

# Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee Minutes

**Present:**

M. Bose, Vice-Chair  
B. Sandhu  
D. Arnold  
G. Hahn  
H. Dhillon  
J. Zelazny  
M. Hilmer  
P. Harrison  
R. Brar  
S. VanKeulen

**Agency Representative:**

D. Geesing

**Regrets:**

Councillor Starchuk, Chair  
J. Sandhar

**Staff Present:**

C. Barron, Engineering  
C. Stewart, Planning and Development  
H. Chan, Planning and Development  
M. Johnson, Planning and Development  
M. Osler, Engineering  
R. Dube, Engineering  
C. Eagles, Legislative Services

**A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

1. The committee is requested to pass a motion adopting the minutes of January 11, 2018.

It was

Moved by B. Sidhu

Seconded by P. Harrison

That the minutes of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee meeting held January 11, 2018, be adopted as presented.

Carried

**B. DELEGATIONS****C. STAFF PRESENTATIONS**

1. **Surrey Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy**  
Matt Osler, Senior Project Engineer  
File: 5225-01

Staff provided a power-point presentation on the Surrey Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy (CFAS). Mayor and Council adopted recommendations to develop a Coastal Strategy on February 22, 2016.

- Public engagement included community meetings at Crescent Beach, three focus groups, seven technical workshops, meetings with Semiahmoo First Nations, options assessment workshops, and a Phase 1 open house on April 26, 2017. Staff identified preferred options of each of the three study areas: Mud Bay, Crescent Beach and Semiahmoo Bay.
- From the Agricultural focus groups, the top priorities identified were farmland viability, localized flooding, and the vulnerability of existing infrastructure.

- Staff noted the cost to update the current coastal flood infrastructure for seismic standards is close to \$10 million. As sea levels rise, it places a huge strain on infrastructure. This century is expected to receive a 1.2 metre sea level rise. Staff noted existing flood control measures will not be sustainable in the future and provided a short video describing the coastal flood options for each study area. The video and more information on the Surrey Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy can be found at <http://www.surrey.ca/city-services/19888.aspx>.
- A member suggested that instead of making a dyke, the Mud Bay barrier could be made larger for a water front development, which developers could entertain the cost. Staff noted the idea has been brought forward by others but is not viable due to several factors.

Staff noted the Coastal Floodplain accounts for approximately 20% of Surrey's land.

*S. VanKeulen arrived to the meeting at 9:22 a.m.*

#### **D. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **1. Development Application 7915-0196-00**

Helen Chan, Planner

File: 7915-0196-00

The subject application was previously submitted to AFSAC at the September 7, 2017 meeting where staff sought preliminary comments on a proposal to exclude land from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and construct a regional irrigation district. Following the meeting, AFSAC requested a comprehensive Agricultural Impact Assessment, surveys of farmers to be accompanied by information on the proposal including associated costs, and for the applicant to appear as a delegation to the Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC).

- The subject application proposes to exclude two properties from the ALR, amend the Official Community Plan (OCP) designation from Agricultural to Industrial, and rezone from One Acre Residential Zone to Business Park 3 Zone.
- Instead of adding land to the ALR as compensation for the exclusion, the applicant is proposing to design, finance, and construct a regional irrigation district that would supply water from the Fraser River to approximately 965 hectares of farmland in the Upper Serpentine agricultural area. The irrigation system would be designed to incorporate future expansion to an additional 817 hectares of land, with expansion costs to be undertaken by an alternate party. The applicant proposes that the operational model for the irrigation system is that the City take over operation and maintenance of the proposed system and a By-law be developed to identify annual costs charged to local farmers.
- In response to the requests by the Committee of the September 7, 2017 AFSAC meeting, staff provided AFSAC the following information from the applicant:

- *An agricultural impact assessment prepared by PGL Environment Consultants. The PGL report describes the economic value of additional irrigation capacity and the benefits calculated based on an earlier report;*
- *An economic impact study on the industrial land/ALR exclusion prepared by Site Economics Ltd. The Site Economics report provides an executive summary for the economic impacts of new industrial development;*
- *A survey of farmer support. The applicant obtained feedback from 24 farmers representing 45 properties out of a total of 128 properties; and*
- *The applicant appeared as a delegation at the November 2, 2017 Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC).*
- The Committee confirmed that at the September 7, 2017 AFSAC meeting, they noted support to provide water to farmers in general.

In response to receiving the information, the committee expressed the following comments:

- The PGL report's estimated numbers may not reflect today's market values. The evaluation of numbers is based on crops under the assumption that you can get farmers to farm the land. The numbers do not represent true numbers as the value of crops are not represented accordingly (concerns that the report noted that hay and corn are low value crops); the numbers should be verified.
- Initial soil tests were conducted in the 1970's.
- Surrey's ALR, which is 1/3 of the total land base, should be kept as it is viable to grow crops.
- There are summer drought conditions in the area and irrigation is important.
- One parcel included in the application seems out of place.
- A concrete building on farmland is not necessarily a better use.
- Concerns were expressed with Appendix E and the economic value presented, the coastal flood issue, removing land from the Agricultural Land Reserve, truck parking areas, the re-routing of water flow on these sites and pressure on adjacent land.
- It was felt that during the farmer's survey, the cost to provide water was not fully disclosed. The applicant should discuss costs to the farmers, such as property tax increases, who would those costs go to, and who would cover additional costs.

