



Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting

Virtual Conference
November 17th, 2021

Present: Councillor Metcalfe, Henk Lise (Chair), Stuart Heeg (Vice-Chair), Richard Blyleven, Ron Young, Bruce Armstrong, Stephanie Campbell-Heron, Rick Armstrong, Jordan Fowler, Sue Brocklebank (GRCA), Louise Heyming (GRCA), Matt Reniers

Staff: Lidy Romanuk, Manager of Economic Development & Tourism, Shannon VanDalen, Manager of Planning & Development, Alison Earls, Senior Economic Development Officer, and Breanna Beauchamp, Division Support.

Regrets: Councillor Metcalfe, Nick Kinkel (OMAFRA)

1. Welcome and Introduction

Meeting called to order by Chair Henk Lise at 6:02 p.m. Members and guests introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the Minutes

Moved by J. Fowler and seconded by S. Heeg that minutes of Agriculture Advisory Committee Meeting dated May 5th, 2021, July 21st, 2021, and September 15th, 2021 be approved as presented at 6:04 pm.

APPROVED

3. Rural Water Quality Projects

S. Brockleman and L. Heyming then presented four Rural Water Quality Projects for the Committee's approval.

File # 112- Cover Crops project was presented

Moved By S. Heeg, and seconded by J. Fowler that the project be approved totaling \$1,500 at 6:07 pm.

APPROVED

File #118- Soil Testing & Nutrient Management Plan project was presented

Soil Testing- Moved by J. Fowler and seconded by R. Blyleven that the project be approved totaling \$1000 at 6:09 pm

APPROVED

Nutrient Management Plan Project- Moved by J. Fowler and seconded by R. Blyleven that the project be approved totaling \$2000 at 6:17 pm

APPROVED

File #119- Tree Planting project was presented.

Moved by S. Heeg and seconded by B. Armstrong that the project be approved totaling \$5000.00 at 6:20 pm

APPROVED

File #120- Tree Planting project was presented.

Moved by R. Blyleven and seconded by J.Fowler that the project be approved totaling \$1561.00 at 6:22 pm

APPROVED

4. Official Plan Update

Matt Reniers, then delivered a presentation on the Official Plan Update and draft policies for agricultural lands, key highlights included:

- Agricultural land base refinements
- Major policy changes including prime agricultural land, permitted uses in the agricultural area, on farm diversified uses, agri-tourism, flexibility and simplicity and natural heritage system overview.
- Rural Development Potential Report – an assessment of the growth needs and projections within the rural area of the County, including existing hamlets, resort residential nodes and existing lots of record within the agricultural areas.
- Next steps for the Official Plan include a public information session (virtual) on December 14th, 2021, Phase 2 Completion in early 2022, draft amendments to Council in March 2022, and then Official Plan Amendments subject to The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) for final approval.

R. Young than asked if the prime agricultural area include all the residential areas currently being developed on rural land, like the agricultural parcels being developed in Caledonia.

S. VanDalen responded that the lands specified in Caledonia are already in the urban boundary area and not considered to be part of the agricultural land base. These lands are included within the residential growth forecasts and although some are used for farm land, this doesn't not reflect the intended future land use function. When we are looking at expansion in urban areas, we are adding lands to Caledonia and removing some in Jarvis or Townsend to ensure there is not a huge impact or reduction on agricultural land base that are available in Haldimand County.

J. Fowler inquired if the urban expansion in Caledonia was part of a previous official plan? How does urban expansion move forward?

S. VanDalen added that any of the larger developments in Haldimand County are on lands that have always been included in the urban boundaries, residential development and population accommodations. Until a developer came along, these lands may have been farmed however were still planned to become residential at some point in the future.

5. 2022 Work Plan Priorities

H. Lise then began a discussion on the 2022 work plan priorities for the Committee, and reviewed the priorities for 2021, which included alternative viable cash crops, attracting youth to the agricultural sector, processing opportunities, highlighting niche products and processing in Haldimand County, and a strategic plan for the agricultural sector.

J. Fowler inquired if there was a working budget or capital to pursue these priorities.

L. Romanuk added there will be minimal if any budget available in 2022 to pursue these projects and there may be a benefit to research potential funding opportunities, or explore partnerships like the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie, local school boards etc.

H. Lise added that developing a three year strategic plan may be a better fit for the committee. R. Blyleven agreed, and added that the work plan from last year, is still relevant today, and the Committee needs to discuss how we can tackle these issues.

B. Armstrong added that it would be beneficial to have a list of businesses that are needed locally for the agricultural sector like dead stock removal etc. and work towards opportunities that may bring these kinds of businesses to Haldimand County.

S. Campbell- Heron echoed his comments, and added that dead stock removal is needed in Haldimand County.

J. Fowler volunteered to take the lead in attracting youth to the agricultural sector, and added that it may be beneficial to break out into subcommittees, and work on issues in groups.

L. Romanuk suggested we build the areas of focus at the next Committee meeting, and establish a plan in the new year.

A discussion ensued.

6. EDT Update

A. Earls then delivered an EDT update, key highlights included:

- ATV Regulation Update

- Emily Project Update
- Haldimand Wish book
- Signage Strategy
- Haldimand County recipient of TIAO Innovation Resiliency Award
- SPARK Program

A discussion then ensued.

7. New Business

L. Romanuk addressed the committee to ask if there is a preference to meeting in-person or virtual. The Committee expressed their preference is to meet in person in the new year if safety measures allow.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 pm

9. Next Meeting

January 19th, 2022 from 6pm to 8pm
Location to be determined.