AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY AND ECONOMIC ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, November 22, 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

B. Holmes, A. Smith, U. Tayyab, and T. Taylor

Guests:
C. Stewart, Metro Vancouver, Agriculture and Food Security
D. Wakelin, Metro Vancouver, Environmental Control Officer

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

The agenda order was varied.

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Regional Agriculture Update

C. Stewart, Metro Vancouver, Senior Planner (Agriculture and Food Security), provided a presentation on the Regional Agriculture Update. She commented that in the Metro 2050 plan, agriculture lands are a priority. She provided updates on the following Metro Vancouver documents:

Ecosystem Services on Agricultural Land Report:

- The baseline study completed in January 2023 and focuses on ecosystem locations, types, and service benefits. The report will provide policies, regulations, and financial options to support long-term agricultural use.

Climate 2050 Agriculture Roadmap:

- Endorsed by the Metro Vancouver Board in September 2023.
- Key Actions include:
    - Protect agricultural land
    - Transition to lower emissions
    - Support anerobic digestions
    - Support ecosystem services
    - Adapt to climate change
    - Long-term financial investment
    - Support innovation

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Regional Food System Strategy:

- Endorsed by the Board in 2011
- Key Projects in the strategy include:
    - Food system action plans
    - Food flows
    - Farm tax research
    - Ecosystems services on agriculture land
    - Will be updated in 2024

Agriculture Land Use Inventory:

- Resource tool on agriculture land use in the region.
- Inventory is conducted every 5 years.
- Provides key information on loss of land, crops grown, and development

Agriculture and Food Data Book:

- Still in the early stages of this work.
- Phasing the information in as it is completed

D. Wakelin, Environmental Control Officer, provided the following update on Open Burning permits:

- Metro Vancouver regulates most open burning in the region
- Open Burning Emission Regulation Bylaw 1355 establishes:
    - Clear requirements for the majority of open burns in the region
    - A simpler method to authorize open burning
    - Any property planning to do open burning in Metro Vancouver is required to obtain a permit
    - Encourages alternative disposal methods and cleaner technologies for burning
- Site specific approval are still an option if Bylaw 1355 requirements cannot be met
- Alternative to Open Burning Best Practices Guide now available.
- Two permits for the Township of Langley area were issued by Metro Vancouver for 2023

How to find the Bylaw Registration System:

1. Visit www.metrovancouver.org
2. Search and select “Open Burning Vegetative Debris”

Upcoming work to include:

- Metro 2050 Climate Enhancements
- Climate 2050 Roadmaps
- Ecosystem Services White Paper
- Soil Movement Tracking
- Agriculture Protection and Viability Strategy

Discussion ensued and the following comments were provided:

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Incentives required for farmers not to burn such as free disposal of green waste at the Langley Transfer Station or easier access to chippers or air curtain incinerators
- Permit process should be streamlined instead of Township residents having to obtain a permit through Metro Vancouver and Township of Langley separately.
- The permit fees should be used to educate landowners on burning alternatives such as chipping and/or purchasing equipment to set up a rental program

The agenda order then resumed.

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 - November 22, 2023

Moved by B. Holmes,
Seconded by T. Taylor,
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee approve the agenda and receive the agenda items of the November 22, 2023 meeting.
CARRIED

B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

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

Moved by U. Tayyab,
Seconded by A. Smith,
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee adopt the Minutes of the October 25, 2023 meeting.
CARRIED

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

2. Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS)

A. Smith provided an update on the Outdoor Education Programs with LEPS. The following information was provided:

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Natures' Classroom - Grade 3-7:

- Started in 2011, offered in community spaces or school gardens.
- Helps youth connect with the natural world by discovering where food really comes from.
- Learn how to grow their own food.
- Develop awareness about environmental issues and social responsibility.
- Math, science, geography are themes within the program and fits within the district's rubrics.

Langley Learning Farm – Grades 9-12:

- A facility to demonstrate community-based food skills, an educational space for farm education and contributes to local food security.
- Located at the Derek Doubleday Arboretum.
- In partnership with Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation and Langley Secondary School.
- Environmental Science and Foods students participate in all aspects of farm activities, as well as environmental awareness.

