



Agricultural Advisory Committee of Clarington Meeting

**Thursday, November 12, 2020**

Members Present: Eric Bowman                      John Cartwright                      Don Rickard  
                         Ted Watson                              Tom Barrie                              Henry Zekveld  
                         Richard Rekker                              Les Caswell                              Brenda Metcalf  
                         Ben Eastman                              Councillor Zwart

Regrets:                      Jennifer Knox

Staff:                      Amy Burke, Faye Langmaid – Planning and Development Services

Guests:                      Mayor Adrian Foster; Ryan Cullen, City of Greens Farm; Allison  
                         Brown and Stacey Jibb, Region of Durham Planning and Economic  
                         Development; Carolyn Puterbough, OMAFRA

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Due to COVID 19 restrictions and to ensure social distancing, participation in the meeting was electronic (using Microsoft Teams) and by conference call.

Eric welcomed all to the meeting, with introductions.

Declarations of pecuniary interest

None.

Adoption of Agenda

**020-21**                      Moved by Richard Rekker, seconded by Tom Barrie

*That the Agenda for November 12, 2020 be adopted.*

**Carried**

Approval of Minutes

**020-22**                      Moved by John Cartwright, seconded by Ben Eastman

*That the minutes of the October 8, 2020 meeting be approved.*

**Carried**

## Presentation

**Ryan Cullen, City of Greens Farm:** Ryan Cullen, co-owner of City of Greens farm, provided an introduction and overview of their new farm operation. City of Greens moved to Clarington in late 2019 and began growing in 2020, starting with 0.5 acres of 50'x50' production beds. The farm focuses on small scale, high yield, high market value quick to maturity produce crop production. Ryan reviewed the start-up of the farm, including field preparation, planting and infrastructure development, all of which was done low- or no-tech. Marketing is primarily done via social media, online and through word of mouth. Sales uses an online purchase model with pick up being facilitated by multiple partner locations in Durham Region, including MacMillan Orchards and All or Nothing Brewery. The first year of operations have proven the viability of their business model and achieved an objective to grow to meet the needs of 150 people. Ryan indicated that in the coming years, City of Greens hopes to add edible forest crops amongst the woodland areas of the property and grazing hens for egg production.

Questions from the Committee brought discussion on no-tillage cover crop and overwintering approaches, how the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to a greater awareness and appreciation of buying locally grown and produced food, and the scale and type of agriculture that may be achievable and sustainable on a smaller scale. The Committee thanked Ryan for his presentation and an invitation was extended by Ryan to come and tour the farm in the future.

## Delegations

None.

## Business Arising from Minutes

**Fairlife – Peterborough Facility Tour:** A tour has been arranged for Committee members at the end of the month. Committee members available to attend were confirmed.

**On-Farm Special Events By-law:** Third working group meeting held on October 21 and looked at potential approaches for regulating on-farm special events, including licencing and site-specific zoning. The working group input received to date will inform reporting back to Council on the matter. Meeting date to be confirmed and sent to the Committee, once known.

**Migrant Farm Worker Accommodations – COVID-19 Requirements:** Durham Region Public Health hosted a virtual information session on October 15, 2020. Farm operators who employ temporary foreign workers and/or seasonal agricultural workers were provided an overview of recent recommendations related to enhanced standards and tips for reviewing existing accommodations and considering whether modifications may be necessary to follow public health guidance. It is not known at this time whether the recommended standards will become required by regulation. Ted Watson, who attended the session, explained the necessity for having sufficient advanced notice of any proposed regulatory changes. Farmers could be required to build additional bathrooms or bunkhouses, requiring time for planning, permits and construction.

**AACC 2021 – 2024 Member Applications:** The deadline for applying to the Agricultural Advisory Committee of Clarington is November 13 at 12:00 pm. Four appointments will be made for the 2021 – 2024 term.

### Correspondence, Council Items and Referrals

**By-law Amendment Request to Allow Backyard Hens:** At the General Government Committee meeting held on October 19, Committee considered a Resolution brought forward by Councillor Traill requesting the drafting of a by-law to permit and regulate no more than four backyard hens in urban areas. Multiple delegations were heard, and correspondence was received from numerous residents, both in favour of and in opposition to the matter. On November 2, Council approved Resolution #GG-346-20, which includes a referral of the matter to the Agricultural Advisory Committee of Clarington for input. The matter was discussed by the Committee. A summary of comments follows:

