

MINUTES OF A MEETING

Regional Food and Agriculture Task Force

Wednesday October 25, 2017

10:00 AM –12:00 PM

Commons Room– Capital Regional District 625 Fisgard St., Victoria, BC

ATTENDEES:

Bruce Greig
Bernadette Greene
Director Finall
Erich Kelch
Fiona Deveraux
Gerard Leblanc
Jane Evans
Fiona Deveraux
Linda Geggie
Rob Buchan
Robin Tunnicliffe
Virginie Lavallee-Picard

CRD STAFF: Jeff Weightman, Kaeley Jeffery

REGRETS: Bob Maxwell, Terry Michell; Rudi Wallace

FACILITATION

The meeting was chaired by Virginie Lavallee-Picard, calling it to order at 10:08 am.

1.0 WELCOME

CRD staff Jeff Weightman welcomed participants.

2.0 Director Finall COMMENTS

A recent tour of Haliburton Farms made it clear that there is currently not enough being done for farms and there is risk of losing farming capacity. It may be beneficial to have them present at a Board Meeting and/or to planners within the region so they can see the importance of farming and agriculture.

3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus

4.0 APPROVAL OF THE JULY 27, 2017 MINUTES

The minutes were approved by consensus

5.0 UPDATES ON OLD BUSINESS

a. Update on RFFLT feasibility study process

Process was approved by the Board during the September meeting. Next step is to have Terms of Reference set out by 2018 to begin the request for approval process.

It is noted that the Board has concerns regarding a trust being the finite answer so it is recommended to keep an open mind and explore a range of options to improve food and agriculture. When addressing the Board it is good to keep wording open.

b. Update on National Food Policy recommendations

The report has been drafted and is currently with the GM for final editing and will be sent to the November 22 committee meeting for approval. There is still time for input and small changes if necessary.

c. Update on CRD Board Priorities – agricultural infrastructure needs/abattoir

The Board considers the lack of abattoir on the island important enough to make it a strategic priority to further look in to.

It will cost \$50 000 to study. We will invest \$25 000 and look to the Ministry of Agriculture to match \$25,000.

Lack of barns on the island, and barns being used for storage rather than for agriculture purposes was also brought up and considered for further study.

6.0 PROJECT LEAD REPORTS

Soils/drainage: Soils need more organic matter. This is currently a challenge due to competition from commercial farms making it difficult to get it at low cost. Drainage is currently a problem but all municipalities appear serious to solve it. Central Saanich has made some headway with Maber flats. Still need a drainage management plan.

Agricultural extension officers have been used in the past. It may be beneficial to bring them back.

First Nations: There will be a food partnership program pairing up children with elders in Spring 2018. They will prepare and cook food for a community meal.

A beach is still in the process of being selected for the shellfish initiative. Recently urchins and crabs harvested with black insides were reported. Dumping spots are still currently approved at some spots in the Salish Sea.

An ethnobotany trail will be developed to create a living, breathing ecosystem. It will be volunteer run.

Mary Hayes Health Centre acquired a brush cutter and it is possible to partner up with them to apply for the tractor/truck.

Economic Development: Long term initiative dependent on higher priorities. It may be beneficial to gather statistics and report on them annually to identify gaps as well as have a food metrics round table.

City Folk Farm Folk is another funding option to support some work, though they appear to only fund the start-up phase by providing farmers a rebate at the end of the start-up phase.

Indoor Market: A location for an indoor, all year, farmers market is still being sought.

Wildlife: An education program for 2018 is being planned training people on farms how to addle Canada Geese eggs.

7.0 REGIONAL FOOD AND FARMLAND TRUST TERMS OF REFERENCE INPUT

Discussion ensued around the Regional Food and Farmland Trust Terms of Reference where input was provided on the drafted Terms of Reference.

8.0 NEW BUSINESS

It was discussed how subscription services may be beneficial to farmers.

Hoyne, a local company purchases subscription boxes for their staff during summer months. The CRA allows tax deductions for up to \$500 for staff gifts which they use to write off these gifts. This could be highly beneficial to both employers and farmers as they have more funds at the beginning of farming season.

The Good Food Summit is being held at Songhees Wellness Centre in Esquimalt occurring November 16 and 17.

9.0 NEXT MEETING

To be determined. Will occur sometime at the end of November.

ACTION 1: (Jeff)

Complete Terms of Reference

ACTION 2: (All)

Consider attending Good Food Summit

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/good-food-summit-2017-tickets-37018918582>