



Agricultural Advisory Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. PURPOSE

The Agricultural Advisory Committee (AGAC) is an Advisory Committee of Council established to identify, review, discuss, and make recommendations to Council on rural, and agricultural related issues in the Town of The Blue Mountains.

2. MANDATE

The Mandate of the Town's AGAC is to:

- a) Be engaged, consulted, and comment as one common voice of an Advisory Committee of Council on proposed Official Plan Policy updates and reviews, Zoning By-law updates and reviews that affect the agricultural community and lands and provide a professional and expert agricultural community perspective;
- b) Represent as many of the following groups as possible but not limited to:
 - Grey Cattlemen's Association;
 - Georgian Bay Fruit Growers Association;
 - Christian Farmers;
 - National Farm Union;
 - Ontario Federation of Agriculture;
 - Young Farmers;
 - Organic Farming;
 - Sheep Producers/Dairy Farmers;
 - Winery and Cidery Industry.
- c) Identify key issues of concern for rural and agricultural communities which can be addressed by local, regional, and provincial governments;
- d) Provide advice and recommendations on economic strategies, plans, or studies dealing with agriculture and other rural issues;
- e) Advise Council of changes and key issues within the agricultural industry and rural communities;

Approved: March 6, 2023

Agricultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

- f) Identify and recommend programs which encourage public awareness, land stewardship, and education of agricultural and rural issues;
- g) Work in partnership with staff and local economic development partners to actively assist in fostering and promoting a positive community image and a healthy business environment for existing and prospective businesses.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY

Where appropriate, the Advisory Committee will provide Council with recommendations on an as needed basis through reports to the Committee of the Whole. Council may request update reports at any time on specific projects or initiatives.

4. MEMBERSHIP/VOTING

The AGAC may have a composition of nine (9) members comprised of two (2) members of Council and up to seven (7) voluntary members, appointed by Council, as noted in the composition below:

Voting Members:

- a) Two (2) Members of Council (one member being appointed as Chair)
- b) Up to Seven (7) Members of the public at large
- c) Mayor as ex-officio (not counted towards Committee membership)

Where the Chair is not available to attend a meeting, the second member of Council shall assume the role of Chair for that specific meeting. Notice of the assumption of the Chair by the second representative of Council assuming the Chair shall be made to the AGAC members as early as possible in advance of the meeting.

The Mayor, as ex-officio, is not counted towards quorum and therefore shall not be considered eligible to take on the role of the Chair for a meeting.

Openings for the membership shall be publicly advertised as appointment opportunities arise.

Voting members shall be eligible voters in the Town of The Blue Mountains (who meet elector qualifications outlined in the Municipal Elections Act) and be members of the Town's rural and agricultural community.

Non-Voting Members:

- a) Department Directors and/or Managers, as requested by the Chair in consultation with the Town's Chief Administrative Officer
- b) Executive Assistant to Committees of Council

Members Will:

- a) At all times of their membership on the AGAC the member shall be an eligible voter

Agricultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

with the Town of The Blue Mountains for the purposes of their inclusion on the Town of The Blue Mountains' Voters list; and,

- b) Be personally and actively involved in at least one (1) agricultural industry located within The Blue Mountains and possess relevant farm experience, technical training in an agriculture-based field, and/or current involvement in rural living and/or agricultural activities; and,
- c) Commit to active and respectful participation in regularly scheduled meetings that may include evening-time meetings; and,
- d) Commit to significant preparation for meetings via agenda review including previous minutes and all documentation; and,
- e) Be prepared to meet with Council, and/or attend Council and Committee of the Whole meetings upon Council's request.

All AGAC members are expected to know and abide by relevant conduct policies of the Town. In addition, the following guidelines should be understood by AGAC members:

- a) Only the AGAC Chair can speak on behalf of the Advisory Committee;
- b) AGAC members shall not direct any messaging without the approval of the Chair;
- c) The AGAC Chair plays an important role in ensuring that a functional relationship with high integrity exists within the AGAC, with Council, with the public, and with staff;
- d) Constructive and informative debate and opinion sharing can be a constructive part of the group decision-making process. However, when the debate becomes ongoing, inappropriate, unconstructive, or offensive, and before becoming a conflict, the Chair may need to intervene with an appropriate dispute resolution mechanism.

