

# Minutes

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Meeting **Agricultural Advisory Committee**

Date Tuesday, March 16, 2010

Time 8:30 a.m.

Place Municipal Hall - Large Committee Room

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**Members Present** Blaine Hardie, Chair; Gerry Plester, Johanna Mellor, Jim Quaife, Marcel Fleurie, Neil Wilson, Councillor Ruth Hartmann (comprising a quorum)

**Members Absent** With Notice: Robert Davison; Without Notice: David Groves

**Also Present** Chris Hall, Director of Planning

**Agenda** The Committee approved the agenda as circulated.

**Minutes** The Committee adopted the minutes of the meeting held on January 26, 2010.

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the Technical Planning Committee meetings held on February 9 and February 23, 2010 and the Advisory Planning Commission meeting held on January 22, 2010.

The Committee enquired as to the status of Mt. Sicker Logging on Mays Road which was discussed at the Technical Planning Committee meeting on February 9, 2010. Staff advised that there have been discussions with the owners regarding future plans but nothing recent to report.

Recommendation: that staff remind Council of the ongoing bylaw violations by Mt. Sicker Logging on Mays Road.

## **Business:**

**Water Management** The Committee noted that as a result of a presentation to Council, the water management issue has been referred back to the Public Works Committee. The Committee advised that the report was well received by Council. The consensus was that the Committee members should attend the Public Works Committee meeting on March 31, 2010.

**Agri-Tourism and Retail Sales Guidelines for Local Bylaws** The Committee reviewed the January 4, 2010 information from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands regarding agri-tourism and retail sales on farm land. Staff outlined how these matters are currently addressed in the Zoning Bylaw. Members expressed surprise that more farms do not take advantage of the opportunities provided in the Zoning Bylaw and by the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).

**Cowichan Food Security Plan** The Committee reviewed the Cowichan Food Security Plan, prepared by the Cowichan Green Community. The Committee noted that the Food Charter has been modified since it was presented to the Committee. The Committee agreed that this document is useful in highlighting the agricultural sector, but it needs to be

referred to when matters arise affecting agriculture, so that it remains before the decision makers.

Genetically Engineered (GE) "EnviroPig" from University of Guelph

The Committee reviewed the February 23, 2010 newspaper article about the GE "EnviroPig" from the University of Guelph. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of genetically modified products. There was no general consensus on the matter, although the Committee concurred that labeling of products is important so that consumers can make informed choices.

UBCM 2009 Resolutions

The Committee reviewed the February 3, 2010 response from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands regarding the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) resolution submitted by Councillor Hartmann. Councillor Hartmann felt that a response to the Ministry is warranted, as the provincial position did not reflect the implications to farmers due to declining provincial funding. The Committee felt that the provincial statistics quoted were misleading and warranted a response. Members were requested to review the Ministry's position and provide comments to Councillor Hartmann so that an appropriate reply could be prepared.

Duncan Farmers' Market

Councillor Hartmann raised a concern that the Saturday Farmers' Market in Duncan is being asked to contribute significantly more "rent" to the Duncan Business Improvement Area Society (DBIA). She said that the Farmers' Market is concerned that the amount they are paying is significantly more than in a large number of similar communities.

Recommendation: that the Committee Chair send a letter to the City of Duncan expressing its concern with the obligations being placed on the Farmers' Market.

Watercourse Maintenance

Johanna Mellor expressed that property owners should be obligated to maintain drainage courses. She asked whether there are ways of ensuring that one property owner cannot unduly influence drainage to the detriment of others. She was advised that there are significant legal issues surrounding drainage matters which require considerable research.

Recommendation: that Watercourse Maintenance be referred to the upcoming Public Works Committee meeting.

**Adjournment**

The meeting ended at 10:30 a.m.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on April 20, 2010 at 8:30 a.m. if there are urgent items, otherwise, it will be held on May 18, 2010.

Certified correct

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Signature of recording secretary

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Chair or presiding member