



**MINUTES OF THE
PENINSULA AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
Committee Room No. 2, Saanich Municipal Hall
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2014 AT 7:30 PM**

Present: Mike Romaine in the Chair; John Buchanan; Linda Geggie; Bev Marley; Bob Maxwell; Nikki Tate-Straton; Ryan Vantreight; Diane Williamson; Councillors Stock (N.Saanich), Derman (Saanich), Cormier (C.Saanich) and Loveless (Sidney). Also present was Rob Kline, Ministry of Agriculture and Isobel Hoffmann, Recording Clerk.

Guests: Ray Baker, Mrs. Buchanan; Bernadette Greene, Ann Moskow, Shannon Birch
Regrets: Terry Michell

Introductions were made around the table. Members welcomed Bernadette Greene, who hopes to be a PAC member if endorsed by the supporting Councils; Bob Maxwell introduced Shannon Birch, a soil biologist currently with the Ministry of Environment.

Agenda: No additional items were added to the agenda. The Secretary advised that a Planner for North Saanich, Jamai Schile, was unable to attend to speak to the Licensed Medical Marijuana issue.
Moved by Ryan Vantreight and seconded by Nikki Tate-Straton: "That the Agenda be approved."

Carried

Minutes: **Moved by Bev Marley and Seconded by Dianne Williamson: "That the Minutes of January 9 2014 be approved."**

Carried

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Mike Romaine, as the new Chair, needs to get his signature on the bank account with Island Savings. He and Bev Marley will arrange.

2013 PAC Administrative Budget

- Copies of the Budget were distributed. Total costs for 2013 were \$8,267, an increase of \$648.85 from 2012. (*see next page for allocation of funds between municipalities*)
- The secretary advised there is a dilemma with Juan de Fuca.
- The Electoral Area joined PAC in 2011 and the cost allocation formula was changed to accommodate them, with Juan de Fuca's share being 3.18% of the total costs.
- However, with the resignation of Juan de Fuca's representative, Jim Gowans, mid-way through 2013, they withdrew from PAC as they could not find a replacement.
- Trying to allocate the costs fairly, using the new formula for the six municipalities for the first six months of the year, then using the previous formula for the remaining five municipalities seemed onerous for such a minor amount.

MOTION: Moved by Bev Marley and Seconded by Ryan Vantreight: “That it be recommended to the five supporting municipalities that they absorb the costs for Juan de Fuca for the first six months of 2013, estimated to be \$125.”

CARRIED

Allocation of Costs:

	2012	2013
Saanich	2,985.83 (39.19%)	3,307.07 (40%)
Central Saanich	2,214.04 (29.06%)	2,480.30 (30%)
North Saanich	1,161.87 (15.25%)	1,322.83 (16%)
Metchosin	783.98 (10.29%)	909.44 (11%)
Sidney	230.85 (3.03%)	248.03 (3%)
Juan de Fuca	242.28 (3.18%)	0.00**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- The intent of the Terms of Reference review was to reaffirm PAC's mandate. With the current pressures on agricultural land and the importance of food security, PAC wanted to be able to alert the Councils of current issues so they are aware of the stresses on agriculture.
- The sub-committee took the original briefing document that was submitted to the municipalities last fall, and taking into consideration comments from the Councils who responded (Central Saanich, Sidney and Metchosin), as well as comments around the table, reduced the 4-page document to one page – which has been circulated to members this evening.

Again, the purpose for the revision was to:

- reaffirm PAC's role
- consider expanding the Commission to include other municipalities on Southern Vancouver Island due to the serious issues facing farmers and agriculture today
- consider the ability to appoint up to two additional members if required

The secretary explained that current PAC membership is set at 10 members.

- However, it can't be 10 members, with two members “*in the wings just in case*” as we would not be able to determine a quorum, and it would not be fair to the “spare” members.
- PAC could ask the Councils to include a clause that allows the membership to be increased by one or two if necessary, but that additional member(s) would then be an official PAC member and the quorum ratio would be adjusted accordingly.

Councillor Derman stated:

- He has no problem with the new draft as presented this evening.
- The document identifies the role that PAC has been playing and does not overly stress advocacy.
- He doesn't think the other councils will have an issue with this revision either.
- Perhaps two additional members could be considered “liaisons” and not be a voting member.

