



Committee Report

Agricultural Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: May 20, 2021
Meeting Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Town Hall, Council Chambers
32 Mill Street, Thornbury, ON

Agricultural Advisory Committee Recommendations

NOTE: The following are recommendations from the Agricultural Advisory Committee to be considered for adoption by Council

- [Receive Minutes \(May 20, 2021\)](#)

Recommended (Move, second)

THAT Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains receives the Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes dated May 20, 2021 as attached, for information purposes.



Minutes

The Blue Mountains, Agricultural Advisory Committee

Date: May 20, 2021
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Town Hall, Council Chambers - Virtual Meeting
32 Mill Street, Thornbury, ON
Prepared by:
Sarah Merrifield, Executive Assistant Committees of Council

Members Present: Councillor Matrosovs, John Ardiel, Duncan McKinlay, James McKinlay, Rosemary Mesley, Lynn Vail, Dennis Ouellette, Elora Tarlo

Members Absent: Grant McMurchy

Staff Present: Director of Community Services Ryan Gibbons, Director of Operations Shawn Carey, Transportation Master Plan Coordinator Adam Fraser, Municipal Law Enforcement Officer Raymond White, and Administrative Assistant Committees of Council Kyra Dunlop

A. Call to Order

A.1 Traditional Territory Acknowledgement

We would like to begin our meeting by recognizing the First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples of Canada as traditional stewards of the land. The municipality is located within the boundary of Treaty 18 region of 1818 which is the traditional land of the Anishnaabek, Haudenosaunee and Wendat-Wyandot-Wyandotte peoples.

A.2 Committee Member Attendance

Executive Assistant Committees of Council Sarah Merrifield confirmed that all members were present, save for Grant McMurchy who sent his regrets.

Introduction of Kyra Dunlop, Administrative Assistant Committees of Council.

A.3 Approval of Agenda

Moved by: John Ardiel

Seconded by: Elora Tarlo

THAT the Agenda of May 20, 2021 be approved as circulated, including any additions to the Agenda.

Yay (8): Councillor Matrosovs, John Ardiel, Duncan McKinlay, Rosemary Mesley, Dennis Ouellette, Elora Tarlo, Lynn Vail, James McKinlay

Absent (1): Grant McMurchy

The motion is Carried (8 to 0, 1 absent)

A.4 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and general nature thereof

NOTE: In accordance with the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* and the Town Procedural By-law 2019-56, Agricultural Advisory Committee Members must file a written statement of the interest and its general nature with the Clerk for inclusion on the Registry.

None

A.5 Previous Minutes

Moved by: John Ardiel

Seconded by: Rosemary Mesley

THAT the Minutes of April 15, 2021 be approved as circulated, including any revisions to be made.

Yay (8): Councillor Matrosovs, John Ardiel, Duncan McKinlay, Rosemary Mesley, Dennis Ouellette, Elora Tarlo, Lynn Vail, James McKinlay

Absent (1): Grant McMurchy

The motion is Carried (8 to 0, 1 absent)

B. Staff Reports and Deputations

B.1 Deputations, if any

B.1.1 Kean Gao, MSc Environmental Sciences, University of Guelph re Nitrous Oxide and Agriculture - What, How, and Why?

Councillor Matrosovs welcomed Kean Gao, MSc Environmental Sciences, University of Guelph to the Committee. Councillor Matrosovs noted that the Committee had requested that University of Guelph Professor, School of Environmental Sciences, Claudia Wagner-Riddle be reached to provide information on nitrous oxide and that Ms. Wagner-Riddle had recommended University of Guelph MSc Environmental Sciences Kean Gao to provide a presentation to the Committee.

Kean provided a brief introduction of his studies and work relating to the study of nitrous oxide for the past 8 years. Kean provided an overview of what nitrogen oxide is, why care about nitrous oxide, its use in agriculture, the production of nitrous oxide, how to reduce nitrous oxide emissions and what we can do about it.

Councillor Matrosovs noted that there is a shift regarding the proportion of nitrous oxide coming from cropland and asked how that fit into the larger picture of nitrous oxide emissions. Kean advised that nitrous oxide is primarily produced by the agricultural sectors but that some is produced in industry, such as with combustibles. Kean advised that most nitrous oxide levels have increased since the Industrial Revolution and that it is related to the agricultural sector, mostly cropland soil.

