

Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee Minutes

2E - Community Room A
City Hall
13450 - 104 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2015
Time: 9:01 a.m.
File: 0540-20

Present:

Councillor Starchuk - Chair
M. Bose - Vice-Chair
H. Dhillon
G. Hahn
P. Harrison
M. Hilmer
J. Sandhar
B. Sandhu
B. Seed
S. VanKeulen

Agency Representative:

D. Geesing

Regrets:

D. Arnold

Staff Present:

M. Kischnick, Planning & Development
C. Stewart, Planning & Development
C. Elder, Engineering
C. Bejtovic, Legislative Services

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. The committee is requested to pass a motion adopting the minutes of July 2, 2015.

It was

Moved by M. Bose

Seconded by M. Hilmer

That the minutes of the Agriculture and

Food Security Advisory Committee meeting held July 2, 2015 be adopted.

Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS**

1. **Permitted Uses in the ALR and Regulations for Additional Residences for Farm Use Agricultural Zoning Bylaw Review**
Markus Kischnick, Community Planner and
Tony Pellet, ALC Land Use Planner

The following comments were made:

- Staff distributed charts summarizing permitted and not permitted residential uses in the ALR based on ALC regulations and Zoning. It was noted that secondary suites, in additional 'farm help' dwellings, require ALC approval prior to building permit issuance. ALC consent through a non-farm use application is also required for additional manufactured homes that are not for immediate family members and duplex dwelling or multiple family dwelling not for farm uses. If there is any doubt by the municipality that a second residence is not being used for farm help, an application to the ALC may also be required, based on City discretion.

S. VanKeulen arrived at 9:06 a.m.

- Clarity is required in the following areas:
 - Legitimate need for full-time farm workers
 - Temporary seasonal farm worker housing
 - Should Surrey bylaw be amended to restrict suites in second dwelling in the ALR
 - How to confirm if second dwellings will be used for full-time bona-fide farm workers as part of the building permit application before house is constructed
 - Duplex is a permitted use in Surrey's agricultural zone, but not a permitted use in the ALR and requires an ALC Non-farm use application before construction can occur, and must be for full-time bona-fide farm workers only.
- T. Pellett advised that the Ministry of Agriculture has established detailed Temporary Farm Worker Housing Guidelines.
- Staff set out four questions for review by AFSAC:
 - Q1: Does AFSAC recommend that the zoning bylaw be amended in order to conform to ALC and ALR regulations, specifically the removal of the provision for duplex use?
 - Q2: How should the City assess full-time bona fide farm operations and if the number of residences is commensurate with agricultural activities being undertaken on the parcel when an application is submitted to the City?
 - Q3: What should the criteria be to determine if farm operation requires fulltime workers? Farm types?
 - Q4: Should all second dwelling applications be referred to AFSAC to provide comment on need for second residence for farm purposes? If so, what information is needed along with Building Permit Application, such as Agrologist report, Farm Plan or affidavit identifying that future occupant will be full-time bona fide farm worker?
- Discussion was held around the use of the words "duplex" and "residences". It was noted that, technically speaking, a duplex is two residences and that the *Act* uses the term "residences", plural. T. Pellet responded that the issue is not whether duplexes are permitted for farm help, however, the bylaw needs to be consistent with ALC regulations and the *Act*.
- Staff noted that municipal bylaws are somewhat different from the ALC, in that bylaws must specifically identify the allowed number of residences. The amended bylaw will provide a finite definition. The difficulty comes in

tying together the zoning bylaw and the Act. There is a need to look at how to address illegitimate applications for duplexes. It was noted that the City of Abbotsford specifically states three dwellings. Some municipalities require the applicant specify the use of the second dwelling, whether it be farm help dwelling or some other use.

- Further discussion was held in terms of semantics: a duplex is two residences; one half could be the primary residence and the second half could be used for farm purposes. If there already exists a single farm home, construction of a duplex then creates three residences. It was suggested the bylaw be amended to use the term "dwelling", and that a duplex must be for farm use.
- Staff noted that there are 109 eligible privately owned properties that are larger than 10 Acres in the ALR and there are currently three applications in front of the ALC for duplex buildings. Unless there is a rezoning application or request for variance, AFSAC does not review the applications; there is no mechanism in place where applications would come to this committee. How do we ensure homes are built and used for farm purposes; there is no way to define "farm worker".
- The residential farm plate is in place to preserve the land. When properties change hands, active permits should be withdrawn. Approvals from the ALC should be withdrawn if not acted on within a defined period of time.
- Roundtable discussion regarding Question #1:
 - Additional dwellings, regardless if single family or duplex, should be for farm worker housing as opposed to simply farm operations. However, staff noted that it would be difficult to stipulate who would live in the dwelling.
 - Replacing the term "duplex" with "additional residences" would remove any ambiguity. It was suggested to further clarify this statement by specifying no more than three residences on the property. However, staff advised that the term "residence" would not work in the zoning bylaw; it must be more specific in terms of how many dwellings and what type.
 - The Committee noted that the current bylaw allows for a primary residence, and a secondary residence for farm use subject to ALC approval.
 - It was suggested that the word "duplex" be removed from the bylaw and further suggested that the words "to a maximum of three" dwellings" be added to the bylaw.