Discussion continued:

- Questioned if the document should be presented in person to the Councils so clarification could be provided if necessary.
- It was suggested by Council representatives that a simple cover letter providing background is all that should be necessary. There is nothing alarming in the revised document to raise red flags.
- Suggested that the cover letter indicate there will be a PAC member in attendance when the issue is discussed to answer questions if necessary.
- Councillor Cormier suggested that it might be helpful for PAC to provide updates to Council on agricultural issues at some point during the year.
- A possible name change for the Commission also needs to be addressed. The only comment on this point was received from the North Saanich Agricultural Advisory Committee and they recommended the *South Island Agricultural Commission*.
- Noted that PAC's role as originally documented in the **1997 Agricultural Strategy** was in part to be an advocate for the farm community, farm programmes, tours, markets, marketing, events and activities. PAC was formed to give farmers a voice. This is covered in **Objectives #5 and #6**.
- PAC does not want to be an advocacy group but rather just support fellow farmers in a diplomatic manner.
- It may be worthwhile sending a copy of the six objectives to the Councils as a reminder of PAC's roots. A copy will also be resent to all PAC members.

Ann Moskow stated:

- The review of the Terms of Reference is in two parts: we have covered the first part here by looking at the constitution and mandate, which addresses why PAC exists and who it serves. The second part, which will complete the Terms of Reference, is how PAC operates, eg: meeting procedures and practices. This part will also include a section on conflict of interest.
- It was agreed that the Terms of Reference Sub-Committee continue with the final part of the review, which should be much simpler than the first part. The Chair and Vice-Chair will work with Ryan and Ann. Ann agreed to provide her services for this final part pro-bono.

The Chair noted that in the meantime, PAC has the draft Conflict of Interest Guidelines should any issues arise before the complete revised Terms of Reference are adopted.

CORRESPONDENCE

Durrell Creek: Response from Saanich advising Council has directed staff to:

- investigate moving to Phase II of the original Floodplain Management Plan;
- look at pre-approvals should there be a need to do manual pumping in 2014
- explore with landowners the creation of a Local Service Area to construct and operate an irrigation pumping station at Interurban Road;
- re-initiate negotiations with the Federal Correctional Institute (Wilkinson Road Jail) for access to the portion of the creek on federal property;
- staff continue to maintain Durrell Creek between Interurban Road and Wilkinson Road in a manner consistent with other natural water courses in Saanich.

Councillor Derman advised that permission has been granted by Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Wilkinson Road Jail to deal with the creek.

Bob Maxwell pointed that the issue of Durrell Creek drainage was brought to us by a local farmer, Ray Galey. PAC was an “advocate” for this farmer: we asked for information from Saanich and after discussion sent a request to Saanich Council to look into the matter. This is a good example of how PAC works.

Linda Geggie noted the action that Saanich Council is taking is a good step forward. Saanich has over 20 km of waterways and perhaps PAC may want to look at drainage issues in a long-term fashion. Saanich has regular maintenance schedules, taking into consideration the classification of these waterways and how to improve those that drain farmland, called agricultural waterways. Saanich tries to use forward thinking and be proactive when dealing with its waterways. Perhaps PAC could help prioritize so the farmland is kept in a productive state.

