

Minutes of the regular Regional Agricultural Advisory Commission held on Thursday, September 13, 2012 at 12:00 pm in the CVRD Boardroom, 175 Ingram Street, Duncan, BC.

**PRESENT**

Director M. Marcotte, Chair  
Directors L. Duncan, G. Giles and R. Hutchins  
Bob Crawford, Mick Smith, Pat Durose, Wayne Haddow, Rodger Hunter, George Robbins and Judy Stafford

**ALSO PRESENT**

Carol Greaves, Community Relations Manager, FortisBC  
Dennis Light, Key Account Manager, FortisBC  
Peter Keber (Alternate)  
Tom Anderson, General Manager, Planning & Development (arrived 1:15pm)  
Geoff Millar, Manager, Economic Development Cowichan  
Kathy Lachman, EDC Business Development Officer  
Judy Mills, Recording Secretary

**ABSENT**

Director R. Hartmann, Ian Christison, Joanne McLeod, Dave Thomson, Fred Oud and Dan Ferguson (Alternate)

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**It was moved and seconded that the agenda be amended with the addition of two New Business item as follows:**

**NB1 Judy Stafford regarding Cowichan Green Community activities update;**

**NB2 Rodger Hunter regarding Agri-Arts;**

**and that the agenda, as amended, be approved.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**M1**

**It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the regular Regional Agricultural Advisory Commission meeting held June 26, 2012 be adopted.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**BA1 – Agricultural Adaptation Strategies**

Kathy Lachman reported the Climate Action Initiative Committee met on September 6, 2012 and there was a high level of engagement and great ideas generated. Chair Marcotte encouraged members to attend if they have the opportunity.

**BA2 – RAAC motion to Board**

Kathy Lachman reported at the July 11, 2012 Board meeting the RAAC recommendation was amended to request *“that staff report on the feasibility of the CVRD lending financial and in-kind support to the local agricultural societies to research and develop an inventory of equipment available for lease or loan to emerging farmers, and that this inventory could include a list of potential mentors, and to make this information available through the development of a web page and other means.”*

It was moved and seconded to refer the amended RAAC recommendation by the Board on July 11, 2012, CR7, 12-345, back to subcommittee #2.

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **DELEGATIONS**

### **D1 – FortisBC**

Carol Greaves, Community Relations Manager, FortisBC presented a power point on FortisBC Common Rates and Amalgamation. FortisBC is currently comprised of three companies which each set their own rates. They have applied to the BC Utilities Commission for common rates and amalgamation. This proposes common rates and services across the province and would eliminate current rate discrepancies. If approved, Vancouver Island would see a 25% decrease in rates in January 2014. There is some resistance to the application due to the imposing 5.3% increase in rates on the lower mainland. The original application was suspended with requirement for more public consultation which has now been met and the application re-submitted.

Timing of application is due to infrastructure now being in place and significant financial obligations recently being met. Some residual costs are remaining. FortisBC is now in a position for consistent rates. Very hopeful the application will be approved. Last poll reported was 92% in support and 8% opposed.

Questions and discussion.

Dennis Light, Key Account Manager, FortisBC presented a power point on Agriculture and Natural Gas. They are billing a million gas customers a month, 102,000 on Vancouver Island and 583,000 on lower mainland. BC Agriculture (greenhouses, mushroom growers, animal producers, aquaculture and agriculture related products) is largest consumer then food processing. CVRD consumes 0.004% versus BC overall. CVRD consumes 0.02% in large scale agriculture and food processing industry sector. Lower mainland has economy of scale and growth creates sustainability. CVRD rural gas serviceability is dependent on gas main extension feasibility; size of agricultural operation and distance between potential gas loads. Energy efficiency and conservation incentives include efficient commercial water heater program and organic naturally generated gas; projects include; anaerobic digestion, landfill gas and co-generation.

Questions and discussion.

Director Hutchins left meeting at 1:25 pm.

Peter Keber, Carol Greaves and Dennis Light left the meeting at 1:33 pm.

## **REPORTS**

### **R1 – Subcommittee #1 Land Use Mitigation**

Kathy Lachman reviewed the report. Discussion took place. Members agreed the brochure is a practical solution, very useful and can be put on the website to inform.

Director Giles left meeting at 1:42 pm.

### **R2 – Subcommittee #2 Land Lease Website**

Kathy Lachman reviewed the report. There were no questions regarding action item.

**R3 – Subcommittee #3 Consumer Awareness** Kathy Lachman reviewed the report. Correction was noted to action item #2 IAF refers to IFA, Island Farmers Alliance. Judy Stafford will follow up with the IFA.

**R4 – Subcommittee #3 Islands Agriculture Show** Kathy Lachman reviewed report and discussed option to have three concurrent session streams, two paid and one free, and incorporate the presentations into the Islands Agriculture Show and take up one of the sessions. This may provide more buy in and attendance. Discussion took place.

**It was moved and seconded to adjust subcommittee #3 recommendation regarding the Islands Agriculture Show to plan an information session as part of the 2013 Islands Agriculture Show and invite other agricultural organizations to participate with a session.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

Kathy Lachman reported the budget is available to support 2012 subcommittee action items. Next steps were discussed.

**R5 – Subcommittee #3 Farmer's Market** Kathy Lachman reported at the June 13, 2012 subcommittee #3 meeting it was noted that farmer's markets are splintering. Mick Smith reported at the last Duncan Farmer's Market meeting he was asked to form a loose committee for advertising.

**CORRESPONDENCE** Not applicable.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** Not applicable.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**NB1 – Cowichan Green Community** Judy Stafford reported that as a result of the subcommittee's meeting regarding the Farm Start Program, Cowichan Green Community (CGC) was successful in acquiring a Provincial Grant to complete a Cowichan Region Farm Marketing Report. CGC is also working with North Cowichan to acquire some land to start an Incubator Farm Program. As well, they will be completing a Youth Urban Farm Demonstration Project at Kinsmen Park with support from a Federal Grant.

To support these projects, CGC is relocating to a larger space at the Phoenix Centre on October 1, 2012.

Tom Anderson left meeting at 2:06 pm.

**NB2 – Agri-Arts** Rodger Hunter reported he is working on a mapping project which includes a cultural inventory broken out by area. They are including a category called Agri-Arts including farm gate, wineries and specialty foods because agriculture is such a big part of culture in the Cowichan Region.

**CLOSED SESSION** Not applicable.

**ADJOURNMENT** **It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.

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Chair

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Recording Secretary