



**MINUTES OF THE
PENINSULA AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**
Committee Room No. 2, Saanich Municipal Hall
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2014 AT 7:30 PM

Present: Mike Romaine in the Chair; Bernadette Green; Bev Marley; Bob Maxwell; Terry Michell; Nikki Tate-Straton; Councillor Stock (N.Saanich). Also present were Rob Kline and Isobel Hoffmann, Recording Clerk.

Guests: Ray Baker; Lee Hardy; Jacklin Hoole
Regrets: Mary Alice Johnson, Tom Henry, Linda Geggie; Dianne Williamson

Minutes: Moved by Nikki Tate-Straton and Seconded by Bev Marley: "That the Minutes of November 13, 2014 be adopted, with an amendment to page 6 noting the Roost property is in North Saanich, not Central Saanich."

CARRIED

Agenda: The Agenda was approved with an addition to #8: North Saanich Economic Agricultural Strategy and a grant request from CR-Fair for assistance with the Farmer2Farmer workshop in February, 2015.

TREASURER'S REPORT – nothing to report

SPEAKER'S BUREAU: No Speakers

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES – October 9, 2014

Grants: Strategic Outreach Initiative – Rob Kline

Rob stated:

- To date, two applications have been made to the Strategic Outreach Initiative
- The programme is designed to fund up to \$5,000 to a project that helps producers and producer groups. It is not a matching fund.
- For instance, the Farmer2Farmer conference being held on February 19, 2015 would qualify, as would the Wildlife Management Workshop to be held on January 17, 2015.
- He advised there will be a conference call this week to see whether the programme would support the proposed farm tour in the spring for new mayors and councillors.
- The Review Committee will meet again before the end of the year and in January.
- He will keep PAAC posted on any progress.

CORRESPONDENCE

- a) Copy of Report to North Saanich Council re Glen Meadows Rezoning
- b) Copy of Report to member Councils re Regional Coordination of Agricultural Issues
- c) Request from Central Saanich to provide comments re changes to the Central Saanich Agricultural Advisory Committee; Note: Bruce Greig was unable to attend but will come to the January meeting.
CARRY

Terry Michell sits on the C. Saanich Agricultural Advisory Committee; he noted 6 meetings were held last year and discussions revolved around drainage issues. Some PAAC members thought we are inundated with committees – we need physical help on the farms. If Central Saanich is willing to put \$10,000 into the Advisory Committee – it could be better spent somewhere else.

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES – CURRENT

a) Geese Management Strategy:

- Rob advised a meeting was held this afternoon. The January workshop is getting support from the Strategic Outreach Initiative. The Committee is preparing to get the permits in place for a goose cull. The Ministry of Environment, the Canadian Wildlife Services and a poultry vet are working with the Committee.
- The Wildlife Management Workshop will be held on January 17, 2015 at St. Mary's Church at 9:00 a.m. A lunch will be served. The morning session will be devoted to geese, the afternoon to deer.
- No one in BC is experienced with goose culls and it could be expensive to hire an skilled person. A vet will be on hand at all times during the cull. We need to ensure the cull is done correctly and the geese die with dignity.
- The goal is to bring the population levels down to 1,000 birds.
- It is not only the farmers who will benefit from the goose cull: schools, golf courses, public beaches, and the airport will benefit also. However, the Airport Authority is the only organization to date to provide funding assistance.
- Bev noted at the last count, there were over 9,000 geese on the Peninsula. It is not a good life for them – they have nowhere to sleep or do not get enough to eat. We want to ensure the methods used for the cull are done in the most humane manner as possible. The quality of life for the remaining geese will improve. Once the numbers are under control, we can maintain this by addling eggs. Addling on its own will not work.
- She noted it is difficult to get funding and it has been hard to get golf courses on side. Most municipalities have a problem with geese – but funding comes from the agricultural community.

The Chair thanked Bev and Rob for their hard work on this serious issue over the last few years.

- b) Rob Kline advised that Oak Bay is going ahead with the deer cull. Oak Bay Mayor Nils Jenson has been elected Chair of the CRD Board. He has not heard from Jeff Weightman at the CRD of the exact dates, but he thinks it will be soon. Jeff has offered to attend a PAAC meeting at any time if we need information on the Deer Management Strategy.
- c) CRD Food Systems Strategy: Linda not present.
- d) ALR Core Review: Linda not present
- e) Farmland Trust – Update from Sub-Committee (Linda, Nikki and Mary Alice) – Nikki advised that hopefully the sub-committee can meet in the New Year and will have something to report back soon.

