AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY AND ECONOMIC ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 25, 2023 at 7:00pm
Nicomekl Meeting Room
4th Floor, 20338-65 Avenue, Langley, BC

M I N U T E S

Present:
J. Caldarella, Community Co-Chair
Councillor M. Pratt, Council Co-Chair

C. Allison, B. Holmes, C. Redekop, A. Smith, and U. Tayyab

Guests:
I. Smith, Upland Agricultural Consulting

In Attendance:
C. Keyes, Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Staff:
M. Gunn, Planner, Community and Policy Planning
K. Stepto, Recording Secretary

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES OF THE COAST SALISH PEOPLES

J. Caldarella acknowledged the Traditional Territories of the Coast Salish Peoples.

A. APPROVAL AND RECEIPT OF AGENDA ITEMS

1. Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee - October 25, 2023

Moved by B. Holmes,
Seconded by C. Allison,
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee approve the agenda and receive the agenda items of the October 25, 2023 meeting.
CARRIED

B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES and RECEIPT OF NOTES

1. Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee - May 24, 2023

Moved by U. Tayyab,
Seconded by A. Smith,
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee adopt the Minutes of the May 24, 2023 meeting.
CARRIED

2. Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee - September 27, 2023

Moved by A. Smith,
Seconded by C. Allison,
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee receive the Notes of the September 27, 2023 meeting.
CARRIED

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Fraser Delta Farmland Stewardship Working Group

I. Smith, Upland Agricultural Consulting, provided a presentation regarding the polling results of the Ecosystem Services and Farmland programs in Metro Vancouver survey. She commented that the Fraser Delta Farmland Protection and Stewardship Working Group have been meeting since 2019 with funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada. The Working Group consists of representatives from all levels of government and non-profit organizations.

The Vision for the Working Group is:

"Farmland is protected and stewarded to support long-term sustainability and resiliency of farming while optimizing biodiversity in the Fraser River delta".

Actions for the group include:

- Collaboration on enacting recommended actions in existing policies, plans, and strategies.
- Exploring new tolls and innovative opportunities to reach a greater level of regenerative agriculture, climate change mitigation, biodiversity, and habitat protection.

Ways to better support payment for ecosystem services programs:

- Farmland Advantage
- Local Agricultural Plans and Ecosystem Services Initiatives
- Special funds exist in other communities

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Regional Benefits:

- Conserving or re-habilitating riparian areas
- Managing invasive species
- Protecting ecosystems on and off farmland

Recent Public Polling:

- Objective: to understand Metro Vancouver residents' values toward the environment and their willingness to fund environmental stewardship activities, including farmland.
- 1026 respondents from the Metro Vancouver region

Agreement levels were very high with the following statements:

- Protecting plants, fish, birds, and wildlife habitat improves our quality of life in the region.
- Farmland in the region should be protected so more food can be grown locally to feed the people who live here.
- Local farms have an important role to play in protecting rivers and wetlands.
- Government should help cover costs associated with protecting rivers and wetlands on farmland.
- Local residents should do more to support farmers who want to protect plants, fish, birds, and wildlife on their farms.
- As a benefit to local residents, farmers should be supported financially to protect rivers and wetlands.

2. Aldergrove Food System Project

M. Gunn provided a presentation regarding the Aldergrove Food Systems Project. This project derived from the Social Sustainability Strategy, priority 3E: "Develop a food strategy that complements the Agricultural Viability Strategy and explores opportunities to increase access to healthy, safe, culturally appropriate, and local food." The Agricultural Viability Strategy also identifies actions to support local agriculture by promoting "Buy Local" and the BC Land Matching Program.

Aldergrove was chosen as the pilot project community because the "Let's Talk Aldergrove" group had already been established. This is a working group of non-profit organizations that provide food to the community. The project will also partner with Langley Meals on Wheels.

The goals of the project are to:

- Identify the barriers to, and opportunities for, community food security and food access in the area
- Identify existing food assets in the community
- Raise public awareness about food security in the community
- Identify champions who will support the implementation of the recommendations of the Food Systems pilot project.

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

An Asset Map is being prepared of local food assets which are components of the local food system. Some examples of assets include:

- Emergency food providers (foodbanks)
- Community meal programs
- Community gardens
- Local food retailers
- School food programs

Community engagement will occur which includes selected interviews with key stakeholders and surveys for food assistance clientele and the broader community.

