Township of Langley

Est. 1873

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 7:00pm
Salmon River Committee 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
Councillor B. Whitmarsh, Council Co-Chair

C. Allison, J. Green, A. Hamer, S. Janzen, O. Smid, A. Smith, B. Venechuk, and J. Walker.

Guest:
J. Weightman, Land Use Unit Team Lead, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Ministry of Agriculture and Food:
J. Liu, Regional Agrologist, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Staff:
V. Burnett, Council and Committee Clerk
M. Gunn, Planner, Community and Policy Planning

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 Committee – March 25, 2026

Moved by O. Smid,
Seconded by B. Venechuk,
That the Agricultural Advisory Committee approve the agenda and receive the agenda items of the March 25, 2026 meeting.
CARRIED

B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Agricultural Advisory Committee – February 25, 2026

That the Agricultural Advisory Committee adopt the minutes of the February 25, 2026 meeting.
Deferred to the April 22, 2026 meeting.

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. J. Weightman, Land Use Unit Team Lead, Ministry of Agriculture and Food

J. Weightman, provided information regarding land use planning for agriculture in BC. He provided a map of BC's agriculture sector with a focus on the South Coast. He noted that there is an area called the Golden Triangle, which includes the Lower Mainland, where most agriculture is done in BC, and there are about 34,000 jobs in this area.

There are three key provincial Acts for land use planning in agriculture:

- Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) Act (1970's)
- Farm Practices Protection Act (1990's)
- Local Government Act (1990's), including amendments for Ministers Bylaw Standards, Right to Farm Regulation, and Section 555 Intensive Agriculture.

The ALC Act and Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR):

- The ALR is a provincial zone put in place to protect land for agriculture. It covers about 5% of B.C.'s land area.
- The ALC administers the ALC Act and provides rules for what uses are permitted or not.
- ALC landowners make applications that may be exceptions to the rules. These applications go to local governments first. Local elected officials decide whether the applications should go to the ALC.

Farm Practices Protection Act:

- Ministry Regional Agrologists (RA's) can help resolve farming complaints.
- The Farm Practices and Protection Act allow protections for farmers following normal farm practices.
- BC Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB) handles formal farm practice complaints.
- Land use planning tools, including setbacks and buffers, can help mitigate complaints.

He noted that land use planning focuses on strengthening relationships between local governments, farming communities, and the province. Ministry staff can provide guidance and support. Local governments can impact the farming community by adopting bylaws and amending plans when needed. He also discussed the Minister's Bylaw Standards, which are put in place to assist local governments with their plans and bylaws. These are published in the Ministry's Guide For Bylaw Development in Farming Areas.
The Local Government Act (LGA) gives governments the ability to regulate land use through bylaws and plans. These bylaws require input and engagement from the community and local government staff.
The LGA's Right to Farm Regulation: Regulating a community allows the Ministry to guide them. These communities may pass special farming bylaws,

C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

and have access to different types of buildings, equipment, and zoning bylaws. The Township was regulated in July 1987 and has since adopted farming bylaws approved by the Ministry. They have approved 18 of 23 of the Township's bylaws.

He noted that there are demands, tensions, and pressures in local farming. Metro Vancouver recently released a report from Statistics Canada, and the findings showed limited land, urbanization, farm production costs, demographics, and non-domestic labour increasing reliance are all concerns. The Township has the highest amount of farmland in Metro Vancouver, but there has been a decline in recent years. The demographic of farmers in Metro Vancouver is also increasingly aging.

He provided an overview of what the Land Use Unit does, including responding to local government referrals, developing Minister's Bylaw Standards, coordinating the Union of BC Municipalities Farm Study Tour, organizing the Agricultural Advisory Committee Workshops, coordinating local government submitted bylaws for Minister's approval, and supporting the Policy and Legislation Unit.

Discussion ensued and the following questions and comments were made:

- Increasing the threshold for farm status should include consultation with farmers. Barriers for farmers need to be decreased as it is difficult for young farmers to begin when taxes are increased.

- Any advice for the bylaw review task force?
  The presentation will be provided to the committee. Looking at the Minister's Guide to Bylaw Development and the use of AI can be useful for reviewing.

D. REPORTS

1. Council Co-Chair Report

E. CORRESPONDENCE

F. WORK PROGRAM

1. Agricultural Zoning Bylaw Update

M. Gunn provided information regarding the Agricultural Bylaw Review Task Force. She provided draft terms of reference for the committee to review. There was a discussion at the last meeting on possible additions to the bylaw. The proposed start date for the task force is June 1, 2026.

Discussion ensued and the following comments were provided:

- No more than 10 members of the task force should be appointed.
- The task force can continue meeting outside of AAC meetings.
- There was interest to broaden the scope of the task force beyond the Zoning Bylaw, to include bylaws and policies that currently provide guidance and regulate farming in the Township.
- There was interest in the task force beginning earlier, the option to extend the 180-day limit if approved by Council. Should this be approved, it would start April 13, 2026, making it 232-days.

