

**Agricultural Advisory Committee
February 2, 2012
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Canada Room**

<p>Members Present: Regional Councillor Gord Landon, Chair Councillor Don Hamilton Christopher Burkholder Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Guy Farintosh Harriet Friedmann Bryan Hulshaf Jay Reesor Lynne Koss Paul Reesor Richard Reesor</p> <p>Agency Representatives: Carolyn Woodland, TRCA Jason Ezer, York Region</p> <p>Guests: Gary Wilkins, TRCA Candice Einstoss, York Region Public Health Joan Stonehocker, York Region Food Network</p>	<p>Staff Present: Lilli Duoba, Senior Project Coordinator Elizabeth Wimmer, Senior Environmental Planner</p> <p>Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator</p> <p>Regrets: Maria Gatti, Transport Canada Alan Wells, Rouge Park Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator</p>
--	--

The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:31 p.m. with Regional Councillor Gord Landon presiding as Chair.

1. REVIEW OF THE DECEMBER 1, 2011 AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Moved by Kim Empringham
Seconded by Paul Reesor

That the December 1, 2011 Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes be adopted as presented.

CARRIED.

2. FOOD CHARTER PRESENTATION

Ms. Lynne Koss, Seeds for Change, Candice Einstoss, York Region Public Health, and Joan Stonehocker, York Region Food Network, provided a presentation entitled “Food for Change”. The presentation included: information on the York Region Food Charter Working Group; an overview of what a food charter is and why we need one; examples of food charters from other cities; the elements of a food charter; background information on why York Region would like to establish a food charter; and information on where we are now with respect to the establishment of a food charter. The presenters asked for advice on how to coordinate food policies for York Region, noting they would like to have a Food Policy Council for York Region.

Discussion:

A Member advised that many Markham residents are looking to purchase organic food, but do not know where to buy it. It was reported that Seeds for Change grows and sells organic food. Currently, it has two (2) community gardens and will have (3) more community gardens next year. It was reported that the establishment of a food charter for York Region will help promote this type of information.

The presenters advised that this Committee will be consulted regarding the creation of a food charter for York Region. It was noted that the charter will be a living document.

The Committee discussed what local food is and where it is grown. A question was raised regarding the definition of local? (Is local grown in Markham, York Region, Ontario or North America?). No specific definition was provided. The presenters advised that there are many different definitions of what local food means, noting that this is the type of feedback that is required to establish a food charter for York Region.

A Member noted that it is important to ensure that local organic food is healthier, rather than perceived to be healthier, before moving forward with the establishment of a food charter. It was questioned how the establishment of a York Region food charter supports local farmers. As some Members felt it could create barriers for local farmers.

3. TORONTO REGION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY UPDATE

Gary Wilkins, Toronto Conservation Authority (TRCA), provided a presentation entitled “Making Space for Agriculture”. The presentations included an overview of the TRCA and its agricultural history; the turning points for agriculture; information on the Sustainable Near-Urban Agriculture Policy; and the TRCA near-urban agricultural initiatives.

Discussion

A Member questioned why the TRCA removed agriculture use from the Bruce Mill Conservation Area. Mr. Wilkin advised he would email his response to the Committee.

There was an inquiry regarding whether the TRCA partners with the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association. It was confirmed that the TRCA has partnered with this organization in the past.

4. DISCUSSION ON AMENDING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

There was a brief discussion with respect to the composition of the Agricultural Advisory Committee. Staff recommended that the Committee revise its Terms of Reference to acknowledge the agency members as voting members. The Committee recommended that the number of members representing the Town's agricultural sector be increased from up to five (5), to up to seven (7), to reflect the current composition of the Committee.

Moved by Councillor Don Hamilton

Seconded by Richard Reesor

That the revised Agricultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference be approved to acknowledge the agency members as voting members as presented in Appendix A.

CARRIED.

