



Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting

Haldimand County Administration Building
Wednesday, January 17, 2024 6:00 pm

Present: Councillor Trainer, Chair Neil Hedley, Vice Chair Christine Wilkinson, Dan Court, Cody Snyder, Henk Lise, Cody Snyder, Kevin VanderSpek

Staff: Lidy Romanuk, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism, Kris Franklin, Manager of Engineering, Jessica Easson, Senior Economic Development Officer and Hannah Brown, Research and Marketing Technician.

Regrets: Richard Blyleven, Stuart Heeg

1. Welcome and Introduction

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

2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

No declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Moved by C. Wilkinson and seconded by D. Court that minutes of Agriculture Advisory Committee Meeting dated November 20th, be approved as presented at 6:02 pm.

APPROVED

4. Road Concerns Discussion

K. Franklin introduced himself to the committee and addressed the Road concerns brought forward in previous meetings. The Committee raised concerns regarding road sizes and curbs causing tractors to push farther into oncoming traffic, highlighting the York bridge area. Discussion noted future construction projects to include consultation with the Agriculture community and noted considerations for farm equipment sizes. Another concern brought forward was the need for increased awareness and education to the public during farming seasons, raising awareness of the tractors on the roads in order to ensure public safety.

Further discussion then ensued.

5. Business Retention and Expansion Project

J. Easson presented the Business Retention and Expansion Project Update. Key highlights included:

- Overview of the project
- Methodology and Analysis
- Key insights and Highlights:
 - Business Information
 - Business Climate
 - Future Plans
 - Business Development
 - Workforce
 - Community Development
- BR+E Outcomes
- 2024 Recommended Implementation Plans

Motion was made to support the 2023 Business Retention and Expansion project update, and to bring forward the recommended action plan as drafted for Council consideration.

Motion Approved - Moved by K. VanderSpek and seconded by C. Snyder at 7:19 pm.

6. Work Plan Discussion

J. Easson initiated the workplan discussion by providing an overview of past committee workplan ideas and introduced a workplan brainstorming activity.

Committee members contributed ideas to determine two priority activities for each key topic brought forward in previous committee meetings.

Activities for the committee to prioritize were:

Attracting Youth to Agriculture:

- On-farm events (i.e. drive a tractor, farm tours, breakfast on the farm)
- In school education on agricultural careers, such as job fairs, post-secondary training, and recruiting volunteers to speak in schools.

Increasing Value add Agriculture Opportunities:

- Education on farm policies, permitted uses and guidelines
- Education to public about farming

7. Council Update

Councillor Trainer provided a council update, key highlights included:

- Council recently passed a motion seeking the Province's assistance in the upkeep of abandoned cemeteries
- Upcoming Harrop drain public meeting providing farmers an opportunity to provide feedback regarding drain maintenance
- Archeological Management Plan underway

8. EDT Update

L. Romanuk provided an EDT update. Updates included:

- Solar Eclipse is on April 8th
- Tourism Development Fund: EDT was successful in obtaining funding for a lower Grand River Visitor Experience Strategy
- AgScape event confirmed for November 27th, 2024 at the Caledonia Fairgrounds
- Staff are working on updated agreement for the Rural Water Quality Program
- Business Excellence Event is upcoming on April 18th

9. New Business

H. Lise raised his concern regarding maximum animal units per farm.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 pm, moved by C. Wilkinson, seconded by D. Court.

Action Items:

- Staff committed to reviewing the Slow Moving Vehicle Signage Policy and determine if more signs can be installed and/or if there is a need to update the policy
- Staff will investigate increasing communication during the farming seasons

Next Meeting

March 20th from 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Haldimand County Administrative Building