WAVE Program – Grade 10-12:

- A credited class in school – students gain skills to obtain a job.
- LEPS acts as an "employer".
- 50 to 70 hours of volunteer time and offer a reference.
- Students participate in farm and garden related works, with elements of science themes.
- LEPS can sometimes provide students with paid summer job opportunities.

Nicomekl Elementary School Garden:

- In 2020, LEPS approached Nicomekl Elementary after hearing that the City of Langley was planning on removing the garden on city land that is attached to the schoolyard.
- Now a PAC/Administration/LEPS project to maintain the garden for use by teachers and students.
- Provides outdoor learning experiences and contributes to food security of students.

Future ideas:

- District Agriculture Academy
    - Credited elective courses and coached by teachers and industry professionals. Provide expanded education choices for secondary students and allow them to engage in their passions right in the middle of the school day.
- Future opportunities to expand offerings throughout SD35.

D. REPORTS

E. CORRESPONDENCE

F. WORK PROGRAM

1. Building Agricultural/Rural Connections Task Force Update

J. Caldarella presented the final report from the Building Agricultural/Rural Connections Task Force with recommendations for the Committee to consider. (See Attachment A).

MOTION
Moved by J. Caldarella,
Seconded by U. Tayyab,
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee receive and endorse the Building Agricultural/Rural Connections Task Force report and recommendations as follows:

1. Develop an agricultural outreach campaign to include:
    a. Building connections with agricultural organizations such as BC Agriculture Council, various commodity groups (such as poultry, dairy), 4H, established Langley farms and agritourism operations, the equestrian community, gardening clubs, vet offices, feed stores, real-estate community, etc. to provide an informational about agriculture in the Township of Langley in their newsletter or bulletin, social media and/or website.
    b. Creating an awareness campaign to be posted on the Township's social media and website, with the goal to connect with the rural and agricultural community and create opportunities for these groups to share the content on their social media accounts.
    c. Organizing an 'Ask an Agriculture Planner' campaign with support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food with the purpose to:
        i. Give farmers and rural landowners a targeted opportunity to meet with the Township's Agricultural Planner and a Ministry of Agriculture and Food Regional Agrologist during an in-person meeting, phone call or on-farm visit to answers questions and hear concerns.
        ii. Engage and create connections with the new, future, or current farmers and rural landowners.
    d. Creating a survey, open to all in the agriculture industry (consumers, farmers, rural community members), with a goal to understand agriculture operations and rural living in the Township.
2. Continue to work with partner organizations, such as the Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation, Young Agrarians, Langley Farmers Market, and 4H, to facilitate outreach and educational workshops.

CARRIED

F. WORK PROGRAM

COUNCIL
Moved by B. Holmes,
Seconded by J. Caldarella,
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee recommends that Council directs Staff to include an agricultural/rural community outreach campaign as part of the Agricultural Advisory Committee's 2024 work program considering the recommendations from the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee's Building Agricultural/Rural Connections Task Force.
CARRIED

G. COUNCIL REFERRALS

H. OTHER BUSINESS AND ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Chamber of Commerce Update

No report.

2. Farmers' Institute Update

A. Smith reported that the Institute will be presenting their comments to the Mayor regarding they Bylaw work they have been working on, and that they will be recruiting new members in January 2024.

I. NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, December 20, 2023
Location: TBD
4th Floor, 20338-65 Avenue, Langley, BC
Time: 7:00pm

J. TERMINATE

Moved by U. Tayyab,
That the metering terminate at 8:47pm.
CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Community Representative Co-Chair

Council Representative Co-Chair

Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee
Building Agricultural/Rural Connections Task Force
Summary

Background/History

The Future of Farming Task Force provided input and feedback into the exploration of the future of farming within the context of the Council-adopted Agricultural Viability Strategy (AVS), with an overall objective to promote the business of farming in the Township of Langley (Township). The recommendations completed in the report and presented to the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee (AAEEC) at the end of 2022, suggested that the Township build relationships with the Township farming community to expand the promotion of agriculture and develop a strategy to build relationships and educate the non-farming ALR community.

To build on the recommendations, the approved AAEEC work program for 2023 included the item:

> *Initiate the preparation of a workplan for building relationships with the Township farming community to expand the promotion of agriculture.*

This work moves towards improving the agricultural information, education, and awareness in the Township to the rural community.

