



**MINUTES OF THE
PENINSULA AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**
Committee Room No. 2, Saanich Municipal Hall
THURSDAY, JULY 3, 2014 AT 7:30 PM

Present: Mike Romaine in the Chair; John Buchanan, Bev Marley; Bob Maxwell; Nikki Tate-Straton; Terry Michell; Ryan Vantreight; Dianne Williamson; Councillors Derman (Saanich), Cormier (C.Saanich), Stock (N.Saanich) and Loveless (Sidney). Also present was Isobel Hoffmann, Recording Clerk.

Guests: Jamie Schille and Coralie Breen, Planners, N. Saanich; Dallas **, representing the Roost.

Regrets: Linda Geggie; Bernadette Greene; Mary Alice Johnson & Tom Henry.

Minutes: Moved b Bob Maxwell and Seconded by Bev Marley: "That the Minutes of May 8 and June 12, 2014 be adopted as circulated."

Agenda: The Agenda was approved as distributed.

Note: PAC normally does not meet in July; this is a special meeting at the request of North Saanich to consider the redevelopment of the property at 1819 McTavish Road. As there was no quorum at the June meeting, a few other items have been included on the agenda.

The Chair made some quick comments re the June 12 meeting:

- Ministry of Environment to be requested to provide an update on the Goose Management Strategy;
- The province has decided that medical marijuana does not qualify for farm tax status; other comments have been made by the province regarding municipalities having the opportunity to regulate and/or prohibit MMR on commercial or agricultural land. Municipalities cannot allow a prohibited use but they can restrict it.
- PAC's comments regarding farmland trusts to be sent to the municipalities for reference purposes.

1819 McTAVISH ROAD – DEVELOPMENT PERMIT #DP2013-19

– Mixed Use Agricultural Building

Information was distributed to PAC members, and Jamie Schille and Coralie Breen from North Saanich Planning Department were present to elaborate on the development permit application. Dallas Bohl, co-owner of the property, was also present.

Ms. Schille stated:

- PAC is being asked to comment as to form and character of the proposed redevelopment.
- The property is within a development permit area.
- There are strict guidelines for the development permit.
- PAC's motion cannot contain comments regarding the proposed uses of the buildings.
- The application has been submitted to the Committee of the Whole; this allows Council an opportunity to discuss various proposals. If supported, the application moves on for Council consideration. At that time, Council can reject or approve it, or send it back to staff and/or others for comment.
- In this case, Council has asked that PAC provide comments.

- In response to a comment from the Chair that PAC would be looking at the proposal only from an agricultural perspective rather than the building itself, Ms. Schille stated that the North Saanich Agricultural Advisory Committee had the same concern.
- PAC and the farmers are part of the agricultural community, and while not necessarily experienced on design or style, PAC has a strong voice.
- The questions are:
- is this development compatible with agriculture?
- It is a mixed used building – and is this appropriate?
- Do you have concerns regarding the size, style, location of the buildings?

Dallas Bohl stated:

- This is a 10-acre farm, with 5 acres planted in grain and a mill on site as well as a bakery.
- Two acres are planted in grapes that generate a lot of wine.
- 1 acre supports fruit and vegetables, sheep and chickens.
- We have outgrown the existing farm buildings and need wine cellars for storage, as well as a tasting room.
- In response to questions, he stated there will be parking, but no underground parking. No arable land will be used for this purpose.
- North Saanich has advised one of the entrances close to the intersection of McTavish and East Saanich will have to be closed.
- We cannot continue farming without additional facilities.
- We have another 5-acre lease agreement for growing grain.
- In response to questions about the chosen design, he stated there seems to be no set style in North Saanich. We are trying to come up with a concept that will showcase a total farm experience.
- The original concept came from Scottish design, where animals were kept within the interior courtyard.

PAC comments noted:

- Some examples of agricultural building designs throughout the Peninsula include the Prairie Inn, Matticks Farm, Michell's Farm Market, buildings with shed style roofs.
- This building, as proposed, will create a legacy, and the family may continue to hear undesirable comments about it now and then.
- The long-term effects of this style of building on the community need to be considered.
- Everyone has their own opinions and ideas, but with respect to form and character, a castle theme with towers and turrets would not necessarily be everyone's visions in terms of agricultural use, or be a good fit with the vision for the community.
- Concern was expressed about the size of the building, noting it will be a huge change to what is there now.

