



Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting

Virtual Conference

September 15th, 2021

Present: Councillor Metcalfe, Henk Lise (Chair), Stuart Heeg (Vice-Chair), Richard Blyleven, Nick Kinkel (OMAFRA), Stephanie Campbell-Heron, Rick Armstrong, Jordan Fowler, Sue Brocklebank (GRCA), Kelly Gibson (GRCA), Paul Gagnon (LPRCA), Winona Drouin (Haldimand Stewardship)

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

Regrets: Bruce Armstrong, Ron Young

1. Welcome and Introduction

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

2. Council Update

Councillor Metcalfe provided an update on Council activities including ensuring County facilities are operating within current provincial restrictions, rural broadband update, and stone road conversion update.

A discussion then ensued.

3. Rural Water Quality Suggested Program Additions and Upcoming Projects

S. Brocklebank provided a brief overview of the current budget for the Rural Water Quality Project program. K. Gibson then presented two Rural Water Quality Projects for the committee's approval.

File # 114- Tree Planting project- Riparian Buffer was presented

Moved By R. Blyleven, and seconded by S. Heeg that the project be approved totaling \$2108.00 at 6:13 pm.

APPROVED

File #114- Tree Planting project- Windbreak project was presented

Moved by R. Blyleven and seconded by S. Campbell-Heron that the project be approved totaling \$1649.00 at 6:17 pm

APPROVED

File #115- Tree Planting project was presented.

Moved by S. Heeg and seconded by S. Campbell-Heron that the project be approved totaling \$5000.00 at 6:20 pm

APPROVED

File #117- Cover Crop project was presented by P. Gagnon.

Moved by Blyleven and seconded by J. Fowler that the project be approved totaling \$1500.00 at 6:22 pm

APPROVED

4. Haldimand Stewardship Council (HSC) Program Opportunities

Winona Drouin, Resource Management Consultant at HSC delivered a presentation on available program opportunities. Key Highlights included:

- Wetland Restoration
- Waterfowl Nest Boxes
- Rat snake Recovery Program
- Rural Tree Planting Program

J. Fowler inquired about the storage of the trees, and inventory distribution.

W. Drouin provided that the HSC have summer nurseries, and store the trees for a maximum of one month. The HSC is currently looking for additional storage opportunities, and will provide contribution for landowners that provide storage.

J. Fowler then inquired about what species of trees are planted by the HSC on properties.

W. Drouin added that the species of trees planted, is completely dependent on the property and what would thrive and grow most suitably in the area.

A discussion then ensued.

5. Emily Project Update

A. Earls provided an update on the Emily Project, reviewed marketing materials, form intake processing, and anticipated launch dates.

Councillor Metcalfe inquired if the forms will be available online. A. Earls confirmed that once launched, this form will be available online for intake on the Haldimand County website.

H. Lise then inquired about the ordering process for the signs, and potential timeline for residents to receive signage. A. Earls provided that there will be a processing time for the sign, and will confirm exact timeline with the committee.

L. Romanuk then provided an update on a potential funding opportunity for the Emily Project.

A discussion then ensued.

6. New Business

H. Lise then began a discussion on the Highway Traffic Act (HTA) Changes for Off Road Vehicles (OFV) Regulations, and inquired how these changes impacted Haldimand County.

A. Earls noted that currently Haldimand County is considered a municipality not listed in Regulation 8/03, which means the municipality will not be required to create a by-law to permit ORV vehicle types-they are prohibited as of right. At this time, Haldimand County will not be creating a new by-law to allow ORV on municipal roads.

Further discussion ensued around if OFV vehicles used for agricultural activities are permitted as of right under the Highway Traffic Act. The committee then asked staff to clarify with the Building and Municipal Enforcement division the implications of this recent change under the Highway Traffic Act and if these activities are still prohibited. The committee discussed potentially requesting a by-law be created to permit ORV for commercial farm activities, as it would be beneficial for farmers. They noted riders would need to be insured, and all additional safety requirements would need to be met.

A. Earls will gather additional information, and direction on the HTA changes in Haldimand County from the Building and Municipal Enforcement division.

J. Fowler added that his business, the Carolinian Café has seen an increase in agri-tourism with the onset of the pandemic, and encouraged farmers to reach out for opportunities and synergies with local businesses.

A. Earls added that any farmers interested in agri-tourism and investigating partnerships are welcome to join the upcoming Tourism Network Meetings, and staff would be happy to make any introductions to interested parties.

L. Romanuk then addressed the Committee to gather any additional feedback about the Connect ON Asset Mapping presentation that was delivered at the July AAC meeting, and if they saw benefit in the County purchasing access to this mapping tool.

H. Lise asked if there were any pay per use options available, L. Romanuk added that to her knowledge the only option is a yearly subscription, but will confirm with Connect ON staff.

N. Kinkel added the tool would be beneficial from a planning and economic development perspective. This tool may be an application to consider in the future.

The Committee agreed they will make a final decision on the mapping tool once the Committee meets in November and discussed the potential implementation of an Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan.

A discussion then ensued.

7. EDT Update

A. Earls began a discussion regarding the Official Plan (OP) Presentation that was delivered by Matt Reniers at the July AAC meeting, and asked if the Committee had any additional comments or feedback.

The Committee did not have additional comments, but echoed that the presentation overviewed a lot of information. They noted it would be beneficial to welcome Reniers back to the Committee for the November meeting for an additional overview on the presentation.

L. Romanuk then provided an update on the Digital Service Squad (DSS) including the onboarding of new staff, reviewed the services the DSS offers, and the expanded digital transformation grant eligibility.

The digital transformation grant eligibility has expanded to include all businesses in the County, any interested businesses are encouraged to connect with EDT staff.

A discussion then ensued.

8. Adjourned at 7:41 pm

9. Next Meeting

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