

Minutes: Agricultural Advisory Committee

MEETING DATE: April 10, 2012
LOCATION: Town Office – EPW Meeting Room
PREPARED BY: Adam McMullin, Engineering and Public Works

A. Call to Order

Present: Grant McMurchy, Lynn Vail, Rod Knott, Ron Marshall, Alfred (Jim) Farmilo, Sid Dykstra, James McKinlay
Regrets: Lance Burnham, John Ardiel, Jacquie Hendry, Al Lockhart

A.1 Review and approval of minutes

The Committee reviewed and approved the minutes.

B. New and Unfinished Business**B.1 Environmental Farm Plan Discussion / Update**

James said that he made a deputation to Council regarding the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP), as it was not approved in the 2012 budget. James discussed the success of the program to Council and the fact that all of the funding has been utilized. James told the Committee that \$2,500 of funding was allocated to the EFP after the business improvement association cancelled the annual chili cook-off. James said he is disappointed that the funding came by default. James thanked Lisa Kidd for the funding in a letter that is being forwarded to Council. James asked the Committee members if they should continue to request this funding as it is apparent that Council does not support the initiative.

Grant said that if the funding is being utilized and the program is successful then the Committee should continue to support the program and request the funding from Council.

Lynn asked if there would be a benefit to promoting the program and highlighting the projects for Council and the community. James responded that the information is confidential, but some recipients have allowed their projects to be highlighted. Jim suggested that promoting the program through the newspaper would make for a good news story.

Ron said that the Committee should continue to support the program and request funding from the Municipality and promote the success of the initiatives. Rod added that he does not understand some of the Councillors decisions regarding the program. James asked about meeting with Council, maybe it would help to inform them regarding the program. Jim agreed that a meeting with Council would be beneficial and added that the EFP meets many of the goals outlined in the various plans and studies undertaken by the Town. Jim said that he feels the Committee should continue to pursue the program. Grant said that ongoing publicizing will help build public support. Rod suggested that the Committee speak to Council early in the budget process. Sid asked if Councillors sit on the Chamber of Commerce and added that the current process is not an effective way to communicate to Council. Sid added that the Official

Plan review is an example of his concern, there was much discussion among the group and many suggestions brought forward but these did not adequately reach Council. James said that getting in front of Council and publicizing the EFP should benefit the process. James added that John McKean is very supportive of the initiative.

Motion:

Moved by: Grant McMurchy

Seconded by: Lynn Vail

“THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee supports the environmental farm plan and continue to pursue funding from Town Council for the 2013 budget in the amount of \$5,000, **unanimously CARRIED”**

B.2 Wild Chervil Update

Adam said that a request came from Committee members for an update regarding the management of wild chervil. Adam said that he spoke with Jim McCannell (Manager of Roads & Drainage) and that the Town plans to cut the roadside ditches, prior to the flowering season. Adam noted that last year, in addition to cutting the roadside ditches, the Town also hired contractors to cut the chervil in some areas on the opposite side of the ditch, off of the road allowance. Adam added that the County is fast-tracking approval for a pesticide, but it has yet to be approved. Adam contacted Mike Cowbrough from the province for an update, and it is awaiting a reply.

Lynn said that cutting the ditches is not necessarily effective and that her sideroad was cut too late. James added that he would like to see an aggressive approach. Rod added that the opposite bank needs to be cut to have an impact and asked the Committee if there is a bylaw that requires the wild chervil to be cut. James responded that the County of Grey has designated wild chervil as a noxious weed and that if a complaint is made, it must be cut. Grant asked if there is any funding from the province. James said that he does not believe there is funding, but the fast-tracking of the pesticide approval is being driven by the province. James said that the Town has a major responsibility because wild chervil is spreading.

B.3 Chamber Business Recognition Award Discussion

Jim said that the chamber of commerce plans to add an agricultural award category to the annual general meeting recognition event. Jim asked the Committee for input asking the Committee if the award should be specific or general, focused on youth or innovation and so forth.

Lynn said that a general award may be more effective as each year it could focus on a different aspect of farming. James agreed with Lynn. Grant recommended that the award should be structured to have similar criteria as the other awards. Jim said that he would bring their comments forward and report back to the Committee.

B.4 Order of The Blue Mountains Update.

Adam referred to Item B.4, a letter that Jim drafted on behalf of the committee, to the Town, requesting the inclusion of an agricultural category within the Order of The Blue Mountains. Adam asked the Committee for their comments.

Rod asked if there is a category for business, noting that he would support the letter either way. James asked if this would potentially conflict with the chamber award. Jim responded that the chamber focused on businesses while the Order of The Blue Mountains is a volunteer award. James said that the Committee has time to mull this over and that Jacquie is the driver of this.

Motion:

Moved by: Rod Knott

Seconded by: Grant McMurchy

“THAT the committee table the discussion regarding the Order of The Blue Mountains until another date, **unanimously CARRIED**”

B.5 Public Works Day – Apple Donation Request

Adam said that for public works day this year the Town is hoping to provide an apple for all the students from the Beaver Valley Community School. Sid asked if the public works day could be included in the fall fair. James said that the public works day is a structured event that focuses on the school children. Rod said there may be a supply issue. Grant recommended contacting Harvey McMurchy of the Georgian Bay Fruit Growers.

B.6 Community Watch

Adam referred to Item B.6, a letter from Larry Hall requesting representation from the agricultural community for the community watch program. Grant asked where the meetings were held. Rod said Ravenna a couple of times per year. Lynn volunteered to participate until Jacquie is able to return.

B.7 Correspondence – Municipality of Clarington

James asked the Committee for comments regarding the letter of support from Clarington for the Ontario Slots at Racetracks program. Rod said he is not concerned either way, but maybe the Committee should consider supporting the declaration as it supports agriculture. Jim said that he is neutral on the issue. Grant said he is not informed enough on the program. Sid added that racetracks are private businesses which should be a consideration.

Motion:

Moved by: Grant McMurchy

Seconded by: Rod Knott

“THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee support the Municipality of Clarington resolution, **unanimously CARRIED**”

C. Next Meeting Date

Proposed Next Meeting Date: May 22, 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

D. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.