



## **AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY AND ECONOMIC ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 7:00pm  
Via Zoom

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### **MINUTES**

#### **Present:**

J. Caldarella, Community Co-Chair  
Councillor B. Whitmarsh, Council Co-Chair

C. Allison, I. Han, B. Pearson, A. Smith

#### **Guests:**

G. Jones, Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation  
D. Melnychuk, Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation  
C. Paulson, Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation  
M. Sachse, Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation

#### **Staff:**

V. Gafka, Senior Manager, Economic Investment and Development  
M. Gunn, Planner, Community and Policy Planning  
R. Nelson, Senior Planner, Community and Policy Planning  
K. Stepto, Recording Secretary

### **A. APPROVAL AND RECEIPT OF AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **1. Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee - June 23, 2021**

Moved by C. Allison,  
Seconded by I. Han,  
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee approve  
the agenda and receive the agenda items of the June 23, 2021 meeting.  
**CARRIED**

### **B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

#### **1. Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee - May 26, 2021**

Moved by I. Han,  
Seconded by A. Smith,  
That the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee adopt the  
Minutes of the May 26, 2021 meeting.  
**CARRIED**

## **C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

### **1. Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation (LSAF)**

C. Paulson, M. Sachse, D. Melnychuk, and G. Jones provided an overview and update on the Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation. It was noted that LSAF was established in 2011 as a volunteer organization with up to 17 directors. Its purpose is to build agriculture capacity and knowledge in Langley. Activities include: workshop, Farm Tour, published pamphlet on Salmon River aquifer, research, education, and publicity.

The following information was provided:

Langley Ecological Services Initiative:

- The concept is to pay farmers, modestly, to maintain or improve the environmental integrity on their farm. These actions are not typically part of the normal practices of the farm business.
- Langley was one of six regions in BC to participate in the pilot to test how feasible it is to adopt these as best management practices.

Riparian Work:

- Demo Site 1 and 2 included:
  - Blackberry overgrowth along the Bertrand Creek bank (invasive species)
  - Blackberries ceased after two sprayings of an environmentally suitable solution of vinegar, soap, and Epsom salts.
- Other sites included:
  - Completion of environmental farms plans (6 participants);
  - Nutrient management plans (1);
  - Riparian management plans (2);
  - Riparian plantings (2); and
  - Engineering design work for erosion abatement projects (2).

Results of the pilot revealed that intervention makes a difference. Where work was done, the area showed clear evidence that riparian health improved. In February 2020, LSAF recommend to Council to develop an on-going Ecological Services Program, to establish funding through an Ecological Services Fund parcel levy in the amount of \$10 per legal parcel, and to authorize transfer of the residual funds of \$21,000 of the pilot ESI to LSAF for development of the Langley Learning Farm.

Langley Learning Farm Initiative:

The Langley Learning Farm is a multi-purpose project with various sites within the Derek Doubleday Arboretum consisting of:

- Seed library
- Riparian enhancement area along Fraser Creek
- School demo garden
- Incubator farm
- Urban container garden
- Native plant garden
- Food Forest

**C. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

- Management composting area
- Links to Langley Farmers' Market

Phase One:

- Lease agreement signed with TOL in December 2019.
- Worked intensely with the Science Department at Langley Senior Secondary School and the Langley Environmental Partners Society to establish an Environmental Science 11/12 course in September 2020. LEPS is providing on-site teaching and managing the day-to-day operation.
- Phase One and Two include a greenhouse and plans for a food forest on the berm.

Learning Farm Achievements To Date:

- 2020-21 academic year involved 9-12 students from grades 11 and 12 each week as an extra-curricular Environmental Science course.
- 2021-2022 year is projected to involve 21 students from grade 11, and 19 students from grade 12 an an elective course.
- LSAF is embarking on a scholarships and awards program for students and researchers.
- LSAF and LEPS are actively seeking grant support for programing.
- LSAF was awarded a \$25,000 grant from 2021 Co-Op Community Spaces Grant (one of two in BC).