5. BRAINSTORMING FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Committee brainstormed for future agenda items. The following ideas were discussed:

- 1) Mentoring program for new farmers
- 2) Investigating ways to support local farmers to process food (including canning)
- 3) Creating a tour of Markham's/York Region's farmland
- 4) Looking at Markham's Farmers Markets
- 5) Looking at having a smaller version of the Saint Lawrence Market in Markham

Other ideas provided by email included:

- 1) Official Plan review focusing on rural and agricultural impacts/changes
- 2) Developing a "Share the Road" signage program
- 3) Discuss with the Roads Dept. the importance of regular roadside ditch clean out to maintain properly working field tiles and prevent salty water from flooding back onto farmland.
- 4) Wider road shoulders and the use of graduated curbs instead of vertical curbs to allow for safe movement of farm machinery on the roads.
- 5) Weed control along road property, private property and Rouge Park reforested areas.

- 6) Minimum Distance Separation Buffers on development side of built boundary to prevent restrictions on farm use caused by the new development.
- 7) Local Food Promotion and agriculture education
- 8) Tree by-law review
- 9) Local Food Procurement Policy review
- 10) Assist with Food Charter development
- 11) Community Garden support
- 12) Wildlife crop damage and possible solutions to control number of animals

It was recommended that Sustain Ontario be invited to a future meeting.

6. FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWS

It was reported that the Farmland Preservation News was attached for information purposes.

Ms. Kim Empringham advised that she will be attending the 2012 Farmland Preservation Forum, advising that it is a good forum for discussing what you can do in your own community.

7. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on March 1, 2012 in the Council Chamber. The Rouge Park Alliance will be providing an update on the Park at the meeting.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business reported.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Action Item	Meeting Date	Responsibility of Staff/Committee Member	Meeting Date to be Completed By	Status
Invite York Region Public Health as an "observer" to future meetings.	Dec. 1, 2011	Katie Burns	March Meeting	
Create a glossary of key terminology to ensure that everyone has the same	Dec. 1, 2011	Lilli Douba & Elizabeth Wimmer	To be included in draft Official Plan	

Agricultural Advisory Committee

February 2, 2012

5 | Page

understanding of the subject matter				
Invite Sustain Ontario to a Future Meeting	Feb. 2, 2012	Lilli Douba & Elizabeth Wimmer	April Meeting	
Bring Revised Terms of Reference to Council for Approval	Feb. 2, 2012	Laura Gold	March Meeting	

Agricultural Advisory Committee
March 1, 2012
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Council Chamber

<p>Members Present: Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Guy Farintosh Harriet Friedmann Jay Reesor Lynne Koss Paul Reesor Richard Reesor</p> <p>Agency Representatives: Jason Ezer, York Region Alan Wells, Rouge Park Carolyn Woodland, TRCA</p> <p>Guests: Maria Papoulias</p>	<p>Staff Present: Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator Lilli Duoba, Senior Project Coordinator Elizabeth Wimmer, Senior Environmental Planner Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator</p> <p>Regrets: Regional Councillor Gord Landon, Chair Councillor Don Hamilton Christopher Burkholder Maria Gatti, Transport Canada Bryan Hulshaf</p>
---	--

The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:33 p.m. with Jay Reesor presiding as Chair.

**1. Review of the February 2, 2012
Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes**

It was requested that the list of future agenda items included in the February 2, 2012 agenda package be added to the minutes.

Moved by Kim Empringham
Seconded by Lynne Koss

That the Minutes from the February 2, 2012 Agricultural Advisory Committee be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

2. Rouge Park Update

Mr. Alan Wells, Rouge Park, provided a presentation entitled “Agriculture: An Important Part of Rouge Park”. The presentation included: an update on the mandate of the Rouge Park Alliance (RPA); an overview of the RPA Agriculture Policy; a review of farmlands within the park; information on preserving farmland while accommodating natural heritage areas; areas proposed for heritage restoration; and the parks plans for keeping heritage farms viable through providing long-term leases.