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by S. VanKuelen
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee recommend to the General Manager, Planning and
Development that the word "duplex" be removed from the Surrey Zoning bylaws
A-1 and A-2 Zones

Carried

With J. Sandhar and H. Dhillon opposed.

- Roundtable discussion regarding Questions #2, #3 and #4:
 - Is there a way to define what bona fide farm help is; not whether it is required, but what it is? Difficult to identify.
 - Income should be factored into determining what farm use is, is the income farm driven. Staff advised that a Farm Plan is usually asked for with the application.
 - The Committee suggested there should be criteria/checklist. D. Geesing advised that the Ministry of Agriculture would like to establish specific criteria that would be used and encourage the City of Surrey to ask the Ministry to make that a priority.
 - As criteria are being developed, applications should come to AFSAC as this Committee has the expertise to deal with them.
 - Staff requested that the Ministry provide details on what justifies a farm. D. Geesing suggested that the City contract a professional agrologist for that purpose. However, staff's preferred option would be for this committee to be the knowledge base to provide comments to staff.

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by P. Harrison
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee recommend to the General Manager, Planning and
Development that:

- 1) Staff add the requirement that a Farm Plan specifying the need for additional farm worker residences accompany any applications; and
- 2) Staff request from the Ministry of Agriculture and the ALC the definitions and thresholds for what constitute a full-time farm; and
- 3) The Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee be informed about any proposed zoning bylaw amendments when the information is available.

Carried

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by S. VanKeulen
That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee recommend to the General Manager, Planning and Development that, until such time as the work has been completed on the zoning bylaw amendments that provides criteria to Planning staff, all applications for second 'farm help' dwellings in the ALR be brought to the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee for review and/or comment.
Carried

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by P. Harrison
That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee recommend to the General Manager, Planning and Development, that staff create appropriate wording for additional residences within the A-1 Zone that conforms to the *ALC Act*.
Carried

M. Hilmer left the meeting @ 10:30 a.m.

2. Work Plan

A brief discussion was held on Work Plan items which AFSAC members noted as their priorities. Some items were covered in discussions earlier in the agenda.

The following comments were made:

- Permanent Farmers Market
The area located south of the Newton arena and north of the seniors centre is a potential site for a permanent farm market. A post and beam permanent structure was suggested; a permanent structure would enhance the agricultural community.
- Regulations for Accessory and Seasonal Farm Workers' Housing in the ALR
Staff pointed to the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Agriculture for temporary farm worker housing could be included in the Agricultural zones to permit their use. It was recommended to hold applications to Ministry standards through individual rezoning applications but not to amend agricultural zones at this time.

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Surrey Backyard Chicken Pilot Project Update and Next Steps**
(M. Kischnick)
File: 3900-01

The following comments were made:

- The first year of the Backyard Chicken Pilot Project saw 15 applications; the second year saw another 20 applications. From September 2014 to July 2015, 23 complaints were received; only two of those pertained to operations that were registered in the pilot project.
- Staff provided the Committee with several options to consider regarding the pilot including:
 - ending the pilot program;
 - extending the pilot program as is, or with alterations for another year;
 - bringing a report to Council recommending amendments to the Surrey zoning bylaw stipulating the requirement for 7,500 square feet and mandatory registration with the Province.
 - If applicants were required to submit their applications to the Province and register with the property identification program, information would be more accessible and communication made easier in terms of outbreaks of disease.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

It was

Moved by M. Bose

Seconded by B. Seed

That the General Manager of Planning and Development provide a report to Council for their consideration to move the Backyard Chicken Pilot Project to an outright zoning bylaw requirement allowing for backyard chicken operations on lots over 10,000 square feet in accordance with the Pilot Program guidelines, with mandatory registration in the Provincial Property Identification Program.

Carried

The Committee noted that mandatory registration would enable proper enforcement and ability for city to review where backyard chickens are located without the need for a formal city registration process and application.

It was suggested that going back to a required area of 10,000 square feet rather than 7,200 square feet is preferred. It was noted that poor standards of chicken care and feed have been identified with rats, raccoons and other pest complaints; it is costly to try and get rid of pests that come with backyard chickens. Another deterrent would be to have a licensing system and charge a fee to have a backyard chicken operation; only serious people would apply.

Many inquiries from residents inside and outside surrey have come forward since the pilot project began, including other municipalities reviewing pilot projects of their own. If the zoning bylaw were to be amended, the Poultry Farmers Association could be invited to comment as part of zoning bylaw amendment process.

It was suggested by a Committee member that to prevent the spread of disease, there should be a required 3 km perimeter around commercial chicken operations. Disease can travel up to 1 km on the wind. It was noted by staff that a 3 km radius around any commercial operation in Surrey would eliminate opportunities for nearly all backyard chickens. The rationale behind this perimeter should be included in the report to Council and display the radius for information.

