

The Blue Mountains

Agricultural Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

August 25, 2010

Present: James McKinlay (Chair); Jacquie Hendry

Staff: Peter Tollefsen; Rob Potter; Shawn Everitt; Peter McGee; Lisa Kidd

Guest: Dan Mainguy (Centurion Cycling Canada); Bill Abbotts

James called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

1. Centurion bicycle event

Shawn reported that he, Peter McGee and Bill Abbotts had attended the Centurion event in Wisconsin in July. The Wisconsin ride took place in a rural, agricultural area where the terrain is similar to the Beaver Valley, the major agricultural practice being dairy farms. About 95 per cent of the route was through agricultural areas.

Shawn explained that the Town's role with Centurion is to recruit volunteers and to act as liaison with various agencies including the counties, neighbouring municipalities and the OPP.

Shawn added that the roads were not closed for the Wisconsin ride and will not be closed for the local event. While motorists might be delayed slightly if they get behind the line of riders, they are able to pass the cyclists when the road was clear of oncoming traffic. Riders are restricted to one lane. Dan Mainguy added that there were about 750 riders in the Wisconsin event.

Copies of the routes for the 25-mile, 50-mile and 100-mile rides were distributed to the Committee. Shawn noted that the 25-mile event, on Saturday, September 18, should not be an issue for the agricultural community as the route is generally through the resort area.

The 50- and 100-mile rides on Sunday, September 19, will both travel through farming areas and the Town and Centurion staff want to have a clear picture of the needs of the agricultural community, for example traffic patterns to the apple packing and processing plants.

James noted that the key points for the apple growers will be Bay Growers on Grey Rd. 40, Golden Town Apples on Grey Rd. 2, and the Binkley and Bluewater facilities on Beaver St. The county roads, Grey Rd. 2 and Grey Rd. 40 are the main corridors to these facilities.

Jacquie added that dairy farmers will have trucks coming to pick up milk and there will be normal Sunday traffic as people go to work, church, etc. She also noted that the sun is low on the horizon, at this time of year, and can present a visual hazard on Grey Rd. 19 and other east-west roads during the hours just after sunrise for eastbound traffic. Grey Rd. 19 is a main route for soybean growers to take their crop to the Collwest facility in Collingwood.

Jacquie noted that the key for everyone is education and communication to minimize problems and disruption.

Dan noted that the race organizers will be meeting with representatives from the three OPP detachments, the fire department and Emergency Medical Service on Thursday, August 26. OPP senior officers have travelled the route to try to identify areas of concern.

The 50- and 100-mile rides will start at 7:30 a.m. at Blue Mountain Village and should reach Grey Rd. 2/Grey Rd. 19 intersection by about 8 a.m. At that point the groups split with the 100-mile riders turning south while the 50-mile riders head north toward Ravenna. It is expected the “bubble” – large main group of riders – will stay intact initially but will eventually string out to single file as faster riders move ahead of the pack and slower riders lag behind.

Communication

Shawn and Dan outlined their communication plan.

A postcard with information about the event will be sent to all addresses along and near the Centurion routes in The Blue Mountains. Information will also be available on the Town and Centurion web sites.

All riders receive information packages, one by email and one in their event package when they register. Both packages will make it clear that riders must yield to agricultural vehicles and to vehicles showing a flashing green Volunteer Firefighter light.

Variable Message System (VMS) signage will be placed at key points to relay information beginning one week before the ride.

James suggested that Ken Wilson be asked to post information on his growers’ hot line service which is accessed by many apple growers. Email messages can be sent, as well, but many farmers are very busy at this time of year and may not check their email every day. James also suggested that the packing/processing plants be notified directly and asked to pass information to their customers, truckers, etc.

Lisa noted that one challenge is to get information to seasonal residents who don’t access local media and don’t receive mail here. Placement of signage at strategic road intersections might assist in notifying them.

Shawn added that meetings with various officials from police, emergency, roads and other agencies are on-going.

Future Events

James asked whether there can be a family-oriented ride added. Dan outlined plans for future Centurion events. It is expected the local event will move to July, next year, and will extend to three days including a kick-off event. There is also a possibility of adding a family-oriented ride of 25 km on a route that would accommodate children.

James and Jacquie agreed that July would probably be a better time for the event as it would mean fewer concerns for growers, however there would still be some issues for dairy trucks and haying.

Peter McGee explained that the community events at Ravenna and Clarksburg will be family-oriented with food, crafts, music, etc.