Mr. Wells reported that his term with the RPA will end July 31, 2012. At this time, Maria Papoulias, Rouge Park, will take over as the Rouge Park agency representative on the Markham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Discussion

Mr. Wells recommended that Markham be more aggressive in its tree planting on roadsides to encourage a greater percentage of natural cover within the park.

There was a discussion on the possibility of having a community garden in the Locus Hill Area in Markham.

3. Update on Farmland Forum

Ms. Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator, provided information on the Farmland Forum hosted by Farmland Trust. The forum focused on balancing agriculture and resource demands in rural Ontario. Some of the topics discussed included: how both land conservation and rural economic development can be supported; the state of the farmland loss in Ontario and the relationship to population growth; the Niagara Region as a leader in policy development and planning for agriculture (e.g. engaged multiple levels of government, the farm community and the academic community regarding agriculture policy and research).

It was noted that the presentations provided at the Farmland Forum are available on the Farmland Trust website. The Committee Clerk was requested to email the Committee the link to the presentations.

4. Food Charter Update

Ms. Burns provided an overview of the Food for Change Action Day that was held today at Angus Glen. There was a discussion on Wayne Robert's keynote presentation. The presentation examined food as part of an "Agricultural Economic Development" strategy and it showed how unlikely partners can collaborate on a common dominator, such as food. A glance of where we are now with respect to the loss of agricultural land to urbanization was provided.

The Committee discussed whether food is pleasure or fuel and what local versus sustainable means. It was noted that ones perspective regarding food changes based on ones social economical class.

Mr. Burns reported that the Sustainability Office will be working with students from York University to create an interactive map, which will display food related places (e.g. food banks and farms).

It was reported that feedback from other municipalities will be gathered in order to obtain a balanced view of what should be included in a York Region Food Charter. It was noted that it is important to obtain both urban and rural feedback. It was identified that Toronto was one of the first municipalities to establish a Food Charter.

The Committee was recommended to read the book "The Urban Food Revolution" by Peter Ladner.

Richard Reesor advised that he will provide the Committee with a copy of the article “Yes We Have No Bananas”, written by a geography professor at the University of Toronto. This article provides an insightful perspective on local versus sustainable. It was suggested that a presentation be provided on the meaning of both local and sustainable and on the relationship between the two.

It was reported that the United Way has approved funds for staff support to move ideas from the Open Space Forum forward.

5. Update on Future Presentations

The following future presentation topics were discussed:

- Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan
- Agricultural Processing Facilities
- Traffic Issues/Road signage (e.g. installing “share the roads” signs)
- Educating youth on farming
- Topsoil distribution and depths for new developments
- Access to healthy food for lower social economical classes
- Mapping of “food desserts” (note: part of York University map project)
- Farm tours
- Promotion of nutritional food

Members were requested to email the Committee Clerk suggestions for upcoming presentation topics.

The Committee questioned if Markham regularly reviews its food procurement practices, noting that it would be interested in reviewing Markham’s food procurement practices.

The Committee agreed to spend half of the next meeting on goal setting and on the establishment of a work plan. The completed work plan will be presented to Council for information purposes.

The Vice-Chair requested to be included in the agenda preparation for the next meeting.

6. Recommendation from Toronto Executive Committee

Ms. Harriet Friedmann identified that the “Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement Canada-European Union” (CETA) is an important emerging issue. The Key issues of concern included:

- CETA explicitly restricts the powers of municipal government to support local businesses and direct spending to create employment, environmental benefits, and other social or economic priorities;
- The agreement favours export industries at the expense of farms producing for the domestic market;
- The intellectual property stipulations under CETA would allow corporations to seize farms, farm assets and freeze bank accounts of any farmers alleged to have infringed corporate intellectual property rights.

It was noted that there are many implications of CETA for food security and sovereignty, for the economic viability of our regional farms and food sectors and for the health of Canadians.