MOTION
Moved by C. Allison,
Seconded by S. Janzen,
That the Agricultural Advisory Committee endorse the Terms of Reference for the Agricultural Bylaw Review Task Force, as amended.
CARRIED

COUNCIL
Moved by B. Venechuk,
Seconded by J. Green,
That the Agricultural Advisory Committee recommends that Council approve the Terms of Reference for the Agricultural Bylaw Review Task Force, presented as Attachment A.
CARRIED

2. Farm Tour

M. Gunn reported that the working group for the Farm Tour met a few weeks ago. The name “Township in Bloom” was considered. Staff have reached out to three farms that were suggested, one declined, one confirmed, and one has not responded yet. Wednesday June 24, 2026 is being considered as a potential date. There should be a variety of farms chosen so that different flowers and sites are seen. A food truck may be included as there was positive feedback in previous years. Invitees are being considered, and committee members can suggest additional names. The tour will likely include one or two farms, lunch, and then another farm at the end, possibly a fourth, if time permits.

G. COUNCIL REFERRALS

H. OTHER BUSINESS AND ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Farmers' Institute Update

A. Smith reported that the Farmers' Institute was unsure how many people would be included in the upcoming all candidates meeting at this time.

2. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Update

J. Liu provided the following information regarding funding:

- Processor Productivity Program (PPP) – 10-13 day online and in person with two phases of training.
- Veterinary Practice Smallholder Program – Provides support for disease detection in small farms for poultry and pigs. Farmers can submit diagnostics to vets at no cost.

Reminder that the B.C. On-Farm Technology Adoption Program closes on April 6, 2026. More information and funding opportunities will be provided to the committee by J. Liu.

I. NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, April 22, 2026
Location: Salmon River Committee Room
4th Floor, 20338-65 Avenue, Langley, BC
Time: 7:00pm

J. TERMINATE

Moved by O. Smid,
Seconded by S. Janzen,
That the meeting terminate at 8:35pm
CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Community Representative Co-Chair

Council Representative Co-Chair

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AGRICULTURAL BYLAW REVEW TASK FORCE

Terms of Reference

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) is established pursuant to Council Advisory Committee Establishment Bylaw No. 4700, as amended, and Council Policy 01-008 (Appointments to Committees, Boards, and Task Forces). The AAC's 2026 Work Plan calls for the establishment of the Agricultural Bylaw Review Task Force ("Task Force").

The AAC is composed of community volunteers that work to ensure that the agricultural industry has representation and advocates for the contributions that farming provides to the Township of Langley. The AAC and its annual work plans are guided, in part, by the Agriculture Viability Strategy (AVS) adopted by Council in 2013. The AVS includes four main strategies to strengthen farming:

1. Provide a welcoming business environment for farming;
2. Provide the required services and infrastructure;
3. Provide a secure agriculture land base; and
4. Support farmer use of best farm management practices.

The AAC provides continuity of representation and advocacy as it forms a task force to complete the specifics of these Terms of Reference.

2.0 PURPOSE

The AAC's 2026 Work Plan calls for the establishment of the Agricultural Bylaw Review Task Force to:

- Review the existing regulatory context, specifically bylaws and policies that currently provide guidance and regulate farming.
- Research and compare Zoning Bylaws and "farm bylaws" with those in other "regulated" municipalities under the "right-to-farm" legislation, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas and the Minister Bylaw Standards.
- Identify areas that need clarification and/or updating.
- Recommend policy and regulatory changes to support the agricultural industry.

3.0 EXPECTED TERM OF SERVICE

The Task Force will serve a 232-day term starting April 13, 2026 and terminating (November 30, 2026), allowing it to continue meeting through the municipal election period in 2026.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

The Task Force shall consist of a minimum of four Council-appointed AAC members and others with expertise or experience in the subject areas, such as representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agricultural Land Commission and BC Agriculture Council.

The Task Force will be non-voting and, as such, selecting a chair and establishing quorum will not be necessary.

5.0 MEETING FREQUENCY / SCHEDULING

The Task Force will meet approximately six times over the length of its term, but additional meetings may be held if required. While the AAC may recess after the June 2026 meeting due to the municipal elections in October, the Task Force may continue to meet and carry out its work in the second half of 2026.

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
- Communicating with agencies, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agricultural Land Commission and BC Agriculture Council, regarding representatives to serve on the Task Force
- Attending all meetings to facilitate discussion, provide advice, and obtain input
- Preparing meeting notes

7.0 DELIVERABLES

The Task Force is responsible for providing timely updates, oral or written, to the AAC as the research progresses. The AAC shall receive these updates for information. To accomplish this, the Task Force shall select one person from the group to be its spokesperson for communication purposes. The spokesperson will provide updates at each meeting of the AAC.

The Task Force shall provide a final presentation to the AAC summarizing its findings and recommendations.

A final report and/or Report to Council that summarizes the Task Force's findings shall be prepared following the conclusion of the Task Force.