Councillor Matrosovs referenced Farm and Food Care Ontario statistics, noting that Canada's agriculture sector creates 8.4% of greenhouse gas emissions, of which most are created through livestock. Kean advised that while methane remains the biggest component of greenhouse gas emissions, that cropland soil remains the largest contributor to nitrous oxide emission. Kean noted that there is concern resulting from this as the need for global food demand, and therefore cropland usage, is increasing.

Committee Member John Ardiel asked what the agriculture sector contributed to the methane amount. Kean advised that methane is a huge component of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. Kean advised that more attention is now being given to nitrous oxide because it was previously neglected. Kean noted that it is far easier to control nitrous oxide than methane emissions from cattle.

John Ardiel noted that farmers are quite scientific and well-intentioned when they are applying fertilizer. John asked how a farmer would deal

with natural factors, such as weather, after applying fertilizer for a small release in light rain. Kean noted that it is difficult to predict the weather and that his research has demonstrated the same challenges. Kean noted that slow-release fertilizers can assist with this issue and noted that it is important that producers do their best to control what is possible.

John Ardiel noted that nitrogen credits do not exist, and asked how farmers would get carbon tax credits applied. Kean confirmed that nitrous oxide is not included in the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act. Kean noted that there are various associations and stakeholders who are currently discussing the inclusion of nitrous oxide in the Act. Kean explained the carbon tax principles and carbon credit program and advised that there is a pathway forward to include nitrous oxide in the legislation in the future that could be a revenue source for farmers.

Committee Member Duncan McKinlay asked whether commercial fertilizers draw nitrous oxide in the air, which Kean advised that drawing nitrous oxide from the air is a mostly biological process. Duncan asked if there is a difference between the levels of nitrous oxide emissions between commercial fertilizer versus chicken manure. Kean advised that anaerobic digestors were part of the nitrous oxide emissions as a result from processing manure and noted that it would be important to consider how much nitrous oxide is required by the plants. Kean provided an overview of plant uptake requirements.

Committee Member Rosemary Mesley noted that regenerative farms could make the soil healthier to reduce nitrous oxide requirements. Rosemary noted that credits could be given to farmers for changing farming practices incrementally, which might go further to assist in reducing nitrous oxide. Kean noted that regenerative farming is one of the main sources of the 4-R protocols, and that there are benefits from adapting the practices. Kean advised that most studies completed have been conducted over long periods to determine what plant demands are for nitrous oxide.

Committee Member Dennis Ouellette asked about the cost effectiveness of available fertilizer products that are applied as the plants need it, and how the level of nitrous oxide in the soil can be determined. Kean advised that farmers could take samples of their topsoil to be sent to labs for testing, noting that there are commercial labs to analyze soil to provide a baseline. Kean also advised that farmers could use the manufacturer recommendations on nitrous oxide products and lab reports to determine what levels of nitrous oxide their soil actually requires. Kean advised that 4-R protocols in place consider products that contain urea as a base, and that most of the research shows enhanced fertilizers do a better job of using nitrous oxide efficiently.

Committee Member James McKinlay noted that most farmers are using best practices and management whenever possible.

Councillor Matrosovs thanked Kean for the presentation.

James McKinlay and John Ardiel noted they had concerns regarding the information in the presentation misrepresenting nitrous oxide as it relates to agriculture.

Moved by: Rosemary Mesley

Seconded by: Dennis Ouellette

THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee receives item B.1.1. Kean Gao, MSc Environmental Sciences, University of Guelph regarding nitrous oxide and Agriculture - What, How, and Why? for information purposes.

Yay (8): Councillor Matrosovs, Duncan McKinlay, Rosemary Mesley, Dennis Ouellette, Elora Tarlo, Lynn Vail, James McKinlay

Nay (1): John Ardiel

Absent (1): Grant McMurchy

The motion is Carried (7 to 1, 1 absent)

B.1.2 Adam Fraser, Transportation Master Plan ("TMP") Project Coordinator re TMP Project Introduction and Engagement Opportunities

Councillor Matrosovs welcomed Adam Fraser, Master Transportation Plan Coordinator.