Staff were requested to investigate whether Markham has a position on this matter and report back at the next meeting. The Committee Clerk was requested to email the Committee more background information on CETA.

7. Other Business

a. Markham's Food Guide

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

b. Agriculture Tour

The Committee spoke briefly about the possibility of having an agricultural tour. It was recommended that the tour be smaller than the Sustain Ontario Tour and that a placeholder possibly be placed in the 2013 budget.

8. Next Meeting Date

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee the first Thursday of April rather than the first Thursday of June.

The next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, April 5, 2012 in the Canada Room.

9. Adjournment

The Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Action Item	Meeting Date	Responsibility of Staff/Committee Member	Meeting Date to be Completed By	Status
Invite York Region Public Health as an "observer" to future meetings.	Dec. 1, 2011	Katie Burns	March Meeting	
Create a glossary of key terminology to ensure that everyone has the same understanding of the subject matter	Dec. 1, 2011	Lilli Douba & Elizabeth Wimmer	To be included in draft Official Plan	
Invite Sustain Ontario to a Future Meeting	Feb. 2, 2012	Lilli Douba & Elizabeth Wimmer	April Meeting	
Bring Revised Terms of Reference to Council for Approval	Feb. 2, 2012	Laura Gold	March Meeting	
Update Feb. 2 Minutes to include the list of suggested agenda Items	March 1, 2012	Laura Gold	April Meeting	Completed
Email link to presentation provided at the Farmland Forum	March 1, 2012	Laura Gold	April Meeting	Completed
Read <u>The Urban Revolution</u> and the article <u>Yes We have No Bananas</u>	March 1, 2012	All Committee Meetings	October Meeting	
Email the Committee Clerk recommended presentation topics for future meetings	March 1, 2012	All Committee Meetings	April Meeting	
Investigate Markham's position on CETA and report back at the next meeting	March 1, 2012	Elizabeth Wimmer, Lilli Duoba	April Meeting	

Action Item	Meeting Date	Responsibility of Staff/Committee Member	Meeting Date to be Completed By	Status
Email the Committee background information on CETA	March 1, 2012	Laura Gold	April Meeting	Completed

Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes

March 7, 2013

7:00 PM

Canada Room

<p>Members Present: Regional Councillor Gord Landon, Chair Councillor Don Hamilton Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Guy Farintosh Harriet Friedmann Paul Reesor</p> <p>Agency Representatives: Candice Einstoss, York Region Public Health Jason Ezer, York Region Gary Wilkins, TRCA Maria Papoulias, Rouge Park Alliance</p> <p>Guests: Kevin O'Connor, Friends of the Rouge Jim Robb, Friends of the Rouge Richard Scott, Parks Canada Pam Veinotte, Parks Canada</p>	<p>Staff Present: Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator Lilli Duoba, Senior Project Coordinator Ruth Rendon, Senior Environmental Planner Elizabeth Wimmer, Senior Environmental Planner Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator</p> <p>Regrets: Mike Bender, Rouge Park Alliance Bryant Hulshaf Phil Fung, Environmental Advisory Committee Lynne Koss Doug Lindeblom, York Region Jay Reesor, Vice Chair Richard Reesor</p>
--	---

The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:04 p.m. with Regional Councillor Gordon Landon presiding as Chair.

1. DISCUSSION ON AGRICULTURAL ISSUES WITH RESPECT TO THE ROUGE PARK

Jim Robb, General Manager, Friends of the Rouge Watershed, provided a presentation entitled "Rouge National Near Urban Park Legislative, Policy & Ecological Context". The presentation provided information on the following: (1) the legislative framework protecting the Rouge Watershed; (2) the history of the agricultural lands currently located within the proposed Rouge Urban National Park (RUNP); and (3) the impact the legislation may have on the agricultural lands located within RUNP.

