



**PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT
Agriculture Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes**

DATE: Wednesday, March 18, 2015

PLACE: Pomeroy Sports Centre, 9324 – 96th Street, Fort St. John, BC

PRESENT: Leonard Hiebert, Director, Electoral Area 'D'
Jill Copes, Peace River District Women's Institute
Maurice Fines, Peace River Farmer's Institute
Jim Collins, Alternate – Peace River Farmer's Institute
Judy Madden, PR Regional Cattlemen's Association
Heather Hansen, PR Forage Association of BC
Rod Kronlachner, Member at Large – South Peace
Greg Neave, Member at Large – North Peace
Arlene Boon, Alternate – Member at Large North Peace

Delegation – Agricultural Land Commission

Richard Bullock, Chair
Dave Merz, North Panel
Sandra Busche, North Panel
Garry Scott, North Panel
Laurel Eyton, Planner
Martin Collins, Planning Officer

Guests

Karen Goodings, Director, Electoral Area 'B'
Brad Sperling, Director, Electoral Area 'C'
Julie Robinson, Ministry of Agriculture
Lori Vickers, Ministry of Agriculture

Regional District Staff

Bruce Simard, General Manager of Development Services
Suzanne Garrett, Corporate Services Coordinator

- 1) Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.
- 2) Election of the Chair MOVED by Jill Copes, SECONDED by Rod Kronlachner,
That the election of the Agriculture Advisory Committee Chair for 2015 be referred to a future meeting.

CARRIED.

Notice of New Business:

Jill Copes applications containing personal information

Adoption of the Agenda:

3) Adoption of the Agenda MOVED by Rod Kronlachner, SECONDED by Greg Neave,
that the Agriculture Advisory Committee agenda for the March 18, 2015 Meeting, including New Business and Additional Items, be adopted.

Adoption of the Minutes:

M-1 Agriculture Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of November 25, 2014

Business Arising from the Minutes:

Delegations:

D-1 Members of the North Panel – Agricultural Land Commission

Correspondence:

C-1 December 15, 2014 letter from Kevin Knoblauch regarding Peace Valley Alluvial Floodplain. (referred by the Regional Board from its February 12, 2015 meeting).

C-1a) handout – March 17, 2015 additional information from Kevin Knoblauch

3) Adoption of the
Agenda
(continued)

Reports:

- R-1 Chair's report regarding the status of the November 25, 2014 AAC meeting recommendations to the Regional Board.
R-2 February 26, 2015 report from Jill Copes on the Provincial AAC workshop held on February 18, 2015 in Langley, BC
R-3 Oral report regarding AAC Terms of Reference review.

New Business:

Items for Information:

- I-1 February 16, 2015 letter to BC Agriculture and Food Climate Initiative regarding weather station funding.

Diary and Terms of Reference:

CARRIED.

MINUTES:

4) M-1
AAC Mtg. Minutes

MOVED by Jill Copes, SECONDED by Rod Kronlachner, that the Agriculture Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of November 25, 2014 be adopted.

CARRIED.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

5) Item #4 Tank
Farm update

Members were advised that the Regional District is currently working with legal counsel to achieve compliance regarding the tank farm zoning contravention.

6) Item #6 Regional
Ag Plan

It was noted that work on the Regional Agriculture Plan has been placed on hold pending the completion of the Terms of Reference review.

CORRESPONDENCE:

7) C-1 re:
alluvial floodplains
and handout

Mr. Knoblauch's letter outlined the importance of preserving the river valley alluvial floodplains as this resource contributes substantially to the economic, food security, and health benefits of the region. He is specifically requesting that the Regional District identify all arable and accessible river valley alluvial floodplain areas and preserve them.

One option identified is the "Farm Land Trust", its primary purpose is the preservation of farmland and associated ecological and heritage sites. They can also engage in other activities that help keep land in food production.

MOVED by Rod Kronlachner, SECONDED by Judy Madden, That the Agriculture Advisory Committee recommend to the Regional Board that Kevin Knoblauch be invited to a future meeting of the Agriculture Advisory Committee to provide clarification on how the Committee can address his concerns.

CARRIED.