Councillor Stock left the meeting

Ms. Schille stated the proposal has highlighted some of the gaps in the current zoning bylaws of North Saanich, and perhaps the building proposed would be better suited to a larger property that is further away from residential areas. The municipality has had complaints about the Roost's historical value and is conscious about this. She has tried to guide the applicants to reduce the height of the tower, and it has been reduced from the original plan, but regardless, the size conforms to the bylaw. The tower is a feature, and will be used as a view tower. The existing buildings will be retained and the new

Construction is 11,644 square feet. The ALC requires 5% maximum coverage and this building is under that requirement, as well as conforming to the setbacks and height.

Councillor Loveless stated:

- Farmers have to do things differently to survive in today's economic climate.
- This family is doing what it has to to survive and stay on the farm, making good use of the land.

Councillor Cormier stated

- There are many landmarks on the Peninsula.
- When the Sidney Hotel was rebuilt 7 years ago, she thought it was too modern, but now it seems to work with the community and is accepted.
- We need to do whatever we can to help our farmers and the local economy.
- While this design may be better suited to a 100-acre property rather than a corner 10-acre property, it may grow on the community after a time.
- It seems that most of the farm activity will be kept towards the centre of the property, behind the buildings, which will lessen the impact on the community.

Discussion continued and the following points were noted by Commission members:

- No variances have been requested by the applicant for this application.
- This proposal is a way for the family to continue to make a living on the farm.
- One the building has been there for a few years, people will get used to it.
- Diversification is vital to be successful in agriculture today.
- The proposed accommodations on the second floor will provide added income.
- Some members did not personally like the chosen style of the building, or thought it fit in with the area. However, it was noted that the farmer is trying to make a living and trying to find a balance.

Ms. Schille noted that the applicant has agreed to plant vines and trellis work on the outside of the building to soften its appearance.

The Chair summarized the comments noting that there needs to be some tweaking of the design, and perhaps we could suggest some guidelines for the municipality for future developments.

Considerable discussion continued to craft a Motion. Eventually, the following was decided:

MOTION: Moved by Bob Maxwell and Seconded by Terry Michell: “That PAC prefers farmland structures that respect the past and capture the mood and identity of the Saanich Peninsula to benefit our unique agricultural businesses and produce. There are examples of touchstone architecture in the community, such as the Prairie Inn, Brentwood Bay village, Saanich Fairgrounds, Michell's store and the current Roost building. Although PAC does not feel that the current plans reflected that form and character, PAC believes that if future development plans can reflect this distinct regional character it will contribute to retaining and enhancing an overall regional theme that will aid agri-tourism and related agriculture businesses. PAC believes that the function of the existing and future business on the subject property is beneficial to agriculture and we are generally supportive of the project.”

CARRIED

Ms. Schille stated an open house is planned for the early part of July. Under the current bylaws, the municipality cannot deny this application. She hopes the letters received from the community and comments from the Commission will encourage the applicant to soften the appearance of the building a little.

Agricultural Economic Development Strategy Report – North Saanich

Information was distributed to PAC members and Jamie Schille was present to elaborate.

Ms. Schille stated:

- North Saanich hired a consultant to assist with the Economic Development Strategy. The municipality's Agricultural Advisory Committee was also involved.
- Based on the report adopted by Council in 2010, she put together an implementation plan in support of moving forward with the strategy.
- There are a lot of plans and ideas – but how do we put them into action.
- Council is aware of the recent changes to the PAC's Terms of Reference and there are opportunities for PAC to assist with the Strategy.
- Key activities have been identified in North Saanich and the Peninsula, things that will benefit the farmers and the Peninsula.
- She read some of the key points from the Strategy, noting page 7 identifies 26 actions; the ones that PAC can identify with are: **1.2; 2.4; 2.5; 3.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5; 5.5; 5.7 and 5.8.**
- The intention is now to draft a Terms of Reference, which will be a collaborative process.
- North Saanich already makes a financial contribution to PAC, but is considering a “fee for service” arrangement to increase the revenue to the Commission.
- Budget approval is not finalized and a proposal will be forwarded to Council.
- If Council desires, and if PAC would be willing to assist, then we can move forward with the plans.
- She felt the process would be stronger if PAC were involved.
- The implementation of the proposed actions will not happen overnight.
- She asked Commission members to think about this over the summer.