It was advised that this presentation was referred to the Agricultural Advisory Committee at the January 22, 2013 Development Services Committee meeting.

The York Region Federation of Agriculture prepared a response to Jim Robb's presentation and associated submissions to the January 22, 2013 Development Services Committee. This was circulated to the Committee for information purposes.

Discussion

Mr. Robb recommended that agricultural lands located within the 600m wide ecological corridor for the Little Rouge River as identified in the Provincial Greenbelt Plan (2005) and located within the proposed RUNP be restored. The Committee discussed this possibility and several of the Members felt that agricultural lands currently being farmed and located within the proposed RUNP should continue to be used for agricultural purposes. Mr. Robb also implied that such farmers could be relocated to alternative lands outside of the corridor.

Pam Veinotte, Parks Canada, advised that the public feedback on this matter is being collected and will be incorporated into the Parks Canada Strategic Management Plan for the RUNP. The final decision regarding whether some of the agricultural lands within RUNP will be converted back to a natural state will be determined by Parks Canada.

It was noted that this Committee could pass a resolution on this matter.

Moved by Paul Reesor

Seconded by Kim Empringham

That the Presentation by Jim Robb, General Manager, Friends of the Rouge Watershed, entitled "Rouge National Near Urban Park Legislative, Policy & Ecological Context" be received.

CARRIED

2. REVIEW OF THE JANUARY 10, 2013 AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Moved by Paul Reesor

Seconded by Kim Empringham

That the January 10, 2013 Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes be approved as presented.

CARRIED

3. NUMBER OF WEBSITE HITS- MARKHAM'S AGRICULTURAL WEBPAGE

Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator, reported the following number of visits to Markham's agricultural webpage:

- January – 158 visits
- February – 109 visits

4. REVIEW OF THE FOOD CHARTER

Katie Burns reviewed the Agricultural Advisory Committee's feedback provided at the last meeting regarding the draft York Region Food Charter and provided a status update. The update included the following: what is a food charter; what policies and studies in Markham relate to the food charter; an overview of the Food Charter Working Group and its areas of focus; and information on an upcoming event "Food for Change 2013" on March 20, 2013.

It was noted that a revised version of the York Region Food Charter will come back to the Food Charter Working Group sometime this spring for its endorsement. The working group is also investigating the possibility of creating a Food Charter toolkit. The Committee Clerk was requested to email the Committee a copy of the Guelph-Wellington Food Charter Toolkit to provide an example of what a toolkit may look like.

The Committee was encouraged to email Katie any additional feedback with respect to the draft York Region Food Charter.

Moved by Councillor Don Hamilton

Seconded by Kim Empringham

That the Agricultural Advisory Committee's feedback regarding the draft Food Charter be received.

CARRIED

5. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications/Education/Outreach Sub-Committee

The committee reviewed the topics and sites for Markham's Agricultural Advisory Committee tour being targeted to occur in September 2013.

It was suggested that the tour include a segment on farming in the Rouge Park to educate stakeholders on the type of farming that is occurring within the park.

The sub-committee was requested to provide other segment examples at the next meeting. The Committee can then help generate ideas and provide feedback.

Moved by Guy Farintosh

Seconded by Paul Reesor

That the Communications/Education/Outreach Sub-Committee Report be received.

CARRIED

Economic Viability & Sustainability Sub-Committee Report

Moved by Guy Farintosh

Seconded by Paul Reesor

That the Economic Viability & Sustainability Sub-Committee Report be deferred to the next meeting.

CARRIED

Policy Sub-Committee

The Policy Sub-Committee requested to defer the drainage issue until the fall, as members needed an opportunity to discuss the matter with other Markham farmers.

Moved by Ruth Brock

Seconded by Maria Papoulias

That the Policy Sub-Committee report on drainage issues be deferred to fall 2013.