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES – Current

- **Goose Management Strategy (Bev Marley, Rob Kline)**
 - The January 25th workshop was successful with about 40/45 people attending.
 - It was a diverse group although disappointing there were not more farmers, but acknowledged this is a busy time of year for farmers.
 - There was a high level of interest and no one was opposed to the proposed cull.
 - Attendees were from environmental groups, land groups, and hunters.
 - It was recognized that it is important to involve the environmental side of the equation as there has been huge devastation to the natural habitat and endangered plants, as well as farm crops.
 - Up until now, we have been focussing on agriculture, but we have to widen the scope.
 - If we can reach out to other communities who as yet don't have a significant problem with geese, perhaps we can keep it under control better. They should act now and not wait until they have 7,000+ geese like the Peninsula and Saanich.
 - New brochures and posters have been prepared by the CRD and there will be a rotating display at the municipal halls. Mike Waters is in charge of this.
 - Suggested that libraries and recreation centres are also good locations.
 - Another meeting is scheduled for next week; egg addling may be discussed.
 - Noted that many of the nesting areas are not on farmland; discussion with the broader community is needed to address this point.
 - The goal is to get each municipality on board so that the word can spread; not all seem willing.
 - Councillor Cormier noted that Central Saanich has a newsletter; information needs to be received well in advance to make the publishing deadlines.
 - Social media is a good tool to use, as well as PAC's email list.
 - Bev noted that because we are discussing a pilot cull, we need to be careful of the far reaching effects of social media while at the same time reach those who are directly affected by the devastation caused by the growing geese populations.
 - It is realised that the media needs to be advised but we need to ensure the correct information is being released and taken in the right context.
 - No decision has been reached as yet on when or where the pilot cull will take place. This will probably be discussed at the February 25th meeting.

Noted it would be helpful to have an email data base of farmers, farm groups, and those involved in other aspects of agriculture. The South Island Direct Farm Marketing Association has a list of farmers, but this could be expanded to include other groups and organizations.

- **Deer Management Strategy (Ryan Vantreight)**

- There has been a change in the Central Saanich permitting process for dealing with hunters discharging firearms on farmland.
- He worked with Central Saanich Police and staff on the new permit process.
- For \$5 farmers can get a permit describing the discharge area.
- The hunter has to be “sponsored” by the farmer and the hunter has to obtain a permit to discharge a firearm in Central Saanich – so this doesn't just apply to one particular farm property, and allows farmers to “pool” hunters.
- This changes nothing on the provincial and federal side, which would be a lengthy process.
- Central Saanich decided to change their bylaw and this makes it easier for farmers.
- There is one liaison person to deal with – Paul Brailey, a Central Saanich police officer.
- All other rules and regulations still apply in terms of setbacks and distance from a roadway or structure (100 m). Hunters are only allowed to use a shotgun and buckshot; no single projectiles. Bows and crossbows need 150 m distance.
- All provincial and federal permits are still needed for crop protection outside of hunting season that the farmer needs to get.
- Smaller farms may not have the required setbacks.
- On the whole, this is a more streamlined and easier process for both the farmer and the hunter.
- Last year the CRD and PAC held a successful hunter/farmer workshop and he has been in touch with Jeff Weightman to arrange a 2014 date – perhaps early May. It is good to have all the decision-makers in one room. The 2013 meeting included provision for geese as well.

- **CRD Food Systems Strategy (Linda Geggie)**

- The Food Strategy is on its way again, after a long hiatus.
- A second Meeting will be held next week.
- Feedback will be sought from the CRD municipalities.
- Other parts of the strategy will involve tangible things related to agriculture that need work
 - such as drainage and composting.
- A number of workshops and open houses will be planned throughout the process.

- **ALC/ALR Core Review**

Linda noted there was a rally on the weekend at the Legislature to protect farmland in response to the proposed Core Review of the ALC and ALR. She advised that over the next few weeks we will see legislation come forward on the ALC Act and PAC may wish to respond to this accordingly.

- **Natural Areas Sub-committee Presentation**

Linda stated she made a presentation to the Natural Areas Sub-Committee who are interested in the sustainability of agricultural land. There was also a presentation from the Farmland Trust. The sub-committee made a Motion to put forward a request to Saanich Council to do a feasibility study to look at adding a farmland trust for Saanich.

PAC MEMBERSHIP

The sub-committee recommended the appointment of Bernadette Greene as a 10th member of PAC for 2014. Accordingly, letters have been sent to the supporting municipalities for endorsement.

AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY – Sub-Committee Reports

Water: (vacant)

- Noted that Michael Doehnel is still attending the Water Advisory Committee Meetings and the Saanich Peninsula Water Advisory Commission as a representative for agriculture.
- In May last year Michael assumed that due to the proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference, as he was a past member of the Commission and not a current member, he announced would have to resign from the water advisory committees.
- The CRD has been advised by Michael of his resignation and PAC has been waiting to have its new members finalized before appointing a replacement.
- However, it was agreed that Michael does a fine job representing agriculture, and Councillor Loveless advised that the political members of these committees have a high regard for Michael's opinions with respect to water issues. It would be a shame to lose him.
- PAC suggested that we approach Michael again to see if he will change his mind and stay on as the agricultural representative for PAC on both the WAC and the SPWAC.