RECOMMENDATION 1: THAT the AAC supports the Communications Plan for the Centurion Canada cycling event as outlined at this meeting and is comfortable with the organizing group's efforts to ensure minimal disruption to the agricultural community. CARRIED

Councillor Martin Motion

James noted the following Resolution made by Councilor Michael Martin at the August 9, 2010, Council meeting:

WHEREAS the Centurion Cycling Event to be held September 18 and 19, 2010 occurs during the harvest season and whereas timely harvest and delivery of crops in order to ensure best quality and price is necessary;

NOW THEREFORE this Council requires that all routing for races or touring and timing of such be based upon first priority to the agricultural community's access to the usual routes of delivery to storage facilities and processing plants and in the event of any conflict, the agricultural community's access shall take priority.

(The Motion did not Carry).

RECOMMENDATION 2: THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee recognize Councilor Michael Martin's concern and appreciates his effort to assist the agricultural community through his Resolution of August 9, 2010.

2. Share the Road

Lisa Kidd outlined the Share The Road campaign and circulated proposed text for a brochure (attached). The brochure contains information regarding use of local roads by the agricultural community. She asked the Committee to review the brochure and comment.

James suggested that a sentence be added advising motorists and cyclists that extra care is needed when approaching some pieces of farm equipment because of 'blind spots' that may make it difficult for the operator to see them.

It was also suggested that the turn signals as outlined in the first bullet point under *Be Aware of Farm Equipment Turning* (last section of pamphlet) be deleted as this may result in confusion. There was also discussion about the need to maintain bicycle lanes once they are established. Shawn noted that Grey County's roads department is looking at ways to improve maintenance of paved bicycle lanes.

RECOMMENDATION #3: THAT this Committee endorses and supports the content of the Share The Road brochure with the suggested revisions. CARRIED

3. Tree planting program

Peter Tollefsen reported that Town Council accepted the Recommendation of this Committee made at the June 22, 2010 meeting and authorized Staff to work on a proposal for a Town-wide tree-planting program.

Shawn reported that more than 500 trees have been planted at the Tomahawk property over the past three years. To reduce costs and ensure supply, a tree nursery and flower nursery have been started at Tomahawk and are beginning to produce trees and plants for use in town parks and properties.

Shawn asked the Committee to provide on-going advice on ways to proceed and how the agricultural community might participate.

James stated that the Committee will support the project and help promote it to the agricultural community. He added that his hope would be that the equivalent of one new tree per ratepayer would be planted each year by residents, farmers and businesses. This could be achieved if the Town can find a way to make trees available at nominal or no cost. He added that this program would help support an Environmental Farm Plan program.

Shawn stated that TD Canada Trust Green Fund has a program that supports community tree-planting projects and he will get information.

RECOMMENDATION #4: THAT this Committee is appreciative of Council's support for the concept of a town-wide tree-planting program and will consider ways to assist in making this project a reality.

4. Taste of Blue

Lisa explained that, in conjunction with the Apple Pie Trail program, an event entitled A Taste of Blue, will be held at Blue Mountain Village on September 11. The organizers would like to have a local agriculture representative on hand to talk to visitors to the event about local food and agricultural products.

The Committee agreed that Shane Ardiel or Brian Gilroy, who are both active in farming and knowledgeable about the local food industry, be asked to represent local agriculture. Rob will contact them to see if they are available and willing to attend the event.

5. Craigleith Depot Apple Display

Peter distributed a request from Suzanne Purdy, Curator of the Craigleith Heritage Depot, for historical artefacts related to the local apple industry for a special display this autumn. The Committee suggested several names of farmers who may have articles to loan for the display. Rob will forward the names to Suzanne.

6. County Official Plan Update

Peter distributed preliminary Draft copies of Report SPS.10.13 outlining concerns related to Grey County Official Plan Amendment No. 80 (attached). Peter explained that changes have been made to those provisions of the Amendment which were of concern and that Town Staff are comfortable with the proposed changes.

7. Environmental Farm Plan

Peter reported that the Committee's Recommendation of June 22, 2010, went to Council and Council authorized Staff to research the possibility of including an Environmental Farm Plan

project in the 2011 Budget. James expressed the Committee's appreciation for this support. Peter will keep the Committee updated.

8. Red Hot and Blue: Plan for Economic Prosperity in The Blue Mountains

Rob updated the Committee on the status of the economic development strategy and will distribute copies of the agricultural section with the Notes. Copies of the entire document are available on the Town website.

9. Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

James noted that the Plan is almost ready and a public launch is planned for September 25.

10. Future Meetings

Jacque requested that a discussion on solar power projects be included in the next Agenda.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Attachments:

Agenda – August 25, 2010

Centurion Canada route maps

Share the Road pamphlet text

Message re: Craigeith Heritage Depot apple display

Draft Report SPS 10.13 – County of Grey Official Plan

Message re: Taste of Blue event

Agricultural section from Red Hot and Blue: Economic Prosperity for The Blue Mountains