CARRIED

6. NEW BUSINESS

Toronto Food Conference

It was reported that there will be a 2nd Canadian Food Summit in Toronto, April 9-10, 2013.. Members interested in attending the conference may speak to staff with respect to getting a discounted rate.

Farmland Tax Rate

Concern was expressed regarding the tax rate increase for agricultural lands in some York Region municipalities. Kim Empringham was asked to email staff this information. The matter can then be investigated by Markham's finance staff.

7. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, April 4, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the Canada Room.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes
January 10, 2013
7:30 PM
Canada Room

<p>Members Present: Regional Councillor Gord Landon, Chair Jay Reesor, Vice Chair Councillor Don Hamilton Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Guy Farintosh Bryant Hulshaf Lynne Koss</p> <p>Agency Representatives: Candice Einstoss, York Region Public Health Gary Wilkins, TRCA Maria Papoulias, Rouge Park Alliance</p>	<p>Staff Present: Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator Lilli Duoba, Senior Project Coordinator Elizabeth Wimmer, Senior Environmental Planner Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator</p> <p>Regrets: Mike Bender, Rouge Park Alliance Jason Ezer, York Region Harriet Friedmann Phil Fung, Environmental Advisory Committee Doug Lindeblom, York Region Paul Reesor Richard Reesor Ruth Rendon, Senior Environmental Planner</p>
--	--

The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:04 p.m. with Regional Councillor Gordon Landon presiding as Chair.

1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chair advised that Christopher Burkholder has resigned from the Committee.

2. REVIEW OF DECEMBER 6, 2012

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Moved by Ruth Brock

Seconded by Kim Empringham

That the December 6, 2012 Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes be approved as presented.

CARRIED

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

A. Agricultural Webpage No. of Web Hits

Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator, reported that 76 people viewed the Agricultural webpage on Markham's website in the month of December. A monthly report will be provided on the number of web hits to the webpage on a go forward basis.

B. Policy Sub-Committee Update

The Committee reviewed the recommendations from the Policy Sub-Committee on Markham's draft new Official Plan. A copy of the recommendations is attached as Appendix A of the Minutes.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence

Katie Burns reported that the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence is an award that was introduced by the Province to recognize innovation in agri-food. The application deadline is Friday, January 18, 2013. It was suggested that the following Markham farms would be strong candidates for the award:

- The Whittmore Farm and Judi's Tropical Gardens;
- Artichoke Farmer on 19th Avenue.

Katie Burns was requested to look into the possibility of nominating the above farms/farmers for the award. Jay Reesor will help Katie get in touch with the Artichoke Farmer.

Additionally, Kim Empringham will be submitting an application for a Eco-Farm model that has been used at the Markham Fair for the past two (2) years and that has been funded by the Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund.

Kim Empringham advised that Kathy Simpson from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture was assisting with the York Durham applications for this award.

B. Food Charter

Kate Greavette, Food Charter Coordinator, York Region Food Network, and Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator, provided a presentation on the draft York Region Food Charter.

The Chair reported that the draft York Region Food Charter should be endorsed by this Committee prior to it being brought forward to Council for endorsement.

The Committee provided the following feedback on the draft York Region Food Charter:

- The charter currently has too much detail for an vision document;
- The charter should be a simple and easy to read and to understand ;
- An action plan should be presented to Council with the Food Charter.

It was clarified that the draft York Region Food Charter is being prepared by the York Region Food Charter Working Group. Furthermore, the project is being hosted by the York Region Food Network and is being completed in partnership with the following groups:

- Health York
- Heart and Stroke Foundation
- Seeds for Change
- City of Markham Sustainability Office
- United Way of York Region, in partnership with York University
- York Federation of Agriculture
- York Region Public Health

It was explained that this document is intended to be a vision document for all of York Region. The Charter will be brought forward to the different municipalities in York Region for their endorsement. York Region municipalities can then create their own programs that follow the principles stipulated in the Food Charter.