Prior to commencing his presentation to the Committee, Adam provided opportunity for comment from Director of Operations Shawn Carey.

Shawn advised the Committee of the importance of Transportation Master Plan Project with respect to creating awareness and community engagement in the process. Shawn advised of the importance of receiving feedback and comments from Committee on the Transportation Master Plan.

Adam provided a presentation on the Transportation Master Plan Project Introduction and Engagement Opportunities.

Adam provided an overview on the presentation objectives, what the Transportation Master Plan Project is, coordination with other Town strategies and departments, and the process of the Transportation Master Plan Project.

Adam provided an overview on the process of the Transportation Master Plan Project including Notices and Public Information Centers (PIC),

stakeholder and community engagement and group meetings, virtual engagement tools, First Nations and Metis Engagement, technical advisory group meetings, the Transportation Advisory Committee, presentations to Council. and additional outreach plans.

Adam requested feedback from the Committee with respect to how the Transportation Master Plan Project can support the interests of the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Duncan noted the importance of gathering good data on where the traffic is, where it is going, and who is travelling.

Rosemary noted that the Sustainability Advisory Committee has employed a Data Walk in its engagement. Rosemary noted that it would be beneficial to provide an option to the community to provide feedback in a public domain that allowed for comment sharing. Adam advised that the Environmental Assessment Process will be considering feedback received and will be able to determine if there is an appetite for open comments.

Councillor Matrosovs thanked Adam for his presentation.

Moved by: John Ardiel

Seconded by: Rosemary Mesley

THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee receives item B.1.2 Adam Fraser, Transportation Master Plan Project Coordinator re Transportation Master Plan Project Introduction and Engagement Opportunities for information.

Moved by: Duncan McKinlay

Seconded by: John Ardiel

THAT, with respect to the Transportation Master Plan process, the Agricultural Advisory Committee requests to be engaged as a significant stakeholder in the process.

Yay (8): Andrea Matrosovs, John Ardiel, Duncan McKinlay, James McKinlay, Rosemary Mesley, Lynn Vail, Dennis Ouellette, and Elora Tarlo

Absent (1): Grant McMurchy

The motion is Carried (8 to 0, 1 absent)

B.2 Public Comment Period (each speaker is allotted three minutes)

NOTE: In accordance with the Town Procedural By-law 2019-56, fifteen minutes is allotted at the Meeting to receive public comments regarding Agricultural Advisory Committee matters included on the Agenda. The speaker shall provide their name and address and shall address their comments to the Chair.

Comments shall not refer to personnel, litigation or potential litigation matters, or regarding matters that are a follow-up to a Public Meeting.

NOTE: Committee meetings are currently taking place virtually to assist with social distancing with respect to COVID-19. Comments received from the public that have not been included on the Agenda will be read at the meeting by the Executive Assistant.

None

B.3 Staff reports, if any

None

C. Matters for Discussion

C.1 Wild Chervil Update - Director of Operations Shawn Carey

Director of Operations Shawn Carey provided an update on the Wild Chervil spraying. Shawn advised that the Wild Chervil had been sprayed on the previous Wednesday and Thursday. Shawn advised that a staff report would be provided to confirm the requestors who did not want the chervil sprayed and had requested the "No Spray" signs. Councillor Matrosovs noted she had observed spot spraying on 6th Sideroad.

Adam Fraser left the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

Duncan noted that it was great that the work had gotten done so quickly and thanked Town staff. He also noted that the County would come and spray along county roads upon request.

Dennis noted that he had received a complaint that there was not enough lead time for citizens to request "No Spray" signage from the Town. Dennis noted that he did not see a paper advertisement other than a notice of intent to spray. He asked whether an improvement could be made to the process for communicating the availability of "No Spray" signs. Shawn advised that the Town met the Pesticide Act requirements and that the more lead time that can be provided, the better and that staff can always try to.

James noted that the timing on spraying this year was perfect. Duncan commented that he appreciated what Dennis noted, that Committee members should be talking to people in the fall about spraying, and that people are aware

that this spraying occurs in the spring. Rosemary noted that spraying occurred later in the season in 2020.

