



Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting

Haldimand County Administration Building
September, 21, 2022

Present: Mayor Hewitt, Councillor Metcalfe, Henk Lise, Ron Young, Stuart Heeg, Richard Blyleven, Stephanie Campbell-Heron, Louise Heyming (GRCA), Sue Brocklebank (GRCA)

Staff: Lidy Romanuk, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism, Alison Earls, Senior Economic Development Officer and Jessica Easson, Research and Marketing Technician.

Regrets: Nick Kinkel (OMAFRA), Will Stoneman (OFA), Jordan Fowler, Rick Armstrong, Bruce Armstrong

1. Welcome and Introduction

Meeting called to order by Chair Lise at 6:06 p.m. Members and guests introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the Minutes

Moved by R. Young and seconded S. Heeg that minutes of Agriculture Advisory Committee Meeting dated July 20, 2022, be approved as presented at 6:10 pm.

APPROVED

3. Development Inquiries

Nanticoke Development

Mayor Hewitt provided an update on the proposed Nanticoke development.

Mayor Hewitt explained that if the MZO was approved by the Province then the development process for these lands would begin, which includes a public consultation process. Council has no intention moving forward with the proposal if the public opposes it.

A discussion then ensued with further clarification on the MZO process.

Hagersville Development

Chair Lise raised concerns about forthcoming housing developments in Hagersville with regards to Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) requirements.

Mayor Hewitt explained that the subject lands being developed are within the Urban Boundary and as per provincial policies, the municipality is required to obtain density targets within existing urban boundaries to prevent urban sprawl. The developer of the subject lands is aware of the setback requirements.

4. Council Update

Councillor Metcalfe provided an update on Council activities which included the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) Meeting and the recent Council in Committee (CIC) meeting.

At the AMO Meeting Councillor Metcalfe explained he brought forward the concerns identified at the last Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting and had discussions with the Minister of Agriculture. Key discussions included: Nanticoke, saving farmland and concerns with limited fertilizer.

Councillor Metcalfe also noted the recent Council In Committee meeting where a few planning reports were presented and emphasized the importance of these proceedings so residents have the chance to voice opinions and concerns.

Councillor Metcalfe expressed an appreciation to the Committee which was reciprocated by Chair Lise on behalf of the Committee. A discussion then ensued.

5. Rural Water Quality Projects

S. Brocklebank from the Grand River Conservation Authority presented three Rural Water Quality Project for the committee's approval.

File #123 – Tree Planting Project

Proposal to permanently retire approximately 5.1 acres of land, part of hay field and fallow areas on erosion prone slopes to reduce sedimentation of nearby watercourse. Plant a mix of hardwood and conifers species in 4 areas of the field totaling 3,400 seedlings. Proposal is subject to the condition of getting the Environmental Farm Plan.

Moved by S. Heeg, and seconded by R. Young that the project be approved totaling \$3,034.61 at 6:51 pm.

APPROVED

File #124 – Tree Planting Project

Proposal to block planting on retired pasture with several permanently wet and ponding areas to improve quality of surface water runoff. Plant a mix of hardwood and conifers species in retired pasture totaling 6,800 seedlings and retiring approximately 11 acres of fragile land. Proposal is subject to the condition of getting the Environmental Farm Plan.

Moved by S. Campbell-Heron, and seconded by S. Heeg that the project be approved totaling \$3,787.00 at 6:56 pm.

APPROVED

File #117 – Cover Crop Project

Proposal for approximately 32 acres of the RWQP incentive for cover crops not used for grazing. A discussion then ensued about crops that optimize a fields nitrogen credit.

Moved by S. Heeg, and seconded by S. Campbell-Heron that the project be approved totaling \$640 at 6:56 pm.

APPROVED

Chair Lise, thanked the Conservation Authority for time and inquired about funding timelines. GRCA advise that there are not deadlines for the RWQP funding through the municipality.

6. 2022 Work Plan Review

A. Earls introduced the work plan review looking for actionable items for the next term of the Committee to implement. At the July meeting, discussions centered on concerns to bring forward to the AMO meeting and reviewing the work plan. Highlights from discussions included:

Attracting youth in the agricultural sector

- *Building on existing agriculture events in the community* – At the previous meeting, Committee suggested increasing promotions for existing programs (i.e. Agstravaganza). The Committee also noted the importance of developing programs which help youth develop relevant agriculture skill sets (i.e. 4-H programs) and build networks.
- *Promoting local agricultural careers to students* - At the previous meeting, the Committee noted efforts should be made to increase awareness of diversity in careers. They proposed integrating agriculture and food production practices into school curriculum along with recruiting volunteers to talk to kids about agriculture/farm systems
- *Increasing awareness of agricultural employment opportunities* - The Committee discussed hiring a contractor to attract youth to the industry and create programming. For example Councillor Metcalfe mentioned that Catherine Doan was a recommended name at the AMO meeting. It was suggested that staff look into hiring and working with a contractor like Doan to create a strategy. Committee also discussed promoting existing labour tools such as Grand Erie jobs and creating awareness for employers and job seekers. Another strategy discussed was job fairs and hosting a related Agstravaganza event for Grade 11-12 students, educating them on agriculture and related trades jobs.

Increasing Processing Opportunities

- *Promoting workforce opportunities for our abattoirs and other processors* – The Committee discussed exploring apprenticeships and noted there should also be public consultation meetings with abattoirs to identify needs (including CFFO/HFA). There seems to be struggles finding and attracting skilled employees with limited training programs. The Committee further discussed educating farmers about processing and ride sharing between farmers to attract a greater labour force. Concerns about

conflicting provincial and federal regulations were raised which can limit growth, so Committee discussed the need to advocate for streamlined regulations.

- *Attracting new processing opportunities to the County* – the Committee discussed the rising number of sheep and goat farms in the County with high future demand forecasted. As such further efforts (such as farmer co-ops and funding opportunities) should be explored to attract sheep processors/goat processors to meet market demand. Further discussion identified integration in many industries and other processing opportunities such as wheat to bakeries. In order to facilitate integration and larger scale growth concerns for labour, transportation and water infrastructure should be addressed.
- *Increase educational opportunities for farmers* – the Committee discusses removing stigma from careers in processing and looking at on farm diversification and value add opportunities such as local workshops that discuss permitted uses and funding opportunities. The Committee further discussed creating connections between producers and processors

7. EDT Update

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

- Tourism experiential program
- Holiday Wish book
- Agri Food Forum
- Farmers Wellness Initiative
- Multi sector job fair
- The Emily Project

8. New Business

No further new business was raised.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm, moved by R. Young, seconded by S. Heeg.

10. Next Meeting

November 16th from 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Haldimand County Administrative Building