Members of the AGAC shall not be registered or have been previously registered on the Town's Lobbyist Registry.

It is the responsibility of the member to declare any affiliations and/or inclusion on the Town's Lobbyist Registry to the Town Clerk as soon as possible in writing.

5. QUORUM

Quorum for the AGAC, per the standards of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, is five (5) voting members, unless the public at large membership is less than seven (7) deeming quorum to be set at half of the total appointed membership plus one (1) member and considered as the majority of appointed membership, which must include at least one (1) Council representative in the capacity of Chair, regardless of the total number of members in attendance.

The Council representatives appointed to the AGAC count towards quorum. The Mayor is an ex-officio member of the committee and does not count towards quorum but does have the right to vote and make motions.

6. CLOSED SESSION

A Closed Session shall not be considered an option available to the AGAC.

7. SUB-COMMITTEES

The establishment of Sub-Committees shall not be considered an option available to the AGAC.

8. REMUNERATION

No compensation shall be provided to members of the AGAC for their participation.

9. MEETING DETAILS, AGENDA, MINUTES, AND PROCEDURE

Meeting Frequency and Scheduling:

The AGAC will meet virtually up to eleven (11) times per calendar year between January and the end of November at a time that is to be determined and scheduled at the Committee's first official meeting and will be for the duration of the Term of Council and approved by the Committee.

Additional meetings of the AGAC may be called by the Chair, with a minimum of five (5) business days' notice, to address urgent matters. The determination of a matter being deemed urgent will be at the discretion of the Chair.

The Executive Assistant to the Committees of Council shall send out meeting invites to all AGAC members and post notice of the meeting to the Town's website.

Meeting Agendas and Quorum Deadlines:

The Call for Agenda Items will be circulated with the meeting invitation along with a deadline for quorum to be obtained.

Agenda items shall be set by the Committee Chair, in consultation with and under approval of the Chief Administrative Officer. Members who wish to include an item on the Agenda shall contact the Chair for consideration.

If quorum is not obtained by the deadline indicated, the meeting shall be cancelled. In the event quorum is obtained by the deadline but the AGAC does not have quorum the day of the meeting within fifteen (15) minutes after the hour appointed the meeting shall be cancelled.

Meeting Location:

Meetings will be held virtually, are recorded and archived, and are available on the Town's Website. All meetings are open to the public to view virtually.

Procedure:

All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Town's Procedural By-law 2022-79.

Meeting Minutes:

Minutes shall be approved by AGAC within ten (10) business days by email, or by motion at the subsequent AGAC meeting.

Minutes will be kept by the Executive Assistant to the Committees of Council who will distribute the minutes to all of Council in accordance with Town practice.

Terms of Reference:

The Terms of Reference is a living document and will be reviewed by the AGAC once per term of Council in the second year of the Term of Council and may be revised as required and approved by Council.

10. TERM OF THE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The AGAC will be in effect until March 31, 2026, or otherwise determined by Council.

11. RELATED POLICIES AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

POL.COR.07.01 Accountability and Transparency of Town Actions to the Public

POL.COR.17.04 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

POL.COR.18.04 Protocol Policy for Complaints Related to Council Members and Local Boards

POL.COR.18.08 Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy

POL.COR.18.10 Social Media Policy

POL.COR.19.02 Council Staff Relationship Protocol

POL.COR.21.06 Code of Conduct for Members of Council, Local Boards and Advisory Committees

POL.COR.22.07 Respectful Public Interactions Policy

POL.COR.22.08 Frivolous, Vexatious or Unreasonable Complaints Policy

Town Procedural By-law

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11](#)

[Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990](#)

[Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990](#)