Township of Langley

Est. 1873

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 7:00pm
Salmon River Committee Room
4th Floor, 20338-65 Avenue, Langley, BC

M I N U T E S

Present:
A. Smith, Alternate Community Co-Chair
Councillor M. Pratt, Council Co-Chair

J. Green, A. Hamer, R. Ross, O. Smid, B. Venechuk, and J. Walker

In Attendance:
J. Liu, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Staff:
R. Cesaretti, Director, Permits, Licences and Inspections
M. Gunn, Community and Policy Planner
C. Longhi, Recording Secretary

Alternate Co-Chair Appointment

Moved by A. Hamer,
Seconded by B. Venechuk,
That A. Smith be the Alternate Community Co-chair for the June 25, 2025 Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting.
CARRIED

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES OF THE COAST SALISH PEOPLES

Councillor M. Pratt acknowledged the Traditional Territories of the Coast Salish Peoples.

A. APPROVAL AND RECEIPT OF AGENDA ITEMS

1. Agricultural Advisory Committee – June 25, 2025

Moved by R. Ross,
Seconded by B. Venechuk,
That the Agricultural Advisory Committee approve the agenda and receive the agenda items of the June 25, 2025 meeting.

AMENDMENT
Moved by R. Ross,
Seconded by B. Venechuk,
That item F.3 be moved to the beginning of the June 25, 2025 Agenda.
CARRIED

MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED
The question was called on the main motion, as amended.
CARRIED

B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Agricultural Advisory Committee – May 28, 2025

Moved by R. Ross,
Seconded by B. Venechuk,
That the Agricultural Advisory Committee adopt the minutes of the May 28, 2025 meeting.
CARRIED

The agenda order was varied.

F. WORK PROGRAM

3. Promotion of Agriculture and Agri-Tourism

At the April 28, 2025 Council Meeting, Councillor M. Pratt introduced a motion regarding potential reforms to the Rural Sign Bylaw:

> *Whereas the Township of Langley Sign Bylaw 2012 No. 4927 includes Part 4 - Signs Permitted in Rural Areas,*
>
> *Whereas the fair application of Part 4 depends on the interpretation of staff and Rural Community which can, on occasion, differ, and*
>
> *Whereas this difference in interpretation causes added complexity and causes unnecessary work for both staff and those in the Rural Community who are attempting to advertise their farm-based businesses,*
>
> *Therefore be it resolved that Council request staff to consult with the Agriculture Advisory Committee on potential changes to Part 4 of Township of Langley Sign Bylaw 2012 No. 4927 with the goal of simplifying the language and reducing opportunities for confusion, and*
>
> *Be it further resolved that staff report back to Council with the potential changes alongside possible opportunities for public engagement and further refinements.*

R. Cesaretti, Director of Permits, Licences, and Inspections, was in attendance to discuss the Sign Bylaw, and signage regulations related to agricultural, and agri-

tourism uses. He noted that the relevant section of the Sign Bylaw has not been updated and that signage bylaws are not being actively enforced on farms.

Discussion ensued and the following comments were provided:

- Concerns were raised regarding inconsistencies in interpretation, including regarding signage limits for properties with multiple frontages.
- Committee members expressed support for removing the 90-day duration restriction, advocating instead for permanent signage that is appropriately sized, located safely on the property, and does not obstruct sightlines or intersections.
- It was suggested that farms with a Township business licence should not be required to obtain a separate sign permit. However, it was noted that not all farms require a business licence.
- Suggestions included permitting illuminated signs for visibility after dark, particularly for agri-tourism businesses like breweries, which remain open after sunset.
- The Committee expressed a desire for a simplified, agriculture-specific sign bylaw that better reflects the needs of modern farming operations.

R. Cesaretti will review the current bylaw in more detail and return to the Committee with recommendations at the October meeting before any potential referral to Council.

The agenda order then resumed.

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

D. REPORTS

1. Co-Chair Reports

E. CORRESPONDENCE

F. WORK PROGRAM

1. Farm Tour

M. Gunn will compile the feedback received and bring it forward at the September meeting. Attendance included four Councillors, two MLAs, and one MP. Committee members are encouraged to consider who was missing from this year's attendee list to ensure broader representation next year. The Committee is encouraged to begin considering potential themes or farm locations for the next tour, in 2026.

A. Smith noted that the amount of walking involved should be clearly communicated in advance to all participants.
J. Green commented that the variety of farm types, from large-scale production to small family-run operations, was well received and appreciated.

Councillor M. Pratt stated it was a fantastic tour, with very positive feedback overall. He thanked staff and volunteer farm hosts who made the event possible.

2. Agricultural Profile

M. Gunn facilitated discussion regarding what information should be included in the updated Agricultural Profile. The goal is to feature a concise two-page summary with key data points.

Discussion ensued and the following suggestions were provided:

- Adding key data such as:
  - Number of farms and farm types
  - Commodities being produced (with trends showing increases or decreases)
  - Acreage in production contrasted with out of production
  - Farm gate sales (noted as difficult to quantify, but agri-tourism numbers could be used as a proxy)
  - Water use and well statistics
  - Available land with potential for agricultural production
- Making the document more visually accessible using graphics and infographics in place of dense text.
- Including a clear map highlighting the 74% of Township land within the Agricultural Land Reserve and identifying areas that are currently being farmed.
- Including a section on challenges, such as the generational gap between new and retiring farmers and the impact of land costs.
- Incorporating a “health check” section to assess the overall state of agriculture in the Township of Langley.
- Using links from the main feature page that allow the reader to navigate to the section with more detailed information.

G. COUNCIL REFERRALS

H. OTHER BUSINESS AND ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Farmers’ Institute Update

On June 23, 2025, A. Smith, on behalf of the Farmers’ Institute (LFI), appeared before Council to provide a presentation on the current state of farming in the Township.

She discussed issues raised by rural residents, which included:

- inequitable water use leading to well depletion
- conflicts between organic flame weeding practices and municipal bylaws
- a lack of enforcement on truck parking violations on Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) lands
- difficulty accessing bylaw information on the Township website
- estate homes on valuable aquifer areas
- non-farming uses of ALR land
- dangerous dogs harming livestock

- BC Assessment and obtaining Farm Status
- unauthorized ditching and landfill
- illegal dumping along rural roads

She discussed that the LFI maintains communication with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food, which supports its efforts, but is noted as the most underfunded agriculture ministry in Canada.

She presented suggestions to Council including updating the Township's Rural Plan, including a representative from either the LFI or the Agricultural Advisory Committee on the Township's Board of Variance, and she encouraged Council to advocate for increased provincial funding to the Ministry of Agriculture.

2. BC Ministry of Agriculture

J. Liu, Regional Agrologist at BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food stated that she is new to the area and may be reaching out to members of the Committee to acquaint herself with the area.

3. Additional Resources

M. Gunn shared information on the website "Groundwater, Wells and Aquifers in BC" as well as the Province of British Columbia's BC Drought Information Portal. Website links will be forwarded to members of the Committee.

I. NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, September 24, 2025
Location: Salmon River Committee Room
4th Floor, 20338-65 Avenue, Langley, BC
Time: 7:00pm

J. TERMINATE

Moved by O. Smid,
Seconded by B. Venechuk,
That the meeting terminate at 8:46pm.
CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Community Representative Co-Chair

Council Representative Co-Chair