



Minutes

The Blue Mountains Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Date: Tuesday, May 23, 2017
Meeting Time: 2:30pm
Location: Town Hall, IPW & P&DS Meeting Room
Prepared by: Heather Drane, Clerk Receptionist, Infrastructure and Public Works

A. Call to Order

- **Present:** James McKinlay, Grant McMurchy, John Ardiel, Elizabeth Cornish and scribe Heather Drane
- **Regrets:** Al Lockhart, Lynn Vail and Jim Farmilo
- **Approval of Agenda**
- **Moved by:** John Ardiel **Seconded by:** Grant McMurchy

THAT the Agenda dated Tuesday, May 23, 2017 be approved as circulated, including any items added to the Agenda, Carried.

- **Previous Minutes**

Minutes are circulated and approved by the Agricultural Advisory Committee, using electronic mail. Minutes of the January 18, 2017 meeting were included in the January 23, 2017 Council meeting.

B. Deputations, Presentations, Topics

B.1 Correspondence

B.1.1 Email from Philly Markowitz, forwarded to Committee on May 10, 2017– Funding opportunity to employ youth in green agricultural projects.

Committee discussed the email from Grey County regarding the Agricultural Youth Green Jobs initiatives, now open and accepting applications. This initiative helps fund students up to age 30. Farm operators could receive up to \$10,000 per youth intern from Green Farms Stream funding. Employers in the agricultural sector (but not on farm) could receive up to \$16,000, per post-secondary graduate intern from Green Internships Stream funding.

Funding is available through two streams:

Green Farms Stream – Farm operators could receive up to \$10,000, per youth intern 30 years old or younger to implement projects that are environmentally beneficial.

Green Internships Stream – Employers in the agricultural sector (but not on farm) could receive up to \$16,000, per post-secondary graduate intern to undertake environmental activities, services or research that will benefit the agricultural sector.

B.1.2 Email from Reg Russwurm regarding signage

Committee discussed the email of May 5, 2017 from Reg Russwurm regarding signage. Reg Russwurm noted Grey County has erected a slow moving vehicle sign on Grey Road 13 on the approach to Clarksburg, just south of the curves. He also asked the County about the “Share the Road” idea, however was told the sign is not in the Ontario Traffic manual nor approved by Grey County Council.

James noted he has seen Share the Road with Slow Moving Vehicle sign in other municipalities and suggested that Reg call Bruce County and Huron County to see if they use them.

B.2 Presentation by Elizabeth Cornish

B.2.1 Overview of possible programs we could tap into to support the farm, agri-business community:

OMAFRA session, with a small group of agri-business owners who want to start an on-farm business or expand their existing business and to make them aware of financing options available through the province.

Elizabeth Cornish introduced herself and explained her three main jobs were Economic Development, Communication and Tourism and wanted to meet with the Agricultural Advisory Committee to go over some ideas to support and inform the Agricultural Community.

Elizabeth noted if talking to John Shoot is of interest to the Committee, she could arrange for a small group to get together for a session on how to expand and diversify their business.

John Ardiel noted that John Shoot’s program ends in July. In February there was mention of a new 5 year plan and it’s unclear what the plan includes.

Elizabeth noted she will have a talk with John Shoot to clarify and if it’s of interest she will follow up on a discussion with John Shoot for next year and include topics of interest such as:

- Funds to access through the Government
- Growing the farm business, diversifying, moving forward to the next level
- Level of growth you want to establish, rapid growth and use of technology

Arrange training for a specific need common to area providers (Safety, first aid, etc.)

Elizabeth discussed the training needs focused on the Agricultural Industry and options of organizing group training for better cost efficiency. Elizabeth noted training could be brought here to the community such as Basic First Aid, Farm Health & Safety, Pesticide Safety, Marketing and Social Media.

Elizabeth would like better ways to reach out to the Agriculture sectors and noted that the New Town Website will have better functionality to do so. She mentioned having a section dedicated to the Agricultural sector on the Town Website and in the local newspaper, for people to sign up for information and e-blasts.

Elizabeth noted if the Committee comes up with any other ideas to ask her to organize, please let her know.

Work with Grey County to begin marketing the area to folks interested in the cidery, winery business.

Elizabeth will look into more information and to work with Grey County regarding helping local people to start a Winery/Cidery business.

B.2.2 Discussion of the above. What other supports, ideas would benefit the local agri-business community?

The Committee noted some suggestions and concerns:

- Building permits, zoning to encourage agriculture activity
- Half load restrictions on the roads are an issue at times
- Share the roads are an issue
- Some roads require reconstruction to include biking lanes and make them safer for agriculture and other vehicles
- Reg Russwurm and Jim McCannell to speak about roads, road maintenance, reconstruction and expansion of roads

Elizabeth noted if you have an issue that needs to be addressed, write a letter or make a deputation to Council. Council needs to hear your voice.

B.2.3 How do we reach the agri-business community with new events and programs?

The Committee noted some suggestions:

Source any funding for natural gas in rural locations and government initiatives – See if Reg Russwurm can follow up on.

Go after all grants that we can.

Bring broadband to the area. The SWIFT program, stands for South Western Integrated Fibre Technology. The Provincial and Federal Governments have put together a comprehensive plan bringing broadband to rural areas, an ultra-high speed fibre optic network across the region and are working to build the infrastructure necessary. This

needs to be located on Public property. The Committee would like to see if the Town needs to do anything to help this happen.

B2.4 Next steps and closing.

Elizabeth will follow up on the following:

- Implementing ideas that the Agricultural Advisory Committee comes up with
- Ideas to help more with
- Talk to John Shoot
- Contact Al Lockhart
- Open up to other sectors regarding training
- Look into Enterprise Bulletin and other ways to inform the Agricultural Community
- Half Load Roads
- Wine and Cidery contact person and let John Ardiel know
- The Agricultural Symposium
- Workshops, speakers, technical support, promotion of Agri-business
- People are parking on the road near the Bruce Trail and it's very difficult to get by with farm vehicles. Elizabeth will talk to By-law and Shawn Everitt. There may be signage required.

John Ardiel noted there is an overgrown section of the Blue Mountains Town Line, south of SR 31 that needs to be brushed back and that Grey Highlands needs to do the same on their end.

The Agricultural Advisory Committee has recommended the following to Council:

Moved by: Grant McMurchy **Seconded by:** John Ardiel

THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee request to contact Brian Kane and Jim McCannell to resolve the overgrown section of the Town of Blue Mountains Town Line South of SR 31 and to be in contact with Grey Highlands to resolve their side. Invite John Ardiel to meet if there is an on-site meeting.

C. Adjournment

Moved by: John Ardiel **Seconded by:** Grant McMurchy

THAT this Committee does now adjourn at 4:25 p.m. to meet again in November, 2017 or at the call of the Chair.