**D. REPORTS**

**E. CORRESPONDENCE**

**F. WORK PROGRAM**

**1. Future of Farming Task Force**

M. Gunn presented the compiled ideas and draft recommendations for the three areas the Task Force focused on regarding reducing barriers to farming. The information was presented as follows:

**Communication Strategy – Ideas:**

- Fact based
- Genera TOL Ag info
- Ag Programs
- Regulation links
- Funding Opportunities
- Clear language
- Policy and Bylaw links

## **F. WORK PROGRAM**

- Education

Draft recommendations:

1. Develop a dedicated agriculture webpage to include all things Agriculture in the TOL including the contact of the Agriculture Planner.
2. Develop a dedicated business agriculture webpage to provide information for farmers (new and current).
3. Investigate and establish a tool that provides an online Farming Business Directory and the ability to promote and sell agriculture products.
4. Create an Ag e-newsletter to distribute agriculture related information to the TOL agriculture community.

Comments from the Committee:

- #4 – specify which Ag groups the info is going to.
- Communicate with landowners who are not farming their land about the benefits of farming.

### **Policy and Bylaws Review – Ideas:**

- Easy navigation
- Compare with Federal and Provincial requirements
- Streamlined
- Clear language
- Uncomplicated
- Engage with farming community

Draft recommendations:

1. Complete an in-depth review of other jurisdiction's agriculture policies and bylaws.
2. Complete a review of current TOL bylaws and policies to determine areas of inconsistency and provide adjustments if required, such as streamlining with Provincial Regulations, clear language, and relevance.
3. Review residential regulations on ALR land once Provincial Gov't releases updated regulations.
4. Review meat processing regulations on ALR land once Provincial Gov't releases updated regulations.
5. Develop a good neighbor policy/brochure to educate the farming & non-farming community about farming practices to avoid conflicts.

Comments from the Committee:

- Have a main contact person at the TOL for Ag inquiries.
- Regulations are too restrictive. These need to be reviewed further.
- AAEEC could take a more proactive role in reviewing the updated regulations to help Council with decision making.
- Keep a working relationship with the Ag groups.

### **New Farmer Attraction - Ideas:**

- Clear Bylaw and Policies
- School education
- Access to sell products

**F. WORK PROGRAM**

- Continue building relationships with stakeholder groups (FI, LSAF)
- TOL staff connection
- More incentives for farm
- Tax reform for ALR lands not farmed
- How to start a farm guide
- Lease TOL owned land to farmers
- Showcase success stories

Draft recommendations:

1. Develop a *How to Start a Farm* guide.
2. Support new farmers to develop viable business plans through education.
3. Promote the Young Agrarians Land Matching Program.
4. Undertake a feasibility study to determine if TOL could potentially lease appropriate TOL lands to new farmers.
5. Build relationships with the TOL farming community to expand the promotion of agriculture.

Comments from the Committee:

- How can we encourage landowners to start thinking about farming their land?
- Build relationships with non-farming landowners.
- Build relationships with local and regional post secondary education institutions to connect with future farmers.
- Could find an opportunity to get farming information into TOL eNewsletter.
- Run a series for new farmers in the Ag eNewsletter that will be developed.
- Look to see how other communities are communicating this information.

Priority draft recommendations are as follows:

1. Develop a dedicated Ag webpage;
2. Review the policies and bylaws; and
3. Build communications with farmers and potential farmers.

**G. COUNCIL REFERRALS**

**H. OTHER BUSINESS AND ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**I. NEXT MEETING**

**Date:** September 22, 2021  
**Location:** TBD  
**Time:** 7:00pm

J. **TERMINATE**

Moved by B. Pearson,  
That the meeting terminate at 8:56pm.  
**CARRIED**

**CERTIFIED CORRECT:**

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Community Representative Co-Chair

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Council Representative Co-Chair