



Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting

Haldimand County Administration Building
Wednesday, March, 15, 2023 6:00 pm

Present: Councillor Metcalfe, Cody Snyder, Stuart Heeg, Henk Lise, Dan Court, Richard Blyleven, Neil Hedley, Kevin VanderSpek, Christine Wilkinson.

Guests: Louise Heyming (Grand River Conservation Authority), Jake Watson (Grand River Conservation Authority - Virtual)

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

1. Welcome

Meeting called to order by L. Romanuk at 6:00 p.m.

2. Land Acknowledgement

L. Romanuk read Haldimand County's land acknowledgment.

3. Introductions

L. Romanuk welcomed all new and returning members to the inaugural Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting for the 2022-2026 term. The meeting began with round table introductions.

4. Rural Water Quality Projects

L. Heyming from the Grand River Conservation Authority presented an Introduction to Rural Water Quality Program. The Rural Water Quality Program (often referred to as RWQP) offers financial and technical assistance to farmers to implement best practices to benefit water quality. This program operates with an annual budget of \$25,000. L. Heyming discussed past projects and provided an overview of the funding opportunities in Haldimand through the RWQP, including: Livestock Fencing, Erosion Control Structures, Sediment Basins/Wetland Creation, Tree Planting/Natural Area Restoration, Wellhead Abandonment, Cover Crops, Crop Nutrient plans/Soil testing, Living Snow Fence and Innovative Projects.

J. Watson from the Grand River Conservation Authority presented a Rural Water Quality Project for the committee's approval.

File # Haldimand 90 – Tree Planting

Proposal to plant 750 conifers & deciduous trees to increase tree cover and improve buffer for rural water quality.

Moved by R. Blyleven, and seconded by S. Heeg that the project be approved totaling \$661.56 at 6:32 pm.

5. Orientation

L. Romanuk shared a presentation providing an overview of Haldimand County Economic Development and Tourism (EDT) and the Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC). The presentation highlighted Haldimand County Economic Development activities, how the AAC aligns with EDT, AAC terms of reference and expectations.

A. Earls shared highlights and accomplishments of the last term of committee. A summary of the proposed work plan and priorities included:

- Attracting Youth in the Agricultural Sector
 - Building on existing agriculture events in the community
 - Promoting local agricultural careers to students
 - Increasing awareness of agricultural employment opportunities
- Increasing Processing Opportunities
 - Promoting workforce opportunities for our abattoirs and other processors
 - Attracting new processing opportunities to the county
 - Increase educational opportunities for farmers

6. Elections

Election of Chair

Councillor Metcalfe opened the floor for nominations for the position of Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

H. Lise nominated N. Hedley for Chair. N. Hedley accepted the nomination.

N. Hedley nominated C. Wilkinson for Chair. C. Wilkinson accepted the nomination.

As there were no other members nominated, ballots were distributed to all members and upon tally of the votes, N. Hedley was declared Chair.

Election of Vice-Chair

Councillor Metcalfe opened the floor for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

N. Hedley nominated C. Wilkinson for Vice- Chair. C. Wilkinson accepted the nomination.

As there were no other members nominated, C. Wilkinson was declared Vice-Chair.

7. Council Update

Councillor Metcalfe provided a Council Update. Highlights included discussions with Honourable Minister Thompson at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference (ROMA). Key discussion items included ongoing workforce requirements for abattoirs as well as potential Minister visit to the area. Councillor Metcalfe also identified that Council will be proceeding with public consultations regarding the MZO in Nanticoke. Finally, the 2023 Tax-Supported Operating budget was recently approved with a residential impact of only 3%.

8. EDT Update

L. Romanuk then delivered an EDT update, key highlights included:

- Upcoming Board and Committee Training Sessions
- Agri-Food Employment Project through the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie.
- Economic Development and Tourism email “E-blasts – News You Can Use”
- The launch of the Business Retention and Expansion Project
- Upcoming virtual seminar regarding Community Economic Development 101 training
- Business Excellence Breakfast Rescheduled
- Ralph Bradley Memorial Bursary
- Mohawk City School

9. New Business

Chair Hedley opened discussion regarding implementing key priorities and future agenda items. Discussion topics included:

- Burn permit discussions and fire safety
- Opportunity to further explore dry wells in Haldimand County
- Road safety/signage programs for large farm equipment
- Deadstock programs
- Agricultural Recycling
- Agriculture Workforce and Labour changes
- Inviting unique and new producers to our meetings to gather an understanding of their needs. i.e. Agritourism operators such as Blue Water Flower Farm

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm, moved by K. VanderSpek seconded by H. Lise.

11. Next Meeting

Wednesday, May 17 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Haldimand County Administrative Building