



Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting

Virtual Conference
March 16, 2022

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

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

Regrets: Nick Kinkel (OMAFRA)

1. Welcome and Introduction

Meeting called to order by Chair Henk Lise at 6:00 p.m.

2. Agricultural Advisory Committee Chair and Vice Chair Election

L. Romanuk opened the floor for nominations for the position of Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee. Henk Lise was nominated by Stuart Heeg. Henk Lise accepted the nomination as Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee for 2021.

APPROVED

L. Romanuk opened the floor for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee. Stuart Heeg was nominated by Henk Lise. Stuart Heeg accepted the nomination as Vice-Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee for 2021.

APPROVED

3. Approval of the Minutes

Moved by Ron Young and seconded by Stephanie Campbell- Heron that minutes of Agriculture Advisory Committee Meeting dated November 17th, 2021, be approved as presented at 6:05 pm.

APPROVED

4. Council Update

Councillor Metcalfe provided a brief update on Council activities including the official plan, and the granular road conversion program.

A discussion then ensued.

5. Rural Water Quality Projects

L. Heyming delivered a presentation of the highlights for the Rural Water Quality Project from 2021-2021. S. Brocklebank then presented one Rural Water Quality Project for the committee's approval.

File # 122- Natural Area Restoration project was presented.

Moved By Jordan Fowler, and seconded by Stephanie Heron- Campbell that the project be approved totaling \$3,900 at 6:43 pm.

APPROVED

6. 2022 Work Plan Discussion

Prior the Committee meeting, a poll was distributed for each Committee member to vote on their top two 2022 work plan priorities. The two top priorities identified from the Committee were attracting youth to the agricultural sector, and increasing processing opportunities.

L. Romanuk then created two breakout room sessions for the Committee, each session was led by EDT Staff and were allotted twenty minutes for a focused discussion on the top 2022 priorities identified in the poll . Key highlights from the discussions included:

Attracting youth in the agricultural sector

- *Building on existing agriculture events in the community-* The Committee expressed interest in participating or holding events similar to the 'Ag- Stravaganza' days at the fairgrounds with a focus on expanding the curriculum for a wider range of ages. It was also noted that it may be beneficial to promote the Agricultural job market at these events.
- *Promoting local agricultural careers to students –*The Committee discussed leveraging their partnerships with local farm educators to promote career options within the community (i.e. Henrietta Heeg). This local agricultural promotion may include field trips to local farms or school visits to entice youth to start looking into career options in the agricultural sector. There may also be an opportunity to connect with the WPBGE Partnerships for the Workforce Succession Strategy (2023)
- *Increasing awareness of agricultural employment opportunities-* The Committee discussed options for increasing awareness including a potential Partnership with St. Leonard' for agricultural employment opportunities. It may also be beneficial to offer

agricultural jobs fairs to high school students and work with the local school boards to provide more local co-op opportunities.

Increasing Processing Opportunities

- *Promoting workforce opportunities for our abattoirs and other processors-* The Committee saw value in connecting with local processors to promote employment opportunities, and get these sectors more involved in workforce attraction. It was also added that identifying program opportunities or grants available for small scale processors may be helpful.
- *Attracting new processing opportunities to the county-* The Committee explored the possibility of training and having the Development Concierge Team review the processes/permits needed for these facilities to identify opportunities and reduce red tape for potential processors. It may also be beneficial to have an expert come in to inform them on how to establish and assist in creation of processing facilities. In addition, the committee could also explore opportunities for home based business processing for niche farming/ small canneries.
- *Increase educational opportunities for farmers-* The Committee expressed a need to increase the communication to inform farmers of educational opportunities and processing efficiencies. ie. taking birds off feed. It may also be beneficial to connect with farmers about processing needs in the community and address gaps or potential local opportunities for scale up.

Action Item: Staff will pull together a 2022 Agricultural Advisory Committee work plan highlighting the key priorities addressed in the discussion. The Committee will review and finalize the work plan at the next scheduled Committee meeting.

7. Overview of Agricultural Data

A. Earls then delivered a presentation of the economic dashboard analytics highlighting Town folio ,OMAFRA'S Analyst Tool, and provided an industry summary of agriculture in Haldimand County.

J. Fowler added that it may be beneficial to the Committee to see this data presented to them annually to see how the data/ trends are changing.

L. Romanuk added that EDT Staff could provide an annual update to the committee as requested.

8. EDT Update

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

- Emily Project Update
- My Main Street
- SPARK Program Winners

- In Person/ Virtual Meeting Discussion

The committee provided that they would prefer to meet in person at the next meeting, and would like to tentatively schedule a meeting for April 20th, 2022.

A discussion then ensued.

7. New Business

No new business was brought forward.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm

9. Next Meeting

(Tentatively) April 20, 2022 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Location to be determined