C. Resolutions

Moved by Lynne Koss

Seconded by Councillor Don Hamilton

That the Policy Sub-Committee recommendations attached as Appendix A be approved.

CARRIED

Moved by Jay Reesor

Seconded by Bryant Hulshaf

That the resignation of Chris Burkholder from the Agricultural Advisory Committee be received with regret for information purposes and that a letter of appreciation be forwarded by Mayor Frank Scarpitti.

CARRIED

D. Stiver Mill

Councillor Don Hamilton reported that the Stiver Mill located on Main Street Unionville will be revitalized. The project must be completed by March 2014, as this is a condition of the government grant that is being used towards the project. Staff are trying to plan the construction so that the farmers market can continue throughout the construction.

There is currently a debate whether the Stiver Mill should be red or silver in colour.

5. NEXT MEETING DATE

It was requested that the October 2013 Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting date be moved from the first Thursday of the month to the second Thursday of the month due to the Markham Fair.

The next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, February 7, 2013 in the Canada Room.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Kim Empringham
Seconded by Bryant Hulshaf

That the Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourn at 8:40 p.m.

CARRIED

Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes

April 4, 2013

7:00 PM

Canada Room

<p>Members Present: Regional Councillor Gord Landon, Chair Jay Reesor, Vice Chair Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Guy Farintosh Bryant Hulshaf Lynne Koss Richard Reesor</p> <p>Agency Representatives: Candice Einstoss, York Region Public Health Jason Ezer, York Region Maria Gatti, Transport Canada Gary Wilkins, TRCA</p>	<p>Staff Present: Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator Lilli Duoba, Senior Project Coordinator Ruth Rendon, Senior Environmental Planner Elizabeth Wimmer, Senior Environmental Planner Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator</p> <p>Regrets: Councillor Don Hamilton Mike Bender, Rouge Park Alliance Phil Fung, Environmental Advisory Committee Doug Lindeblom, York Region Maria Papoulias, Rouge Park Alliance Paul Reesor Harriet Friedmann</p>
--	--

The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:04 p.m. with Regional Councillor Gordon Landon presiding as Chair.

1. REVIEW OF MARCH 7, 2013 MINUTES

There was a brief discussion on whether this Committee wanted to take further action in regards to the discussion held at the last meeting on the balance of agricultural and natural heritage lands located within the proposed Rouge Urban National Park. It was decided that no further action would be taken at this time, as Parks Canada will be making the decision regarding the status of the agricultural lands.

Moved by Ruth Brock

Seconded by Kim Empringham

That the minutes from the March 7, 2013 Agricultural Advisory Committee be approved as presented.

CARRIED

2. PRESENTATION ON SOIL PRESERVATION

Liz Wimmer, Senior Environmental Planner provided a presentation entitled “Markham Topsoil Policy”. The presentation included the following: Background information on municipal engineering standards pertaining to top soil management; highlights of Markham’s Site Alteration By-Law 211-232 ; the Urban Design Groups “Trees for Tomorrow Streetscape Manual” practices pertaining to soil preservation; and an overview of applicable legal agreements .

Brian Lee, Senior Manager of Development Engineering and Transportation was in attendance to help answer questions on soil preservation.

It was reported that subdivisions are governed by the planning process through a subdivision agreement rather than the site alteration by-law. It was noted that other factors which may affect the soil quality within a subdivision include: (1) the year the subdivision was built, as the thickness of topsoil required in a subdivisions was recently increased from 100 mm to 200 mm; and (2) enforcement and monitoring of subdivision agreement requirements.

