



* Subject to Advisory Committee Approval *

Agricultural Advisory Committee of Clarington Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, November 9, 2023
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Location: Microsoft Teams
or Meeting Room 1C, Municipal Administrative Centre
40 Temperance St., Bowmanville, Ontario
Members Present: Henry Zekveld (Chair), Tom Barrie, Eric Bowman, Brenda Metcalf,
John Cartwright, Mitch Morawetz (DRFA), Jordan McKay, Craig
Rickard, Ryan Cullen
Regrets: Richard Rekker, Councillor Zwart, Jennifer Knox
Staff Present: Sylvia Jennings, Jane Wang – Planning and Infrastructure Services
Guests: Stacey Jibb – Invest Durham; Brenna Bizley, Jennifer Hoban –
Barrett Centre at Durham College

1. Welcome and Introductions

Henry Zekveld welcomed all to the meeting, with introductions.

2. Land Acknowledgement Statement

Henry Zekveld recited Clarington's Land Acknowledgement Statement.

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Approval of Minutes of October 12, 2023

Amendment to the October 12, 2023 minutes was identified. Amy Burke was presented with a thank you card and gift of appreciation by the committee.

023-017 Moved by Tom Barrie, seconded by Eric Bowman

That the minutes of the October 12, 2023 meeting, as amended, be approved.

Carried

5. Presentations / Delegations

5a. Presentation on the Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture – Brenna Bizley, Jennifer Hoban

B. Bizley and J. Hoban shared a presentation on the work of the Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture, focusing on their urban farms located in Whitby and Ajax. The presentation started with an overview of the Barrett Centre and its inception through the Barrett Family Foundation. The Centre is based out of

the Faculty of Hospitality and Horticultural Science. The Whitby farm is focused on engaging the student population, while the newly opened Ajax farm is focused on community engagement.

The program seeks to demonstrate the viability of urban agriculture, address food insecurity, and educate the public on where food comes from and healthy eating. The farms are located in urban areas, which allows residents to access and experience farms who may otherwise not have the opportunity. The farms also act as a demonstration space that showcases various forms of urban agriculture that can be explored as sustainable and economically viable ventures. The Barrett Centre consults with schools, families, and local organizations to build their programming. Currently this includes market gardens, therapy gardens, a food literacy innovation zone, hoop houses, vertical farms, apiaries, and orchards. The first crops were planted at the Ajax farm this August, and donations were made to local food banks by October.

The Centre collaborates with many partners across Durham College and the broader Durham community to develop learning opportunities, address food insecurity, and connect the community to local food systems. The Barrett Centre particularly focuses on connecting and engaging youth with agriculture at an early age. Some methods included developing lesson plans for teachers, creating dual credit programs with local high schools, and hosting field trips for elementary students.

The Barrett Centre also shares best practices and information on farming. This includes information from an introduction to growing plants to how to build an economically viable urban agriculture business. They provide in person demonstrations and an online community portal where peers and experts can share information.

B. Bizley and J. Hoban answered questions from the Committee. Cover crops are used over the winter. Animal agriculture has not yet been incorporated into the urban farms, but it is being considered. Some of the biggest challenges they've experienced while developing the farms are rigid regulations and unexpected costs. The team cited long, complicated approval processes and higher than expected costs, such as \$112,000 to install concrete footings for their hoop houses. They noted that simplified, more flexible approvals and a clear understanding of the costs are some of the most important factors for making more urban agriculture projects viable.

H. Zekveld thanked B. Bizley and J. Hoban for their presentation.

6. Business Arising from Previous Meeting

6a. Official Plan Review – Discussion Questions – All

S. Jennings shared a discussion question with the Committee to obtain their early feedback for the Official Plan Review. The question was: What's the best way to consult with this Committee, and the broader rural and agricultural community in Clarington?

The Committee noted several strategies that would be helpful when engaging the Committee or the broader community. In person consultation is particularly

important to this community. Consultation with groups, rather than individuals, can encourage more forthright discussion. Surveys can be shared via email or online, but important notices should be sent by traditional mail. Major issues should be discussed in the community at a town hall meeting, as was done prior to the pandemic.

The Committee also noted the importance of asking specific questions with a clear relevance to the community as opposed to high-level questions. They noted that with high level plans, members of the public often struggle to connect their concerns with the content of a plan. It was suggested that the Official Plan Review consultation with the Committee take place by incorporating a small amount of consultation on a portion of the Plan into each meeting throughout the year, as opposed to fewer sessions that are high-level and longer.

6b. AACC Work Plan Review for Annual Report – All

S. Jennings shared the AACC 2023-2024 Work Plan. The Committee highlighted their accomplishments according to the Work Plan. S. Jennings will prepare a draft Annual AACC Accomplishments Report based on these items in advance of the next meeting.

6c. Update on Council Items – S. Jennings

S. Jennings provided an update on the Council items brought forward at the previous meeting including the results of motions pertaining to backyard chickens, rodenticide usage at municipal facilities, installation of a pipe to connect two farm parcels, and a proposed battery energy storage facility.

7. Correspondence, Council Items and Referrals

The following was circulated for information:

- Letter from Minister Calandra regarding proposed legislation to return lands to the Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine

8. Liaison Reports

8a. Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee – T. Barrie

None.

8b. Durham Region Federation of Agriculture – M. Morawetz

M. Morawetz provided the update. The DRFA is currently looking at the issue of battery storage sites, including two near Beaverton. The OFA convention is on November 21st and 22nd in Toronto. The DRFA will elect its executive at its meeting on November 28th.

8c. Durham Farm Connections – B. Metcalf

B. Metcalf provided the update. The Celebrate Ag Gala was a success with 210 guests and \$7,000 raised from auctions. These numbers were less than previous years, where typically \$10,000 is raised, but the organization has reserves to fund next year's programming. Durham Farm Connections is looking for ideas for next

year and new committee members. Those interested can contact Brenda Metcalf. B. Metcalf thanks the attendees and volunteers.

B. Metcalf reported that it was currently unclear if the Grade 3 agriculture education program could go forward this year, as the Town of Whitby is on strike, and the event was going to be held in the Brooklin Arena. The High School Program will be held in May. November 30th is the Durham Farm Connections Annual General Meeting, held in collaboration with Durham Farm Fresh. It will be hosted at Pingles and open to anyone interested.

8d. Durham Agricultural Economic Development Update – S. Jibb

S. Jibb provided the update. Invest Durham is now reporting annually on their progress implementing the Growing Agri-Food Durham Five-year Plan. S. Jibb and A. De Vos will be presenting on this topic to the Committee at the January meeting.

9. New Business

None

10. Date of Next Meeting

December 14, 2023

11. Adjournment

023-018 Moved by J. Cartwright, Seconded by B. Metcalf

That the meeting adjourn at 9:10 p.m.

Carried