REPORTS:

8) R-2 re:
AAC Workshop

Jill Copes attended the 2015 AAC Workshop held in Langley, BC. Topics included:

- How your AAC can strengthen farming in your community
- Sustainable farm systems
- Primer on ALR changes and medical marihuana
- Top priorities for the Strengthening Farming Program 2014-2018

Discussion session 1:

- Challenges to successful agriculture in your region
- Mechanisms to make the AAC more effective to local government
- Barriers to farmers/communities to access resources and funding
- Economic development strategies to support agriculture
- Issues related to water management

- 8) R-2 continued Discussion session 2:
- Stories of success

Jill felt that the workshop would be beneficial for Regional District Planning staff to attend to see how AAC's are used in other areas of the Province, i.e. how the District of Kent allows subdivisions on farm land while minimizing the impact on agricultural land. Members were advised that the AAC Workshop proceedings can be viewed on the Ministry of Agriculture's website.

- 9) R-3 re:
review of AAC Director Hiebert advised members that as a result of the Committee's input
Terms of Reference regarding the future focus of the Committee, the AAC Terms of Reference
and AAC suggestions will be reviewed by the Electoral Area Directors'
Committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 10) NB-1 Concern has been expressed regarding private individuals personal information
re: personal and signatures available on the Regional Board agenda's through various
information applications. Are applicants advised or made aware that their application will
become part of a public document?

Mr. Simard advised that application forms are being revised, he will check and report back to the Committee.

DELEGATION:

- 11) D-1 re:
ALC The following members from the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) were in
in attendance to open a dialogue with the AAC:
Dave Merz, Sandra Busche, Garry Scott – North Panel members;
Richard Bullock, Chair;
Martin Collins, Planning Officer; and
Laurel Eyton, Land Use Planner

Topics included:

- appointed to the ALC based on merit, with experience in agriculture or land use planning, let us know your experience?
- Fort St. John boundary expansion to the west, how would the ALC assess an application for exclusion in this circumstance? If the application did not conform to the Official Community Plan for Area 'C'?
- as ALC panel members, does agriculture take precedence over any other use unless it is proven that there are no other options?
- the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) AAC is the only AAC in this region, how does the Panel view input from this AAC? How important are comments from the AAC on any agricultural related applications?
- Homesite severance
- Small lot subdivisions on agriculture land
- Subdividing ½ sections to ¼ sections
- Compliance with ALR rules, i.e. tank farm and how enforcement occurs
- Large water holding dugouts
- Cumulative impacts of oil and gas
- Any concerns with the OGA ALC Delegation Agreement
- What would qualify for an on-site inspection/review?

11) D-1 re:
ALC

Discussion points:

- All panel members have many years of agricultural experience
- Urban expansion is an issue, applications will depend on history and location, most productive agriculture land is within municipal boundaries. ALC mandate is protection of agriculture lands. The ALC has no jurisdictional authority to halt expansion of a community, only if land is to be removed from the ALR. The ALC is careful to follow all Official Community Plans – recognized as a valuable tool – provides direction on what people in the area want. Try to direct development towards areas that are less capable for agriculture or already settled.
- ALC values input from AAC's around the Province, find it very useful to have a local opinion, important to the process. Have to take into consideration other aspects of applications. ALC tries to take a holistic approach - number 1 is agriculture, social – economic – cultural, impacts on society. More than agriculture is considered in the north. Section 6 is still key.
- ¼ section subdivisions is a big issue in the north. Each application is evaluated under its own merits taking into consideration different factors. The problem is determining the intent of the application. ALC cannot guarantee that the ¼ section subdivision will remain as farmland or for farm purposes. Is the applicant a viable farmer, do they own more land that is productive.
- Have a good working relationship under the Delegation Agreement. The ALC does not have the tools or expertise. Our concern is there enough agricultural knowledge within the OGC? 2014 audit should be completed within the year.
- Large dugouts for agriculture is a permitted use, for industrial use the landowner should submit a non-farm use application. Water is outside of the ALC's mandate, can only make decisions on land use. Concern was expressed regarding the interruption of natural drainage flows as this impacts users down the road. It was noted that the new Water Act comes into effect in 2016 which addresses these types of issues/concerns.

NEW BUSINESS:

12) Committee
report

MOVED by Jill Copes, SECONDED by Heather Hansen,
that the recommendations from the Agriculture Advisory Committee meeting
of March 18, 2015 be recommended to the Regional Board for approval.

CARRIED.

13) Adjournment

MOVED by Maurice Fines, SECONDED by Rod Kronlachner,
that the meeting be adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Leonard Hiebert,
Chair

Suzanne Garrett,
Corporate Services Coordinator