Summary of Questions from Presentation

Questions Related to The Site Alteration By-Law 2011-232:

- 1) How does the current By-Law regulate the mixing of subsoil and topsoil through development or agriculture related activities?
- 2) How does Markham monitor the illegal dumping of soil?
- 3) How does Markham implement Section 2.9 of the By-Law? It states that, *“no site alteration permit will be permitted on agricultural lands unless the owner provides a certificate, signed by a professional engineer/soil scientist, confirming that the site alteration will result in maintaining or improving the overall fertility of the agricultural lands.”* How is soil quality confirmed?
- 4) Can Markham review the following definitions within the by-law to ensure that they are consistent?
 - i) “Fill”
 - ii) “Soil”
 - iii) “Topsoil”The Committee thought that the definitions in the by-law may not be applied consistently.
- 5) Does Markham require topsoil testing to screen for contaminants and organic content prior to placement? How is this done?

Questions Related to the Subdivision Process:

- 1) What can be done to ensure that stored topsoil being placed in subdivisions is adequate to sustain plant life?
- 2) Can we increase the depth of topsoil for new development lands?
- 3) How can we monitor topsoil placement to ensure required depths are achieved?

- 4) Can we minimize the amount of topsoil to be removed from a development site through regulation?
- 5) Can we provide improved standards for topsoil storage? (ensuring height, temperature and duration of pile does not exceed by-law standard)
- 6) Is the standard for topsoil piles adequate? What do other municipalities do?
- 7) Can we develop specific standards for the composition of topsoil?

Moved by Guy Farintosh

Seconded by Ruth Brock

That the presentation entitled "Markham Topsoil Policy" be received.

CARRIED

3. FOOD CHARTER

Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator, provided an update on the York Region Food Charter. A revised more condensed version of the policy was included in the agenda package.

Discussion

It was clarified that in proposed York Region Food Charter under the heading "Equity and Social Justice" that "*dignified access for food for all*" refers to making it a pleasant experience for anyone who needs to go to a food bank to obtain food.

It was recommended that under the heading Education and Skills in the proposed York Region Food Charter that the last sentence be revised as follows:

*"Understanding the connections between food, farming, health, **the economy** and the environment."*

It was agreed that the minutes from the York Food Charter Working Group will be included in future agenda packages for information purposes.

Moved by Jay Reesor

Seconded by Richard Reesor

That the Agricultural Advisory Committee endorse the Food Charter as amended; and,

That it be brought forward to the General Committee for its endorsement.

CARRIED

4. SUB-COMMITTEE PLANNING FOR SUMMER

a. Agricultural Tour

The Committee discussed the fall agricultural tour. It was agreed that the Committee Member with the most expertise should research and speak to the various topics to be included in the tour. The following committee assignments for the fall agricultural tour were made:

Drainage

Guy Farintosh

Soil Standards

Jay Reesor

Share the Roads

Kim Empringham

Community Gardens

Lynne Koss

Rouge Park

Maria Papoulias, Rouge Park Alliance

Local Food Procurement

Communications Sub-Committee (note: the sub-committee will consider discussing this topic on the bus)

5. SEED LIBRARY

Katie Burns advised that Markham will be starting a Markham Grow Seed Library as part of a pilot project. The project will be promoted by Markham Public Libraries. The program will allow residents to take home seeds to grow in their garden. The resident will then return the seed to the Seed Library in the fall. There will be no penalty at this time if the seed is not returned. The purpose of the project is to encourage residents to start gardens in their homes.

6. TAX RATE

Kim Empringham provided an update on York Region farmland values. An overview of MPACs method for determining the property assessment value for farmlands was provided. The average assessment increase for York Region farmland in 2012 was from 15% to 30%. Some municipalities are looking at putting measures in place to protect the tax rate of farmers. Durham Region was the first municipality to reduce the tax rate for farmland.

It was clarified that the Committee's interest is in protecting the tax rate of farmers, not in protecting the tax rate of developers or corporations that own farmland.

Agricultural Advisory Committee

April 4, 2013

Page 5 of 5

Moved by Ruth Brock

Seconded by Bryant Hulshaf

That the Agricultural Advisory Committee request that Markham's Finance Department review the presentation entitled "2012 Farmland Values Update" and report back to this committee.

CARRIED

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 8:46 p.m.