- The economic value and industrial economic survey is for Council to determine. Committee members should focus on the exclusion, irrigation and agricultural impact assessment concerns.
- How would the net benefit to agriculture be established?
- Members would like to revisit Policy O-51 and meet with staff to determine if Policy O-51 requires changes. The Committee needs a good reason to recommend Council support or deny an application.
- The ALR is to ensure food security. There are challenges but the subject land is still farmable.
- There is an impact on the remaining farmland, such as changes to roads, climate adaptation, farmland prices, and the viability of farmland.
- The subject area does need water and in the summer months there is a drought.
- The application should go forward in order to determine and understand associated costs and compensation. Members would like additional knowledge and information.
- There are environmental impacts such as biological and chemical contamination. Moving water from one separate water source to another risks introduction of new species, such as fish, parasites or algae. There may be consequences for future generations.
- Are there other alternatives for producing water for agricultural properties?
- There is a benefit to farmers in the area and sees no other way to obtain water in the Upper Serpentine.

In response to questions from the Committee, staff noted the following information:

- Comments from AFSAC are requested on the general concept of the exclusion for the creation of the irrigation district; how the exclusion would affect the ALR and whether this is a net benefit of the proposed ALR exclusion and compensation strategy.
- The estimated costs in the application have not yet been compared to existing systems but noted that the subject irrigation system is more complex than those in the vicinity.
- There would likely be a levy for all residents and a bylaw would be created for that purpose. The applicant stated that they told the farmers directly that there would be a levy for the operation and maintenance of the irrigation system.

- Information specific to Policy 0-51 may need to be provided during a regular Committee meeting and not privately. This will have to be confirmed.

It was Moved by H. Dhillon  
Seconded by S. VanKeulen  
That the Agriculture and Food Security  
Advisory Committee receive Development Application 7915-0196-00 as  
information.

Discussion ensued and the Committee expressed the following comments:

- The application is a complex project.
- There were no answers about environmental impacts.
- The application creates pressure to review Policy O-51.

It was Moved by G. Hahn  
Seconded by R. Brar  
That the Agriculture and Food Security  
Advisory Committee has made no recommendation to support or not support  
Development Application No. 7915-0196-00.

Discussion ensued and the Committee expressed the following comments:

- As a member of AFSAC, our duty is to protect agricultural land.
- It is expected that the applicant would only provide information that speaks positively about their proposal. As land prices are increasing, residents are not able to purchase affordable farmland. Is this subject application the best direction for irrigation for these parcels or are there other options for the parcel?

*H. Dhillon declared a conflict of interest and exited the meeting at 11:02 a.m.*

2. **Application to Develop Land exclude from the ALR and abutting existing ALR Land**  
Melissa Johnson, Senior Planner  
File: 7912-0304-00

On July 26, 2016 the subject application was approved by the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) for the exclusion of property from the ALR.

- The applicant is proposing to develop the land for business park use, an Official Community Plan amendment to re-designate the land from Agricultural to Mixed Employment, amend the East Newton Business Park Neighbourhood Concept Plan to include the property within the NCP boundary, rezone from General Agricultural Zone (A-1) to Business Park 3 Zone (IB-3), and subdivide into approximately six business park lots.

- The applicant will be required to submit a Development Permit for form and character, farm protection, sensitive ecosystems and hazard lands. A restrictive covenant will be registered on title of all new lots to inform future owners of the implications of adjacent farm operations on their property.

Members expressed concerns about the public using the dyke as a trail. Staff noted additional measures may need to be implemented to deter residents in doing so. The Committee would like to see the access from Highland Creek and the related buffers be taken care of.

Staff noted that future applications would be for the individual parcels.

It was Moved by S. VanKeulen  
Seconded by P. Harrison  
That the Agriculture and Food Security  
 Advisory Committee recommend to the General Manager of Planning and  
 Development to support Development Application 7912-0304-00.  
Carried

*H. Dhillon returned to the meeting at 11:23 a.m. and D. Arnold left the meeting at 11:23 a.m.*

**E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL**

**F. CORRESPONDENCE**

- 1. ALR Land and A1 Land for Sale**  
File: 6880-75

Correspondence was received by a resident regarding parcels for sale in the Agriculture Land Reserve and the possibility of applying a foreign buyer's tax on such farm properties.

It was Moved by R. Brar  
Seconded by P. Harrison  
That the Agriculture and Food Security  
 Advisory Committee receive the ALR Land and A1 Land for Sale correspondence as  
 information and discuss the item at a future AFSAC meeting.  
Carried

**G. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**H. INTEGRITY OF THE AGRICULTURE LAND**

**I. OTHER BUSINESS**

- 1. Verbal Updates**

J. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, March 1, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. in 2E Community Room B.

K. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by P. Harrison

Seconded by R. Brar

That the Agriculture and Food Security

Advisory Committee meeting do now adjourn.

Carried

The Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

  
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Jane Sullivan, City Clerk

  
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Mike Bose, Vice-Chair