The AVS supports communication with the Township agriculture community through the following initiatives:

- **AVS 2.1.1 Township of Langley Council**
  Objective: To assure farmers that agriculture is important in the Township and to support agriculture at the Township level.
- **AVS 2.1.3 Partnerships**
  Building partnerships within the Township, and beyond its boundaries, is an appropriate way to support agricultural production and viability.
  Objective: To encourage partnerships to expand agricultural production.
- **AVS 2.1.4 Promotion of Agriculture**
  The agricultural industry provides considerable activity in the Township and citizens may be unaware of the economic, cultural, and heritage benefits from agriculture. Promotion of agriculture enhances the welcoming business environment for the industry.
  Objective: To promote the role of agriculture to citizens and others.

At the March 22, 2023, AAEEC meeting, the committee brainstormed how the work program item could move forward with the conclusion that at task force should be created with AAEEC members and key stakeholders.

At the April 26, 2023, AAEEC meeting, the committee endorsed the Terms of Reference, refer to Appendix A, for the Building Agricultural/Rural Communications Task Force and recommended that

Council approve the establishment of a Task Force. At the May 8, 2023, Regular Council meeting, Council approved the establishment of the Building Agricultural/Rural Connections Task Force (Task Force) for a duration of 180 days.

The purpose of the Task Force was to:

- Determine the level of awareness and understanding of the Township's work in the agricultural community – both with the general public and among key stakeholder groups;
- Review the existing agricultural information and communication tools and methods (including the AVS), and assessing their effectiveness in building community awareness and understanding; and
- Provide input on:
    - Appropriate communication methods and formats.
    - Relevant content for various audiences.
    - Support and leverage the work of partner organizations.
    - Online information links.
    - Required resources for sustained education and outreach.

Discussion/Analysis

The Task Force consisted of a member of Council, three AAEEC members, Langley Environmental Partner's Society, Langley Farmers' Institute, and the Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation.

The Task Force worked with the Farm Tour Working Group to provide questions on-table during the networking session of the June Farm Tour to gather information on the attendee's understanding of agriculture and how they find information on agriculture in Langley. Refer to appendix B.

The Task Force additionally met five times outside of the regular AAEEC meetings and provided the AAEEC members progress reports during the September and October AAEEC meetings. During these meetings the Task Force discussed many ways to improve the communication outcomes with the rural and agriculture community as there is no one direct group that they are all connected to as Langley has a very diverse agriculture profile. The Langley Farmers' Institute is a potential body in the future, but it is currently still growing its membership.

Finally, the Task Force partnered with the Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation to develop the November 4, 2023, workshop, Small Lot Living: Explore Composting and Make Connections. The Agricultural Planner with the Township provided a presentation on how the Township supports and encourages agriculture. The Task Force also conducted an informal poll to understand the agriculture versus non-agriculture profile of the 25 attendees. Refer to Appendix C.

Recommendations:

The Task Force developed the following recommendations based on the work they completed over the past five months:

1. Develop an agricultural outreach campaign to include:
    a. Building connections with agricultural organizations such as BC Agriculture Council, various commodity groups (such as poultry, dairy), 4H, established Langley farms and agritourism operations, the equestrian community, gardening clubs, vet offices, feed

stores, real-estate community, etc. to provide an informational about agriculture in the Township of Langley in their newsletter or bulletin, social media and/or website.

b. Creating an awareness campaign to be posted on the Township's social media and website, with the goal to connect with the rural and agricultural community and create opportunities for these groups to share the content on their social media accounts.
c. Organizing an 'Ask an Agriculture Planner' campaign with support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food with the purpose to:
    i. Give farmers and rural landowners a targeted opportunity to meet with the Township's Agricultural Planner and a Ministry of Agriculture and Food Regional Agrologist during an in-person meeting, phone call or on-farm visit to answers questions and hear concerns.
    ii. Engage and create connections with the new, future, or current farmers and rural landowners.
d. Creating a survey, open to all in the agriculture industry (consumers, farmers, rural community members), with a goal to understand agriculture operations and rural living in the Township.

2. Continue to work with partner organizations, such as the Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation, Young Agrarians, Langley Farmers Market, and 4H, to facilitate outreach and educational workshops.

