



Office of the Mayor

K. Lorette, General Manager, Planning and Protective Services
CRD Planning and Protective Services Committee
625 Fisgard Street
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 1R7

August 31, 2017

Dear Mr. Lorette and Planning & Protective Services Committee members,

Re: Regional Food & Farmland Trust

The District of North Saanich submits this letter of support for the advancing the feasibility and development of a regional farmland trust and farmland acquisition fund. Mayor and Council passed a motion on May 25, 2014 supporting this initiative. The Notice of Motion is as follows:

WHEREAS the Capital Region is working to support agriculture and farming through the Regional Sustainability Strategy and the Regional Food Systems Sub-Strategy AND WHEREAS individual municipalities have begun efforts to work regionally to support these aims

BE IT RESOLVED that the District of North Saanich work in concert with the CRD and other regional municipalities to support a regional farm trust and farm land acquisition fund to acquire a supply of farm land, and including land already acquired, for lease to farmers, including incubator farm plots for new farmers.

AND FURTHER RESOLVED that the CRD Board be notified of this resolution and encouraged to work actively toward this initiative

258 That the District of North Saanich work in concert with the CRD and other regional municipalities to support a regional farm trust and farm land acquisition fund to acquire a supply of farm land, and including land already acquired, for lease to farmers, including incubator farm plots for new farmers and that the CRD Board be notified of this resolution and encouraged to work actively toward this initiative.

Subsidiary Motion

259 That the initiative to work in concert with the CRD and other regional municipalities to support a regional farm trust and farm land acquisition fund be referred to the Tri-Municipal meeting.

260 That the initiative also be referred to the District Agricultural Advisory Commission.

On June 5, 2014 the Agricultural Advisory Commission discussed the referral and passed the following resolution in response to Council:

23-AAC DISCUSSION: The Agricultural Advisory Commission agrees in principle with the idea of farmland trust and recommends to Council that the District of North Saanich work in concert with the CRD and other regional municipalities to support a regional farm trust and farm land acquisition fund to acquire a supply of farm land, including land already acquired, for lease to farmers at fair market value, and incubator farm plots for new farmers provided that the regional farm trust and farmland acquisition fund address the following concerns:

- full public consultation process on all acquisitions and expenses;
- a cap to be set on taxpayer funding;
- possible unfair competition of existing local farmlands must be addressed in a fair and equitable way; and
- a management and sound business plan must be presented.

And, further resolved that the CRD Board be notified of this resolution and encouraged to work actively toward this initiative.

Food and farmland trusts provide long-term protection of farmland and are one mechanism used to help farmers secure affordable, long-term land tenures in the face of increasing land prices. They are voluntary agreements involving the sale or donation of property or a perpetual conservation covenant by a will/ estate of a land owner to a government agency (e.g., District of North Saanich) or a private, non-for-profit land trust organization (e.g., Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust) and are intended to complement the existing provincially designated Agricultural Land Reserve.

A food and farmland trust can also broaden its mandate to help strengthen the economic viability of local agriculture by:

- 1) becoming the coordinating body to promote and develop economic opportunities for local farmers;
- 2) increasing local agricultural training and mentoring opportunities for existing and new farmers;
- 3) supporting the implementation of beneficial farm management practices; and
- 4) advocating for policies to preserve and enhance regional agriculture.

A broader mandate for the proposed trust would not only be consistent with the "North Saanich Agricultural Plan", it would also be consistent with the "Whole Community Agriculture Strategy" and "The Economic Development Strategy for Agriculture in North Saanich." Thus, the AAC and Staff are in support of the concept of a regional food and farmland trust and acquisition fund and fully support feasibility and further exploration moving forward of this important mechanism to increase land access in the CRD.

Yours truly,


Mayor Alice Finall