2. Truck Parking

R. Sidhu, Truck Parking Coordinator, Traffic Operations

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

3. Subdivision of Land Adjacent to the ALR

(C. Atkins)

File: 14-0168-00

File: 6880-01

The following comments were made:

- The applicant proposes to rezone from one acre residential to half-acre residential.
- This application was previously considered in December 2014. The application has been refined and now proposes two side by side half acre lots with building setback of 37.5 meters, a 12 meter buffer which slightly exceeds requirements, and a shared driveway onto 164 Street.
- The proposed project complies with the OCP.

Discussion

The existing house will be removed and two new houses constructed. The landscape buffer will be required to conform to the adjacent properties. Concern was expressed that, even though the proposal fits landscape buffer requirements, buffers are not always properly maintained. It was noted that any buffer would be more than what is currently in place.

It was

Moved by H. Dhillon

Seconded by B. Sandhu

That the Agriculture and Food Security

Advisory Committee recommend that the General Manager, Planning and Development, support Application No. 14-0168-00 for subdivision of land adjacent to the ALR, with the expectation that the landscape buffer will at least match what is currently in place.

Carried

4. **Application for Farm Road Opening of 160 Street**
(C. Elder)
File: 5400-80 (16000)

The following comments were made:

- This application was presented at the AFSAC meeting of July 2, 2015; the Committee requested additional information.
- The applicant has provided a report stipulating that they will do all onsite grading with existing materials.
- One building will be added for storage of plants and farm equipment.
- No sales will occur from the property.

It was Moved by H. Dhillon
Seconded by M. Bose
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee recommend that the General Manager, Planning and
Development, support of Application No. 5400-80 (16000) for farm road opening
of 160 Street.

Carried

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

F. CORRESPONDENCE

G. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. **New ALC Compliance and Enforcement ALR Land Use Activity Report Form**
(M. Kischnick)

The following comments were made:

- Staff provided information on the ALC's web page modifications and enforcement process to report illegal activities in the ALR.

2. **Metro Vancouver Project to Address Illegal Fill on Farmland**
(M. Kischnick)

The following comments were made:

- Staff provided a copy of the Metro Vancouver report on a Regional Pilot Project to Prevent Illegal Fill Deposition.

H. INTEGRITY OF THE AGRICULTURE LAND**I. OTHER BUSINESS****1. Role of Food Security and Policy within this Committee
(Councillor Starchuk)**

The following comments were made:

- Discussion was held whether Food Security should be a standing item on the AFSAC meeting agenda.
- Councillor Starchuk met with the Food Action Coalition who wants to ensure communities are aware of what is going on in terms of issues around land availability, water for irrigation, and other obstacles.
- There are different components of food security: availability, access, hunger, community kitchens, affordability, food literacy, and how to read a label, etc.
- The Food Action Coalition is leading the charge on integrating food security in a more organized kind of way. Food security is becoming a bigger and bigger issue through different mechanisms, incubator farms, Flavours of Surrey. It was suggested the Food Action Coalition be invited as a delegation to speak to AFSAC.
- Council should be encouraged to look at hiring a part time position relating specifically to food security and access issues.

Discussion

Discussion was held on the intent of Food Security. The collective impact should be to focus on prioritizing and what AFSAC believes should be the priority, i.e. focus on Surrey, focus on buying local BC, access, incubator farms.

The Committee noted that it is not just about local produce but how to preserve it. It would be most effective to focus on one or two items; use the committee's expertise as best we can; identify what this committee can effectively support.

The highest priority in the long term is the water issue. If there is no irrigation to the crops, cannot feed the people. This is a food security issue. It was also noted that food security has to be about the land, the production, creating availability of the food, and creating affordable food. The Coalition is about availability of food to those who cannot afford what is sold at farmers markets today.

- 2. M. Hilmer would like to invite Michelle Riley, an agriculture student, to appear before AFSAC to speak on water and irrigation issues.**

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by B. Sandhu
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee invite Michelle Riley to the next AFSAC meeting to speak on
the issues of water and irrigation.

Carried

3. Correspondence to New Coast Realty from Councillor Starchuk

Copies of the correspondence from Councillor Starchuk as well as the
correspondence from the ALC to New Coast Realty will be forwarded to AFSAC
members for their information.

4. M. Bose brought forth two articles about food and food security; these will be scanned and emailed to AFSAC members.
5. D. Geesing advised that there are funds available from the Ministry of Agriculture for events focused on helping the agriculture industry grow.

J. NEXT MEETING


The next meeting of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee will be held on October 1, 2015, at 9:00 a.m.


K. ADJOURNMENT

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by P. Harrison
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee meeting do now adjourn.

Carried

The Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee adjourned at 11:49 a.m.


Jane Sullivan, City Clerk


Councillor Mike Starchuk, Chair