

MINUTES OF A MEETING

Regional Food and Agriculture Task Force

Thursday February 15, 2018

9:00 AM –10:30 AM

Meeting Room 658 – Capital Regional District 625 Fisgard St., Victoria, BC

ATTENDEES:

Jane Evans

Linda Geggie

Virginie Lavallee-Picard

Erich Kelch

Derek Masselink

Robin Tunnicliffe

Rudi Wallace

Director Ken Williams

CRD STAFF: Jeff Weightman, Kaeley Jeffery

REGRETS: Rob Buchan, Bernadette Greene, Fiona Deveraux, Gerard Leblanc, Bob Maxwell, Terry Michell

FACILITATION

The meeting was facilitated by Virginie Lavallee-Picard, the meeting was called to order at 9:06 am.

1.0 WELCOME

CRD staff Jeff Weightman welcomed participants.

2.0 DIRECTOR WILLIAMS' COMMENTS

Director Williams provided a brief introduction to the group and all Task Force members introduced themselves.

3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4.0 APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 23, 2017 MINUTES

The minutes were approved by consensus.

5.0 UPDATES ON OLD BUSINESS

a. Food and farmland access feasibility access study process update

The study terms of reference were completed in December 2017 and presented at the January 24, 2018 Planning and Protective Services Committee meeting, the Committee and CRD Board supported the terms of reference and an RFP was posted on February 26 2018.

Comments from the Board discussion emphasized considering a range of options to support agriculture with differing levels of involvement for the CRD and other local governments. Farmers and farm groups must also be involved in these discussions as they are great resources and it is good for them to know that they're engaged in the process.

b. ALR/ALC Revitalization Consultation Process

Jeff attended an ALR/ALC revitalization consultation session in Nanaimo. The Ministry of Agriculture put out a request for stakeholder engagement using a Minister's Appointed ALR/ALC Committee which was received by the CRD. Jeff provided a briefing containing feedback from the task force, Regional Growth Strategy, Food and Agriculture Strategy. The panel members were receptive.

There is still an opportunity for input by individually filling out an online survey or drafting formal input and recommendations. The submission deadline is April 30. If the Task Force would like to submit recommendations, the recommendations and the report would need to be approved by the Planning and Protective Services Committee on March 28 and again by the CRD Board April 11. The Task Force discussed the value of providing input and suggested CRD staff draft a report for Committee and Board consideration.

b. National Food Policy recommendations update

A letter of recommendations for a National Food Policy from the Task Force was approved by the Board and sent to the Federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. A response was received stating that all of the feedback is still being reviewed and a summarized "What We Heard" report will be released in early 2019.

c. Agricultural infrastructure needs/abattoir letter to the BC Minister of Agriculture

A letter was sent to the Provincial Minister of Agriculture regarding matching resources to fund research for food and agriculture infrastructure in the CRD. A response has not yet been received.

6.0 2018 WORK PLAN

Wildlife:

An egg addling workshop is being planned to run prior to egg laying season in April. Please advise of this opportunity to anyone who might be interested. The workshop will take place at Saanich Fairgrounds in mid-March.

A consultant and the Canadian Wildlife Service were booked to present the approved permitting protocols and techniques.

Drainage:

Identified as a 2018 Task Force priority, the main focus is storm water, flow volume control and contaminate reduction.

Natalie Bandringa from CRD Environmental Protection presented to the Task Force on current projects and potential tools, and practices to share with farmers and municipalities (if they haven't already implemented them).

Soil betterments/Organic Matter Recycling:

Another 2018 Task Force priority, that is still in progress. Jeff will continue to work with other divisions at staff level to determine where the Task Force can provide input on food and agriculture.

Box Program Tax Incentive Workshop:

Hoyne, a local brewing company is using Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) boxes as an annual employee tax free gift. Hoyne purchases CSA farm boxes for their staff during May-October. The CRA allows an annual tax free gift for up to \$500 for employees which Hoyne uses to provide these gifts. This use of the tax free gift could be highly beneficial to share with both employers and farmers to help provide farmers with early season sales certainty prior to planting at the beginning of farming season.

The Task Force discussed partnering with VIATEC, Chamber of Commerce and other local business groups to host a workshop to disseminate more information.

7.0 CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR DISCUSSION

Discussion ensued around potentially naming a new Chair and Vice Chair for the Task Force meetings. The current Chair Virginie Lavallee Piccard and Vice Chair Derek Masselink will remain.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

Will occur in approximately two and a half months.

There was a general consensus that more notice would be beneficial prior to the meeting. Jeff responded that the doodle poll was sent out two to three weeks in advance but depending on how quickly the poll was filled out, a decision was not made until closer to the date.

9.0 NEW BUSINESS

It was further discussed how Community Supported Agriculture box subscription services are beneficial to farmers.

ACTION 1: (Jeff)

Send box program and ALC meeting information to task force members

ACTION 2: (All)

Recruit attendees for egg addling workshop. Jeff will have more information following consultant confirmation.

ACTION 3: (Jeff)

Meet with Natalie to determine the best way to share drainage information, and consider a presentation to Peninsula Agriculture and Area Commission.