

Minutes of the regular Regional Agricultural Advisory Commission meeting held on Tuesday, April 23, 2013, at 12:00 pm in the CVRD Boardroom, 175 Ingram Street, Duncan, BC.

**PRESENT**

Director Marcotte, Chair  
Directors G. Giles, L. Duncan and R. Hutchins  
Joanne McLeod, Bob Crawford, Judy Stafford, Mick Smith, Wayne Haddow and Marsha Stanley

**ALSO PRESENT**

Alternates Dan Ferguson and Peter Keber  
Shari Patterson, Executive Director, Cowichan Exhibition  
Heather & Brock McLeod, Makaria Farm  
Director I. Morrison (12:30 pm)  
Tom Anderson, General Manager, Planning & Development  
Geoff Millar, Manager, Economic Development  
Kathy Lachman, EDC Business Development Officer  
Judy Mills, Recording Secretary

**ABSENT**

Director R. Hartmann, Ian Christison, Rodger Hunter, Dave Thomson, Fred Oud and Pat Durose

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**NB1 South Cowichan Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 3520;**

**NB2 Municipality of North Cowichan Agricultural Land Reserve exclusion application;**

**NB3 Genetically Modified Organism Rally;**

**NB4 Funding;**

**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 March 21, 2013, be adopted.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**BA1 – Sunfest Country Music Festival**

Director Giles Notice of Motion regarding Sunfest Country Music Festival was discussed. For information, prior to the meeting, Judy Stafford circulated a letter from the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) to the Cowichan Exhibition Society regarding non-compliance of the ALC Act. Director Hutchins reported that he contacted the District of North Cowichan and they are in full support of this very popular event in our community. Tom Anderson reported he contacted the ALC and was advised this is a District of North Cowichan issue in which there is history to the application. The ALC issued approvals with conditions which have not been met.

Shari Patterson from the Cowichan Exhibition reported they met with the ALC on April 15, 2013 and the meeting was favourable. They have since submitted the required paperwork to address and become compliant in four different categories. Further, they have been asked to provide an impact study. Once complete they hope to be taken out of non-compliance and move forward with a non-farm application. The Cowichan Exhibition is reliant on this event and would appreciate support.

Further discussion ensued.

**It was moved and seconded that the Regional Agricultural Advisory Commission recommends that the Board send a letter of support to the Agricultural Land Commission for the Cowichan Exhibition Society's Sunfest Country Music Festival event.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **DELEGATIONS**

### **D1 – Makaria Farm**

Heather and Brock McLeod of Makaria Farm gave a presentation on the effects of supply and demand from a vegetable farm perspective. They started Makaria Farm in 2008 and have eight acres of vegetables. Over the past five years they have noticed policy circles heading towards new farmer startups and would like to see a strong approach.

Demand and supply conditions affect price. Many small scale operations are focused on organic or sustainability. The level of supply and demand for food directly affects existing and new farmers outcomes and success. When government gets involved to affect supply, such as incubator farms, there are more new farmers to meet demand. Increase in demand makes the gap between demand and supply bigger. Increase in supply reduces demand gap. Ideally, government increasing demand is best versus increasing supply. Increase demand and supply will follow. In Cowichan the supply and demand are close to equal. Gap between supply and demand is very important for small farmers. Production costs for small producers are high. Larger operations with efficient production are positioned well to supply local grocers to get to 60% local produce in stores. This production will be at lower prices.

Questions and discussion took place. It was noted farming cooperatives are a good option.

## **REPORTS**

### **R1 – Incubator Farm Program**

Kathy Lachman reported how to develop an Incubator Farm Program is a Subcommittee item and is part of our Agricultural Plan to attract new farmers. Kathy requested to refer this item back to the Subcommittee for discussion to ensure we are doing the right thing for the right reasons to benefit the right people. Discussion took place.

**It was moved and seconded that the item of supply and demand along with the discussion of incubator farms be referred to Subcommittee 2 for review and report back to the Commission.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**R2 – Farm Stays**

Kathy Lachman reported the EDC and RAAC Farm Stay Subcommittees held a joint meeting. After reporting back to their respective Commissions, the RAAC members rejected farm stay use. The opposing EDC and RAAC recommendations went forward to the Board on March 27, 2013 and they voted against allowing agri-tourism accommodation and farm stays. The topic will be referred to the Electoral Area Services Committee. Tom Anderson reported that the report is being drafted and will be on their agenda within a month and we will see how the Directors respond.

Discussion took place.

**R3 – Subcommittee Updates**

Kathy Lachman gave Subcommittee updates.

Subcommittee 1: Circulated final copy of re-branding document for review. Includes brand, mission and vision. Supports Agricultural Plan to move forward with visual identities and is an example of how you can use the local brand and raise awareness and demand. Will be putting together a marketing plan. Challenged to find dollars to implement. Discussion took place.

Subcommittee 2: Working on incubator farm model and now have direction and will look at cooperatives model.

Subcommittee 3: Circulated copy of brochure “So, you want to move to the countryside...what can you expect?”. At design stage and looking for feedback or suggestions on design or content. Word smithing component is complete.

Discussion took place. Director Giles will send feedback from Advisory Planning Committee. It was noted to include local realtors, welcome wagon and visitor information centres in the distribution plan. Further comments can be sent to Kathy Lachman and edits will be discussed at next meeting.

**R4 – Step Up Program**

Kathy Lachman reported Dan Ferguson sent her link for the Step Up Program. Coordinator is Jennifer Stevens and is based out of Ottawa. The Program is most popular in BC and Ontario. There is a high interest to come to BC and farm. The Program will match you up with a mentor if you do not have one. Must pay minimum wage and cover WCB. Provides 20 matches per year but is dependent on funding. They are running a full program this year. It has been out for several years and the intention is to continue to offer yearly.

**R5 – Climate Action Committee**

Kathy Lachman reported the Climate Action Subcommittee has drafted a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. Emily MacNair from BC Agriculture Climate Action Initiative is handling the changes and refinement and then it will be available for distribution. Subcommittee will have a follow up meeting end of May to consider how to implement recommendations. Emily will be advising if additional funding is approved. The final document will reside with the RAAC.

Discussion took place.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**NB1 – South Cowichan OCP**

Dan Ferguson requested clarification regarding South Cowichan Official Community Plan (OCP) zoning concerns from RR-2 to RR-3 or RR-3A. Director

Giles gave a summary on the background and process followed. The intent of the Bylaw is to protect rural community and heritage founded on agriculture.

In depth discussion took place. Chair Marcotte advised draft Bylaw No. 3520 is on the CVRD website. Tom Anderson advised Mike Tippet is working on revisions and will send out bylaw link once complete.

Further discussion took place. Shari Patterson left the meeting at 1:50 pm.

**NB2 – Municipality  
of North Cowichan**

Judy Stafford reported she attended the Somenos Marsh Management Committee meeting and the District of North Cowichan has voted unanimously to apply to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) to remove land from the Somenos Marsh for the proposed RCMP station. The Cowichan Green Community is writing to the ALC regarding concerns of removing land from the protective area. She opened discussion with members regarding their views.

In depth discussion took place. Judy Stafford advised she would like a motion for a letter from the RAAC to the ALC regarding concerns so the ALC will have a variety of letters referencing this issue.

Marsha Stanley left the meeting at 2:02 pm.

Further discussion took place.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Tom Anderson and Director Hutchins left the meeting at 2:10 pm. Due to a loss of quorum the meeting was adjourned.

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Chair

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Recording Secretary