Councillor Matrosovs thanked Shawn Carey for the update.

C.2 Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, Bill 156 Resources and Information - Committee member Duncan McKinlay

Moved by: Duncan McKinlay

Seconded by: John Ardiel

THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee receives Item C.2 Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act - Bill 156 OFA Resources and Information and requests this information be made available to the public.

Yay (8): Andrea Matrosovs, John Ardiel, Duncan McKinlay, James McKinlay, Rosemary Mesley, Lynn Vail, Dennis Ouellette, and Elora Tarlo

Absent (1): Grant McMurchy

The motion is Carried (8 to 0, 1 absent)

C.3 Transportation Committee Update - Committee member John Ardiel

None.

C.4 Follow-up Direction from Council

a) Heritage Apple Variety Nursery

THAT, in accordance with the February 18, 2021 recommendation from the Agricultural Advisory Committee as noted:

THAT with respect to a heritage apple variety nursery, the Agricultural Advisory Committee receives the request for information and recommends that Council direct staff to coordinate with Georgian Bay Fruit Growers with regards to project feasibility, CARRIED.

AND THAT Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains directs staff to coordinate with Georgian Bay Fruit Growers regarding project feasibility for a Heritage Apple Variety Nursery, Carried.

C.5 Chair's Report

Councillor Matrosovs advised that Diane Brooker, Grey County Federation of Agriculture, provided presentation regarding the Federations' priorities for 2021.

Councillor Matrosovs advised that the Community Sustainability Plan was moving into Phase 2 and that the Committee would be looking at ways to engage

the community for feedback. Councillor Matrosovs advised that engagement opportunities would be available beginning May 2021 and would continue throughout the summer.

Councillor Matrosovs advised that the survey for the Tree By-law had closed, and that a meeting between herself and staff was scheduled to discuss the results. Councillor Matrosovs noted that citizens could continue to provide feedback to the Town via email. Councillor Matrosovs provided a brief overview of the next steps including a public meeting to be held, a staff report and a subsequent presentation to Council.

John Ardiel asked how Councillor Matrosovs envisioned public engagement taking place with regards to the Tree By-Law stages. Councillor Matrosovs advised she would speak with staff about how community engagement would take place during Committee breaks but that individuals could still submit comment on this issue.

John Ardiel noted his concerns that Town staff do not understand that farmers are not tied to their emails or social media and that they may not receive information on when or how to participate. John noted that the Committee should make an effort to reach out to agricultural associations to circulate information and notices to their members. Councillor Matrosovs advised the best way to stay apprised of issues is to sign up on the e-mail list and that public meetings are also sent to newspapers. Councillor Matrosovs noted that John's idea regarding circulation to associations would be beneficial and confirmed she would bring that comment to Town staff.

Duncan noted that Niagara Escarpment Planners are currently doing comprehensive work involving how to deal landscaping plans, and that the Town should consider a similar holistic approach. Councillor Matrosovs advised she would ask Town staff about this suggestion.

Duncan noted that he had received mail regarding the Tree By-law that had the Town logo on it, which Councillor Matrosovs advised that particular document was not official Town mail and that CAO Shawn Everitt is aware of this. Councillor Matrosovs advised she would ask Town staff about a strategy dealing with this.

D. Correspondence

None

E. New and Unfinished Business

E.1 Additions to Agenda

E.2 Items Identified for Discussion at the Next Meeting

- OMAFRA Follow-up Correspondence to Lorraine Sutton regarding Nitrous Oxide
- Update on Proposed Fill By-law, if any

F. Notice of Meeting Dates

June 17, 2021

Town Hall, Council Chambers (virtual)

G. Adjournment

Moved by: John Ardiel

Seconded by: Rosemary Mesley

THAT The Agricultural Advisory Committee does now adjourn at 8:15 p.m. to meet again at the call of the Chair.

Yay (8): Councillor Matrosovs, John Ardiel, Duncan McKinlay, Rosemary Mesley, Dennis Ouellette, Elora Tarlo, Lynn Vail, James McKinlay

Absent (1): Grant McMurchy

The motion is Carried (8 to 0, 1 absent)