



## **Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting**

Haldimand County Administration Building

January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Present:** Councillor Metcalfe, Henk Lise (Chair), Stuart Heeg (Vice-Chair), Bruce Armstrong, Ron Young, Richard Blyleven, Nick Kinkel (OMAFRA), Stephanie Campbell-Heron Rick Armstrong, and Jordan Fowler.

**Staff:** Lidy Romanuk, Manager of Economic Development & Tourism, Alison Earls Senior Economic Development Officer, and Breanna Beauchamp, Division Support.

### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

Meeting called to order by Chair Henk Lise at 6:02 p.m. Members and guests introduced themselves.

### **2. Agricultural Advisory Committee Chair and Vice Chair Election**

L. Romanuk opened the floor for nominations for the position of Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee. Henk Lise was nominated by Richard Blyleven. Henk Lise accepted the nomination as Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee for 2021.

**APPROVED**

L. Romanuk opened the floor for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee. Stuart Heeg was nominated by Henk Lise. Stuart Heeg accepted the nomination as Vice-Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee for 2021.

**APPROVED**

### **3. Council Update**

Councillor Metcalfe provided an update on Council activities including updates on virtual council meetings, the Forest Conservation by-law, Fencing by-law and the rural broadband project.

The committee illustrated concern about the turn around for permits in the building department, and the need for expedited applications.

A discussion then ensued.

### **3. 2021 Work plan**

A. Earls addressed the committee about the 2021 work plan, and provided some ideas the previous committee recommended including but not limited to identifying alternative viable cash crops, assisting in marketing of niche products, and attracting youth to the agriculture sector.

J. Fowler provided feedback on the 2021 work plan options, specifically the focus on attracting youth to agriculture, and the possibility of working with the school boards to offer opportunities in trades.

H. Lise commented that bringing the community together through niche products at the farmers' markets or having online hubs where farmers can sell their products and experiences virtually could help farmers expand their reach.

Councillor Metcalfe added it would be beneficial to have the farmers' markets available online.

L. Romanuk added that the Digital Service Squad are here to help local businesses increase their online presence, and could assist farmers in e-commerce set up.

L. Romanuk also mentioned the launch of the Real Haldimand Marketplace, and the possibility of adding the local farmers markets to the marketplace, if there is enough interest from the vendors.

The committee provided feedback that it may be beneficial to concentrate on one work plan item per meeting to promote increased dialogue with the committee.

A discussion then ensued.

### **4. Emily Project Update**

A. Earls provided an update on the Emily project, and how we can implement this program in the County. A. Earls made the recommendation that the Committee Chair make a presentation to Council at a future Council meeting. Concurrently staff will bring forward a report for Council approval of further investigation and implementation of the program in Haldimand County.

Motion to bring forward the proposed Emily project and program implementation plan for Council approval.

Moved by R. Blyleven and seconded by S. Heeg to move the recommendation forward at 6:40 pm.

**APPROVED**

## 5. Approval of Minutes and Business Arising

Moved by. R. Young and seconded by R. Blyleven that minutes of Agriculture Advisory Committee Meeting dated November 18th, 2020 be approved as presented at 7:31 pm.

**APPROVED**

## 6. EDT Update

A. Earls provided an EDT Update, key highlights included:

- RWQP Report and Update to Council
- Official Plan Update
- New Zoning Map
- Digital Service Squad Webinars
- GRCA Webinar
- LEADS Program
- Equine Hardship Program

A discussion then ensued.

## 7. COVID-19 Business Recovery Priorities

L. Romanuk then delivered a presentation on the COVID-19 Business Recovery Priorities that highlighted the four key business recovery areas identified by the Business Development and Planning Advisory Committee and the outcomes of each priority. Key highlights included:

- **Marketing and Advertising-** included the creation of a Marketing working group, creation and distribution of a guide to sourcing local food and shopping and wellness, the Haldimand Road Trip Map, the Great Taste of Ontario Passport, creation of a “Shop Local” Haldimand graphic, execution of the Haldimand Wish book Campaign, and increased social media campaigns focusing on a hyper local audience.
- **Resources and Information provision to Local Business-** included the development and distribution of a list of personal protective equipment that was available to purchase from local businesses, the Digital Service Squad outreach, creation and distribution of a Haldimand vendors reference list, and the virtual Small Business Week celebration in partnership with the Brantford Brant Business Centre.
- **Outreach to Local Business-** included creation of a business retention survey on the impact of COVID-19 with 879 businesses participating. Feedback from the survey included assistance on reopening procedures, information on updated safety upgrades to mitigate the risk of COVID-19, and available government programs and grants.
- **Regulation and Program Enhancements-** included promotion of the Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation ‘Safe Openings’ program, and the development of the Real Haldimand Marketplace.
- **Upcoming County Initiatives-** included continued improvement of communication and outreach to businesses, creation of the Development Liaison Team, Community

Improvement Plans, Updated Zoning by-law, Official Plan update, rural broadband internet project, North Caledonia Employment Lands, Cayuga Parks Plan, and the Signage Strategy.

A discussion then ensued.

**7. Adjourned at 7:33 pm**

**8. Next Meeting**

March 17, 2021 from 6pm to 8pm  
Location to be determined.