Councillor Derman advised that the agricultural water rates for 2014 remain unchanged.

Farm Economics (Terry Michell) – not present.

Agricultural Land Base (Mike Romaine) Nothing to report.

Resource Stewardship (Vacant)

In view of the proposed additions of drainage and composting issues to be included as part of the CRD's Food Strategy document, perhaps this sub-committee should be revived. Linda will have more information at the next meeting on the Strategy.

The CRD's Integrated Watershed Management Programme is hosting a free workshop on March 11th "**Working on Contour: Holistic Water Management for a Changing Climate**". The intended audience includes working farmers, municipal and provincial staff and rural land owners within the CRD. Participants are limited. Registration required. More information: contact nbandringa@crd.bc.ca

Education and Outreach (Linda Geggie)

- She is working on the March 6th Farmer2Farmer workshop being held at the Saanich Fairgrounds.
- There will be 15 farm presenters (including Bob Maxwell).
- The Island Chef's Collaborative will be providing lunch.

- Information and Registration at www.farmer2farmer.ca
- She thanked PAC for providing \$500 towards the event.

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

A draft copy was circulated; members were asked to look at the highlighted sections that require some input or revision, and let the secretary know the changes by the end of next week at the latest. The report will be sent to the Municipalities together with the administration costs for last year.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Information has been circulated via email to PAC members on the following events:

- ◆ South Vancouver Island Direct Farm Market's Winter Meeting – February 20, 2014
- ◆ Farmer2Farmer – March 6, 2014
- ◆ Saanich Peninsula Healthy Communities “You Are Where You Eat” - March 27, 2014

Councillor Cormier stated a reminder for the March 27 “You Are Where You Eat” forum will be sent out in the next week or two. 100 seats are available. To date, 85 invites have been sent out. Registration is slow, but expected to pick up closer to the date.

OTHER BUSINESS:

North Saanich: Licenced Medical Marijuana

Jamai Schile from North Saanich was unable to attend the meeting to elaborate on this issue. Councillor Stock advised that Council voted to prohibit granting licenses to grow medical marijuana in North Saanich.

- However, an application was received by the municipality on January 16 from the Cannon Group to purchase the mushroom farm on McTavish Road on the same side as the Reserve and run as a licensed medical marijuana operation.
- Because this application was received before the February 3, 2014 prohibition, the municipality’s lawyers have advised we have to approve it.
- Members on the Agricultural Advisory Committee and Council members felt this use is more suitable in an industrial area rather than agricultural land.
- Security fences are required around the perimeter as well as lighting.
- Apparently there are only three inspectors for the whole of Canada; this is insufficient - the process has not been properly thought out.

Discussion noted there are a lot of misconceptions over licensed medial marijuana. Perhaps it might be helpful to hear the case “for” and “against”, as well as current licensing and legislation regulations. Marijuana is an agricultural crop; it might be educational to get the facts because it is likely there will be more applications in the future.

Municipal Strategic Plans

Councillor Cormier raised the point about municipal Strategic Plans and how they are used as a work plan for the year. She doesn't know what PAC has done in the past, but if PAC were to ask the municipalities what is in their strategic plans for the coming year – determine if there are there agricultural issues where support is needed, perhaps PAC could take this into account when considering their speakers throughout the year.

Ann Moskow pointed out that PAC did look at the CRD Strategic Plan (the Food Strategy). A strategic planning session to determine where all the municipalities stand on agricultural issues and how PAC could assist in these areas is a good way of providing support.

The Chair offered to work with Councillor Cormier to draft something for the next PAC meeting.

Members were asked to think about possible speakers for 2014.

WEBSITE - <http://saanich.ca/living/afs/index.html>

Members were reminded to pass along information they wish to be posted on the site.

Adjournment: On a Motion from Bev Marley, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm

Next Meeting: The next PAC meeting will be held on **THURSDAY March 13, 2014**, 7:30 pm at the Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2.