Conclusion

The Township has a diverse agriculture and rural community. The Agricultural Viability Strategy encourages the Township to support the agriculture community by appreciating and respecting the many contributions they provide to the Township and surrounding communities. To continue to foster the relationship with the rural and agricultural community and improve awareness, understanding, cooperation and problem solving, it is suggested that the incoming Agricultural Advisory Committee build on the work of the Task Force to develop a more robust and focused outreach campaign.

Attachments

Appendix A – Building Agricultural/Rural Communications Task Force Terms of Reference

Appendix B – Answers to 2023 Farm Tour Questions

Appendix C – November 4, 2023 Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation Workshop Poll Results

Township of Langley
Est. 1873

BUILDING AGRICULTURAL/RURAL CONNECTIONS TASK FORCE

Terms of Reference

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Future of Farming Task Force provided input and feedback into the exploration of the future of farming within the context of the Council-adopted Agricultural Viability Strategy (AVS), with an overall objective to promote the business of farming in the Township of Langley (Township). The recommendations in the completed report, and presented to the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee (AAEEC) at the end of 2022, suggested that the Township build relationships with the Township farming community to expand the promotion of agriculture and develop a strategy to build relationships and educate the non-farming ALR community.

The approved 2023 AAEEC Work Plan, proposes to create a strategy to build those relationships with the Township agricultural/rural community to expand the promotion of agriculture. As recommended by the Future of Farming Task Force Report, this is a key step towards improving the agricultural information, education and awareness in the Township to the rural community.

In accordance with its Terms of Reference (and the applicable sections of Council Advisory Committee Establishment Bylaw 2008 No. 4700), the AAEEC may establish a task force for a specific purpose (up to a maximum duration of 180 days) to undertake special projects which may require extended consultation, review and planning, subject to prior approval of Council.

2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Task Force is to assist in developing a strategy to engage with the agricultural/rural community. Specifically, the Task Force will assist in:

- Determining the current level of awareness and understanding of the Township's work in the agricultural community – both with the general public and among key stakeholder groups;
- Reviewing the existing agricultural information and communication tools and methods (including the Agricultural Viability Strategy), and assessing their effectiveness in building community awareness and understanding; and
- Providing input on:
    - Appropriate communication methods and formats;

- Relevant content for various audiences;
- Supporting and leveraging the work of partner organizations;
- Online information links; and
- Required resources for sustained education and outreach.

3.0 EXPECTED TERM OF SERVICE

It is anticipated that the work of this Task Force will require a term of 180 days.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

The Task Force should include a minimum of four volunteers currently serving on the AAEEC and others with expertise or experience in the subject areas such as representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation, Langley Farmers Institute and academia.

5.0 MEETING FREQUENCY / SCHEDULING

It is anticipated that the Task Force will meet approximately six times over the length of its term, but additional meetings may be held if required.

6.0 STAFF SUPPORT

Township staff will facilitate the participation and contributions of the Task Force by:

- providing relevant background information;
- scheduling meetings and preparing agendas;
- attending all meetings to facilitate discussion, provide advice, and obtain input; and
- preparing meeting notes.

Appendix B - Answers to 2023 Farm Tour Questions

1. **What are some key facts that you know about Township's agriculture and/or equine industry?**
    a. Over 1500 kms of watercourse in agri-areas
    b. Fewer full time agricultural farms/businesses
    c. Hobby farms
    d. 50% of the titles/farms are under 10 acres
    e. Langley is the horse capital of BC
    f. Thunderbird is #1
    g. Over 5000 private wells provide drinking water & irrigation
    h. 75% of the land is in the ALR
    i. 40% of the land is actually farmed and 25% is designated as parks
    j. Farm not estates
    k. Small amount of farmers
    l. Too many small farms

2. **Where would you go to find information on agriculture?**
    a. Melisa Gunn, TOL
    b. Stats Canada
    c. Farmers
    d. Farms
    e. Tim
    f. KPU
    g. Township City Hall
    h. Metro Vancouver
    i. Ministry of Agriculture
    j. ALC
    k. Circle Farms Tours
    l. Tourism Langley
    m. LSAF
    n. Langley Learning Farm
    o. Langley Community Farmers Market
    p. Otter Co-op
    q. LEPS
    r. Manure Link
    s. Not publicized enough but TOL and Provincial Agriculture
    t. Horse Council BC
    u. Neighbours' Farms
    v. AAEEC
    w. Google
    x. Young Agrarians
    y. Poster boards at feed & equipment stores
    z. Egg finder