Councillor Cormier stated:

- She is very pleased to see this suggestion.
- Central Saanich held its Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting last week, and we also have a plan with priorities but have not had the funds or the staff to move things forward.
- She sits on the sub-committee that is developing the Terms of Reference the Central Saanich Economic Development Strategy.
- Working with PAC and Peninsula municipalities in a collaborative manner would be beneficial.
- A similar venture has been successful on Salt Spring Island; perhaps a couple of members from the Salt Spring Alliance could be invited to a PAC meeting to advise on the process that was used to implement the Island's plan.

Discussion noted the following points:

- How much more of a role can PAC play in the community?
- We are a small group of volunteers, who are also busy farmers
- Every meeting we attend takes away time from the farm.
- We would need to have more staff support to carry out this work.

Ms.Schille stated:

- We do have a staff person who could help.
- She pointed out this is process is policy based, not project based. It will identify and prioritize projects.
- For example, establishing a Peninsula brand to assist farmers with marketing.

CARRY for further discussion at the September meeting; members were asked to review the document and the policies outlined above.

Ms. Schille and Ms. Breen left the meeting

1020 BECKWITH AVENUE – ALR APPLICATION & REDEVELOPMENT

This application was discussed at the June 12, 2014 PAC meeting, with Neil Findlow, Saanich Planner attending to explain the application. Discussion took place but no recommendation could be made as there was no quorum. Information has been redistributed and Planning is asking that PAC provide comments as soon as possible in order that the application can proceed to Council in conjunction with the Panama Flats application.

Members who had not been present at the June meeting reviewed the plans provided by the Planning Department, asked questions about the proposed boundaries and the purpose of the application. Other members offered comments based on the discussions at the June meeting.

Discussion noted the following:

- Should PAC be recommending subdivision of farmland?
- The land is being under-utilized at the present time.
- Access to the farmland will be improved, allowing farm vehicles to access the farms without traveling on the municipal roads.
- It was also noted there is no loss of agricultural land – it is simply a readjustment of boundaries to make the farm work better.
- The Commission was generally supportive of the application, with a few concerns, which will be passed to the Planning and Parks Departments:
 - Equestrian use of the trails should be considered
 - The maps provided are not clear regarding the proposed boundaries or trail locations
 - Perhaps a “before” and “after” plan could be provided

The secretary will ask Mr. Findlow, Saanich Planner to answer the concerns noted above.

Councillor Derman left the meeting

SAANICH FAIR 2014

PAC is being asked to pass a motion to authorize the expenditure of up to \$500 towards supplies and honorariums for this year's Saanich Fair.

MOTION: Moved by Ryan Vantreight and Seconded by John Buchanan: “That PAC authorize the expenditure of up to \$500 towards the 2014 Saanich Fair.”

CARRIED

REGIONAL DEER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Councillor Loveless advised at the June 25, 2014 CRD Board meeting, a report to the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee on the Regional Deer Management Strategy was considered.

The recommended motion on the report was to conclude the implementation of the RDMS one year pilot project in September, 2014 as per the pilot project terms of reference. However, after discussion, the following alternative motion was passed:

“That the Planning Transportation and Protective Services Committee receive the report RSP-PPS-2014-11 for information and that the PTPSC recommends to the CRD Board that staff review budget and time line implications of extending deer management services into the future and report back to the PTPSC.”

Councillor Loveless suggested that PAC send a letter in support of extending the project.

Discussion noted:

- There has been no consultation with the farmers in the region and we would definitely support an extension of the project.
- A considerable amount of time, money (as much as \$150,000) and energy has been spent to date on this strategy and it seems a complete waste of resources to simply shelve it rather than continue to move forward with a tangible outcome.
- Oak Bay was planning a cull but the provincial government can no long provide the necessary equipment.
- In the meantime, our farmers have to continue to deal with the devastation caused by the growing population of deer without help from the province or the local municipalities, enduring crop losses, the high cost of fencing and other deterrents.

It was recommended that PAC write a letter to the CRD Board, on behalf of the farmers, requesting a meeting to discuss the continuation of the Regional Deer Management Strategy, and asking that the PTPSC consider the implications of not moving forward with the strategy.

Councillor Loveless advised she believes this matter will be considered at the Board's July 14, 2014 meeting. The secretary will ensure that PAC's letter is submitted by that date.

Adjournment: On a Motion from Ryan Vantreight, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm

Next Meeting: The next regular PAC meeting is scheduled for **September 11, 2014**, 7:30 pm

I hereby certify this is a true and correct copy of the Minutes.

Isobel Hoffmann
Recording Secretary