- In general, egg producers do not have significant concerns with backyard chickens when rules that serve to minimize the risk of the spread of disease are strictly followed.
- Multiple layers of biohazard protection are placed on the egg industry to manage the potential biohazard risks, which are strictly followed by egg producers and enforced by industry oversight.
- The importance of and need for a mechanism to report and track the number and cause of backyard hen deaths is important in determining the risk of disease in the community.
- The risks associated with the spread of disease applies to all feathered animals in the area, not only hens. Further, the potential risks are not only of interest to larger local egg producers, but also to local farms with smaller outdoor chicken flocks.
- Concerns were raised regarding the proper management of other risks, including the attraction of rodents and predatory animals, roosters being added to flocks, and proper housekeeping and animal care over the long-term.
- There was general disagreement with the concept of food insecurity in Clarington. While consumer preference has attributed to the reduced availability of large eggs, oversupply of medium eggs due to reduced restaurant sales during the first wave of COVID-19 resulted in the need for early flock removal at many farms across the province.
- Committee members re-stated the position taken on the same issue in 2010, which did not support allowing chickens on non-agricultural lands in the Municipality.

Comments specific to the proposed draft regulations included the following:

- Written permission from landlords must be mandatory;
- Setback from all windows and doors or a neighbour's house must be as far away as possible (i.e. greater than the 3 metre minimum, where possible); and
- Gender of a chicken can be determined at one day old.

**Ontario Barn Preservation Advocacy Letter:** The Ontario Barn Preservation sent a letter to municipalities in Ontario identifying an issue whereby historic barns are being demolished as part of applications to sever surplus farm dwellings, contributing to a loss of cultural heritage and rural character. The matter was discussed at the October 20 Clarington Heritage Committee meeting, where the letter was referred to the Agricultural Advisory Committee of Clarington for comment. The Committee expressed an appreciation for the value of historical barns to the rural landscape but is mindful of the function of barns as infrastructure to facilitate farm production. Farming and the needs of agricultural operations and operating parameters have changed over time. Barn replacements may be necessary to maintain farm viability. Continuing to repair and maintain a barn that is no longer serving its purpose as part of the agricultural operation is costly expense for the business.

### Liaison Reports

**Durham Agriculture Advisory Committee:** Tom Barrie provided an update from the November 10 DAAC meeting in his email to all prior to the meeting.

- Mike Scott, Project Planner, is the new DAAC Staff Liaison.
- DAAC has formed a sub-committee to examine and follow the development of the Federal Clean Fuel Standard. The proposal includes land use and biodiversity criteria that are of a concern to the farming sector. Of key concern are the proposed setbacks from a watercourse or wetland and the restriction on growing biofuel crops on recently cleared land.
- The Region has received concerns about new ‘Share the Road’ signs, thought to contain too much information to be effective. Works Staff will attend the December DAAC meeting to discuss the signs. They are also scheduled to attend the January 2021 AACC meeting to review rural area capital projects and can be asked about the signs then.

**Durham Region Federation of Agriculture:** Rickard Rekker provided an update from the October 21 DRFA meeting in his email to all prior to the meeting. Durham Farm Connections is reviewing nominations for the Celebrate Agriculture 2020 Awards. An online awards ceremony will be announced soon, and an online fundraising auction is pending for early 2021.

**Clarington Board of Trade:** CBOT continues to work to coordinate a local response to COVID for businesses, including campaigns to encourage local dining and shopping.

### New Business

**Request of Ministerial Zoning Order Resolution:** Committee members brought forward concerns and questions being asked in the community in response to Resolution #C-418-20 approved at the Special Meeting of Council on October 26, 2020. These relate primarily to the paragraph in the resolution asking the Province for a commitment “to reviewing the lands south of Highway 2 between Hwy 418 and Maple Grove Road for inclusion in the Greenbelt based on their contributions to the systems of agriculture, natural heritage and water resources.” They include questions about the relationship of this request to the request from Home Hardware for Municipal Council

support for a Minister's Zoning Order, concern about public notice, and seeking clarification on the potential implications of the request and the process for study of a Greenbelt expansion. Mayor Foster was in attendance and responded to questions. For background and context, Staff provided the Committee with a copy of the [Clarington Official Plan](#) - Special Study Area 2 policies, and an excerpt from the Official Plan Review – [Countryside Discussion Paper](#) (section 4.6.5) that gives some history on the Committee's past consideration of the value of this area to agriculture. Committee members commented that growth and development in the surrounding areas is increasingly challenging the ability to farm in the area and, in particular, the ability to move farm equipment on public roads.

#### Next Meeting

**Thursday, December 10, 2020 @ 7:30 pm (Virtual Meeting)**

DRAFT