3. **What do you believe are the/your roadblocks(s) in agriculture?**
    a. Ownership of land – loans – investments in equipment & infrastructure
    b. Parcelization (small lots)
    c. Non-farm ALR Landowners
    d. Cost of Land
    e. Access to long-term lease agreements
    f. Labour costs
    g. Lack of agriculture education
    h. Population growth
    i. Rural/urban conflicts, including perception that ag land is parkland and therefore freely accessible (trespass)
    j. Who owns the lands? Farmers?
    k. Farmland owned by families for the lifestyle not for farm business investments
    l. Value of farmland
    m. Access to more equine events for intro/grassroots training & competitions that can build on the industry (there used to be lots for local equine events)
    n. Horses aren't always considered agriculture
    o. Balance between farming and viability such as restriction on land use re: ancillary uses (events, film, etc..)
    p. 10 non-farm events per year
    q. Economic viability
    r. Financing & capital to get started
    s. Better recognition that agri-tourism is agriculture
    t. Concierge/gateway that operates as one-stop for info/permitted uses/rules

4. **What is your perception/opinion of agriculture in the Township?**
    a. Lots of challenges but lots of potential
    b. Lack of farming culture
    c. Agriculture shrinking in the Township and it should be preserved and supported as much as possible
    d. It is not as robust as it should be. Farmland being used for estate homes and not farming
    e. Potential to be converted by business and industry buyers
    f. Huge potential
    g. No more removal of farmland
    h. Farm not estates
    i. Difficulty finding the resources and supports to make progress

5. **What do you see are the key stakeholders to reach out to the engage the agricultural community?**
    a. ALR Landowners
    b. KPU
    c. LEPS
    d. Farmland Advantage
    e. Large Animal Vets
    f. Commodity groups ie berry
    g. Equestrian communities
    h. TOL Staff (Melisa Gunn & Jason Chu)
    i. Producer Groups such as sheep, pig
    j. Events – Pacific Ag Show, Mane Event
    k. Feed stores
    l. Equipment Supply Stores
    m. Industry Associations (BC Egg, BC Garlic, Bees, HCBC, Dairy, Greenhouse, etc..)
    n. Farmers
    o. TOL Councillors
    p. Farmers Markets
    q. Ministry of Ag Regional Agrologists
    r. AAEEC
    s. Farmers Institute
    t. Metro Vancouver
    u. Agricultural Realtors
    v. Young Agrarians
    w. Agricultural Educators

6. **What are some of the challenges you see that agriculture in the community brings?**
    a. Education: lack of understating as to importance of local agriculture and food production. Where does your food come from?
    b. Much of land is not farmed
    c. Manure management for small properties
    d. No compensation to farmers for ecosystem services (habitat, etc..)
    e. It is a hidden but important economic driver
    f. Land development - agriculture lands going from food/farm production to industrial/housing
    g. Watercourse protection
    h. Low taxes due to agriculture but expensive to invest in infrastructure, etc…
    i. Urban sprawl
    j. Economics - land, building, equipment, labour & feed costs all high
    k. Land management

7. **What do you think the equestrian community brings to the general agricultural community?**
    a. Economic, social & environmental values
    b. Opportunities for large mix of uses

c. Economic contribution

8. How do you feel about food security in Langley?

a. Concerned
b. Anxious – we need to grow our own food not bring it in from across the border, etc..
c. Has the potential to supply 25% of food required in Metro Vancouver. Until food is a societal concern, will no be fully developed
d. Poor – many people have no comprehension about food production, where it comes from… besides the store
e. We are not food secure, too much reliance on Big Box grocery stores

Appendix C – November 4, 2024 Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation Workshop Poll Results

Informal Poll Questions and Results:

1. How many attending live on lands:
    - Greater than 10 acres
        - 6 attendees
    - Less than 10 acres
        - 5 attendees
    - Non ALR lands
        - 7 attendees
2. Who would classify themselves as a:
    - Commercial farmer
        - 1 attendee
    - Hobby farmer
        - 8 attendees
    - Gardner
        - 3 attendees
3. How many here grow food for consumption?
    - 14 attendees
4. Who was aware the Township employs an agricultural planner prior to this workshop?
    - 8 attendees
5. Who here has visited the Township's agriculture page on the website?
    - 2 attendees