The project will wrap up in early 2024.

D. REPORTS

E. CORRESPONDENCE

F. WORK PROGRAM

1. Building Agricultural/Rural Connections Task Force Update

B. Holmes reported that the task force will be co-hosting with the Langley Sustainable Agricultural Foundation a workshop being held on November 4 at the George Preston Recreation Centre from 9:00am to 12:00pm. The theme is “Small lot living: explore composting and make connections”.

MOTION
Moved by B. Holmes,
Seconded by J. Caldarella,
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee receive and endorse the recommendation of the Building Agricultural/Rural Connections Task Force to co-host the November 4, 2023 “Small lot living: explore composting and make connections” workshop with the Langley Sustainable Agricultural Foundation to build relationships with the agriculture/rural community.
CARRIED

G. COUNCIL REFERRALS

1. *Agricultural MAWA Bylaw Reform*

Whereas:

G. COUNCIL REFERRALS

1. *The Township of Langley is one of the richest agricultural areas in Canada and home to nearly half of all farms in Metro Vancouver, over 1,000 farms;*

2. *The 2015 Agricultural Viability Strategy endorsed by Council contains the vision that "The Township of Langley supports agriculture while fostering and encouraging sustainable and viable production" and "Farmers are respected and appreciated for their contributions to the community and its citizens"; and*

3. *It is prudent to support the agricultural community with ongoing reform and modernization of applicable bylaws and regulations from time to time;*

Therefore be it resolved that Council hereby refers to the Agriculture Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee to:

A. Potentially conduct consultation within the agricultural community regarding the Migrant Agricultural Worker Accommodation municipal requirements; and

B. Work with staff to forward to Council for its consideration, prior to the end of 2023, bylaw and/or policy amendments as may be required to:
   1. *align Township of Langley bylaws with provincial and federal legislation, as appropriate for Council to consider; and*
   2. *reform outdated administrative requirements or other processes with amendments to Zoning Bylaw 1987 Section 201.5 regarding the Migrant Agricultural Worker Accommodation to assist the agricultural and farming community.*

CARRIED

COUNCIL
Moved by J. Caldarella,
Seconded by B. Holmes,
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee recommend that Council extend the date of the Migrant Agricultural Workers Accommodation bylaw and/or policy amendments until the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has concluded their consultation and update of the Temporary Farm Workers Housing in the Agricultural Land Reserve.

That Council request the Ministry of Agriculture and Food host an engagement event in the Township of Langley as the Township of Langley accounts for a large amount of the land in the Agricultural Land Reserve in Metro Vancouver.
CARRIED

H. OTHER BUSINESS AND ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Chamber of Commerce Update

C. Redekop provided the following update:

H. OTHER BUSINESS AND ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- The Excellence Awards are taking place on October 26.
- The Chamber met with the Minister of Finance to discuss the Employer Health Tax and the impact this has on temporary foreign workers who cannot access provincial health services.
- 81% of businesses who took the federal "Covid loan" are concerned about making the repayment deadline of January 18, 2024. The federal government is not interested in allowing for an extension.
- A member shared their frustrating experience with trying to deal with neighbours who are using agricultural land for non-permitted uses.

2. Langley Farmers' Institute (LFI) Update

A. Smith reported that the LFI is continuing its bylaw work and that members of the LFI will be at the November 4 Workshop.

She noted that the Aldergrove Fair is looking for more volunteers to help organize the fair for 2024. This fair has always had an agricultural focus.

3. Ministry of Agriculture and Food

C. Keyes reported that the Ministry has upcoming engagement opportunities to engage with local commercial scale farmers to set priorities:

- Abbotsford - November 9
- Surrey – November 10
- Pemberton – November 14

Each event is a drop-in session from 12:00pm – 4:00pm.

He will provide the link with further information to the committee.

4. Young Agrarians Land Matching

M. Gunn reported that the Young Agrarians are having a land matching event at Willoughby Hall on November 26.

NOV 26, 2023: Langley, BC - LAND LINKING WORKSHOP (youngagrarians.org)

I. NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, November 22, 2023
Location: Salmon River Committee Room
4th Floor, 20338-65 Avenue, Langley, BC
Time: 7:00pm

J. TERMINATE

Moved by C. Redekop,
Seconded by C. Allison,
That the meeting terminate at 8:30pm.
CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Community Representative Co-Chair

Council Representative Co-Chair