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES – CURRENT

North Saanich Economic Agricultural Strategy:

Note: this was discussed by PAAC in September and October. No formal response has been sent to North Saanich to date.

- The Chair suggested that we advise North Saanich as follows:
- While PAAC appreciates North Saanich's request for PAAC to partner with them on forming the Economic Agricultural Strategy, unfortunately the volunteer members on PAAC are already overloaded with work. Also, PAAC essentially plays an advisory role to the Councils.
- PAAC feels that all the priority actions identified in the Strategy are worthy of support and we would be pleased to provide comments and/or advice on a particular issue as the Strategy continues to develop.
- We would encourage North Saanich to continue with this Strategy; there are areas of synergy that could be combined with the goals of PAAC and the Capital Region.

The secretary to prepare a formal response to North Saanich accordingly.

WEBSITE:

Noted that information on the AAC workshop on the mainland on February 18, the Farmer2Farmer Workshop on February 19, and the Wildlife Management Workshop on January 17 should all be posted on the website. Rob will send information to Isobel.

AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY – SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) Water (Michael Doehnel) – nothing further to report**
- b) Farm Economics (Terry Michell)**
 - Good year for berry crops – no fungus due to the weather. Other crops were 10-15% higher tonnage than past years.
 - There were four cuts of hay this year, with the 3rd cut the last week in August and the last cut at the end of October – which is almost unheard of.
 - Farmers used a lot of water this year; some used drip irrigation systems instead of overhead irrigation on berries, which helped with the crop yield.
 - Galey Farms has harvested all their potatoes and Michells just has a few winter crops lets. Anything local has been selling really well, and a lot of produce has been shipped to the mainland as well.
 - Vantreights switched to organics and Ryan has been exporting a lot of crops to the mainland and also to Seattle.
 - Local kiwi is still available.
 - It was also a good year for grains which will be going to the local breweries and bakeries.
- c) Agricultural Land Base (vacant) – Carry**
- e) Education and Outreach (Linda Geggie) - Carry**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- a) Agricultural Advisory Committee Workshop – February 18, 2015. Rob will provide more information. It is being held in Abbotsford or Langley. The secretary advised that travel costs can be reimbursed for members wishing to attend. A carpool was suggested.
- b) Farmer2Farmer Workshop – February 19, 2015. A request has been received from CR-Fair for PAAC to support the workshop again this year.

MOTION: Moved by Bernadette Greene and Seconded by Nikki Tate-Straton: “That PAAC approve a grant of \$500 to support the Farmer2Farmer Workshop on February 19, 2015.”

CARRIED

PAC MEMBERSHIP

New Appointments for 2015:

The Chair, Mike Romaine, advised he has to step down from PAAC at the end of January due to family commitments. He noted that we will have at least four, possibly five new members. It is important to find a chair that will lead the committee and he acknowledged this can be intimidating. Although this is an informal committee, the chair plays an important role. He would like to see more than one name put forward for consideration. He asked members to think about this seriously and let the secretary know by the end of the month if they would like their name considered, and she can send this information out with the agenda for the January meeting. He has enjoyed his time on the Commission, noting that we have accomplished a great deal in the past couple of years and he encouraged the members to continue with this good work in support of agriculture.

New Members:

The sub-committee has considered applications to PAAC and approved four applicants. At this time, we have 3 vacancies after the resignation of John Buchanan, Ryan Vantreight and now Mike Romaine. Plus our revised Terms of Reference allowed for two additional members.

Suggested it might be beneficial to have one of the new owners of the Vantreights' Farm (now known as Longview Farms) to sit on the Commission. Terry offered to speak to Ryan about this.

The secretary will prepare a letter to the five councils recommending the appointments of the four new members which will hopefully be finalized by the January 8, 2015 PAAC meeting.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014

Members were reminded to send information to be included in the Annual Report to the Secretary as soon as possible. Terry Michell will work with Michael Doehnel again this year to prepare a combined report on crops and water use. Bev and Rob will prepare information about the Goose Management Strategy. The secretary advised the report is usually sent out with the past year's administrative costs and grant request. It would be appreciated if report could be received by the **end of January**.

Adjournment: On a Motion from Nikki Tate-Straton, the meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm
Next Meeting: The next regular PAC meeting is scheduled for **JANUARY 8, 2015, 7:00 pm**

I hereby certify this is a true and correct copy of the Minutes.

Isobel Hoffmann

Recording Secretary