Township of Langley

Est. 1873

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY AND ECONOMIC ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at 7:00pm
Via Zoom

MINUTES

Present:
J. Caldarella, Community Co-Chair
Councillor B. Whitmarsh, Council Co-Chair
Councillor D. Davis, Council Co-Chair

C. Allison, A. Burns, I. Han, M. Mann, T. Meyers, A. Smith, U. Tayyab, and T. Townsley

Guests:
B. Smith, BC Assessment
C. Keyes, Ministry of Agriculture

Staff:
V. Gafka, Senior Manager, Economic Investment and Development
M. Gunn, Planner, Community and Policy Planning
R. Nelson, Senior Planner, Community and Policy Planning
K. Stepto, Recording Secretary

Election of Co-Chair
J. Caldarella volunteered to be the Community Co-Chair and was elected by acclamation, then assumed the role for the remainder of the meeting.

A. APPROVAL AND RECEIPT OF AGENDA ITEMS

1. Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee - February 23, 2022

Moved by I. Han,
Seconded by C. Allison,
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee approve the agenda and receive the agenda items of the February 23, 2022 meeting.
CARRIED

B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. **Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee - January 26, 2022**

Moved by U. Tayyab,
Seconded by T. Meyers,
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee adopt the Minutes of the January 26, 2022 meeting.
CARRIED

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. BC Assessment Authority

B. Smith, BBA, AACI, P.App. Manager, Appraisal Modelling, provided an overview of the BC Assessment Authority and Farm Classification in BC. He noted that the Assessment Authority was established in 1974 and is a provincial Crown corporation, operating independent of taxing functions and politics. They provide a stable, predictable base for taxing authorities to raise $8.3 billion annually in property taxes for important local services and schools.

The following information was provided regarding Farm Classification:

- Can be applied to any property, although primarily on ALR properties.
- Follows farm regulations to determine what and how properties are granted farm class.
- Must meet income thresholds.
- There is an application process each year.
- There are a number of allowable agricultural uses.

Income requirements to be classified as a farm:

- $2,500, if the total area of the farm operation is between 0.8 ha and 4 ha.
- $2,500 plus 5% of the actual value of the farm operation for farm purposes in excess of 4 ha, if the total area of the farm operation is greater than 4 ha.
- $10,000, if the total area of the farm operations is less than 0.8 ha.
- A 20 acre parcel would require approximately $4,000

Tax Benefit for Farming:

- Farm class assesses the land at a legislate land value.
- Receive tax exemption on farm outbuildings.
- Non-farming properties will be assessed at Market Value.

Developing a Farm Class

- Must be a qualifying agricultural use.
- Depending on the product, need to show income anywhere between 1-12 years.
- Must submit a plan on how income will be achieved.

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Unique farming situations include:

- Honey Bees;
- Horse Breeding vs Boarding;
- Fallow Fields;
- Wetlands/Riparian/Wooded Areas; and
- Mixed Crops.

D. REPORTS

E. CORRESPONDENCE

F. WORK PROGRAM

1. 2022 Work Program

2022 Work Program, approved at the January meeting, was provided for information.

2. Farm Policy and Regulatory Review

Based on the Future of Farming Task Force recommendations, the committee decided to focus on the recommendation to initiate a review of current bylaws and policies related to farming and agriculture, and also initiate an in-depth information gathering review of other jurisdiction's agriculture policies and bylaws for comparison, as part of their 2022 Work Plan.

M. Gunn led a discussion regarding developing a terms of reference for this review and asked for input regarding the following:

Who would you like to participate on this task force?

- A smaller group is probably best for this project as opposed to the whole committee.
- Those who expressed an interest in being part of this group include:
    - A. Burns
    - C. Allison
    - U. Tayyab
    - A. Smith
    - T. Townsley
    - T. Meyers

Purpose?

- Talk to other regulated communities who have implemented their own farming policies and bylaws.
- Review the bylaws currently in place in the Township.
- Ensure that bylaws are not an impediment to farmers.

F. WORK PROGRAM

Stakeholder engagement?

- The Langley Farmer's Institute as the outreach group.
- Stakeholders who were used for the Future of Farming Task Force.
- Chamber of Commerce members.
- Young people who are pursuing farming.
- Academic partners who have expertise in this area.
- Cranberry and blueberries farmers.
- Organic and vegan producers.

The Committee will also have a group that will look at developing a dedicated agriculture webpage on the Township website.

G. COUNCIL REFERRALS

H. OTHER BUSINESS AND ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Chamber of Commerce Update

A. Burns reported that the Chamber is moving back to in-person meetings in March and that they can help promote anything that the AAEEC needs.

2. Farmer's Institute Update

T. Townsley reported that the Institute is working with farmers to ensure they have their groundwater license up to date, as well as working on developing a communication strategy for the next five years.

3. Provincial AAC Workshop

J. Caldarella reported he attended the Provincial Agricultural Workshop as the Township of Langley representative.

4. Vertical Farming

M. Gunn reported that an improvement to the Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation will allow for vertical farming including innovative agritech. This is part of the StrongerBC Economic Plan.

I. NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, March 23, 2022
Location: Langley Regional Airport
#300, 5385-216 Street
Time: 7:00 pm

J. TERMINATE

Moved by C. Allison
That the meeting terminate at 8:55pm.
CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Community Representative Co-Chair	Council Representative Co-Chair