

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2097.

The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

February 11, 2025

A meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 in Meeting Room 1-B, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:30 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: T. Barrie, Clarington
Z. Cohoon, Member at Large, Chair
R. Death, Whitby
N. Guthrie, Ajax
J. McKay, Durham Farm Fresh
G. O'Connor, Member at Large
D. Risebrough, Member at Large
H. Schillings, Member at Large
B. Smith, Uxbridge, Vice-Chair
D. Stevenson, Oshawa
N. Swain, Scugog, Vice-Chair, attended the meeting at 7:38 PM
G. Taylor, Pickering
T. Watpool, Brock
*** denotes members of the Committee participating electronically**

Absent: B. Hulshof, Uxbridge
M. Shiers, Durham Region Federation of Agriculture
M. Somerville, Member at Large
W. Wotten, Regional Councillor

Staff

Present: A. De Vos, Program Specialist, Department of Planning and Economic Development
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
M. Scott, Project Planner, Department of Planning and Economic Development
K. Smith, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
L. Talling, Acting Manager, Agricultural & Rural Economic Development, Department of Planning and Economic Development

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by B. Smith, Seconded by H. Schillings,
That the minutes of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting
held on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, be adopted.

CARRIED

4. **Presentations**

A) Growing Agri-Food Durham Annual Update – Lori Talling & Allison de Vos, Invest Durham

Lori Talling, Acting Manager, Agricultural & Rural Economic Development, and Allison de Vos, Program Specialist, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to Growing Agri-Food Durham Annual Update.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Purpose
- Goal Areas
 - Goal 1: Retain and expand local food businesses
 - Goal 2: Streamline the regulation and approval process for agri-food businesses
 - Goal 3: Enable and encourage agriculture related and on-farm diversified uses related to agriculture
 - Goal 4: Advocate for infrastructure support
 - Goal 5: Support businesses to increase agri-food processing capacity
 - Goal 6: Identify opportunities and solutions for the workforce and labour shortages in the agri-food sector
 - Goal 7: Provide resources for aging and young farmers
 - Goal 8: Partner with agriculture organizations to deliver and expand agriculture literacy in the Region
 - Goal 9: Enable a culture of innovation in agriculture and food
 - Goal 10: Enhance urban agriculture
- Annual Reporting and 2025 Priorities

L. Talling and A. de Vos responded to questions with regards to whether Windcrest Meat Packers processes meat; any prospects for abattoirs opening in Durham Region; whether a small abattoir could be considered as an on-farm diversified use (OFDU); the possibility of high schools taking part in the Durham Agriculture Leadership Program; the status of the North Durham Agriculture-Related and On Farm Diversified Uses Project; the timeline for the Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan; the potential challenging of managing the 10 goals as

outlined in the presentation; the definition of a local food business within Goal 1 and whether they have to sell an end-use product; how data is being collected from farms; and whether in-person Business Count data collection for farms will reconvene.

Discussion ensued with regards to the need for more abattoirs in Durham Region; keeping abattoirs open with consistent customers; opening up the Durham Agriculture Leadership Program to the southern municipalities; the progress on the application toolkit and planner toolkit for the North Durham Agriculture-Related and On Farm Diversified Uses Project; farm numbers declining in Durham Region; data being collected through the agriculture census; and collecting data from Agricorp.

In response to a question from Z. Cohoon on how the Committee could assist with delivering on the goals of the Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan , A. de Vos advised the Committee's advocacy support and feedback has been a great help and asked the Committee to continue to do so.

5. Discussion Items

A) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update

A. De Vos reminded Committee members that there is still an opportunity to sign up for the remaining three Durham Agriculture Leadership Program modules.

B) Enabling Agricultural Related Uses & On Farm Diversified Uses Update

A. De Vos advised there is no further update at this time (current status was provided under the Growing Agri-Food Durham annual update).

C) Agricultural Advisory Committee Clarington Update

T. Barrie provided the following update:

- There were two new members appointed to the Clarington Agricultural Advisory Committee.
- Darryl Lyons, Deputy CAO, Planning and Infrastructure Services, David Speed, Director of Emergency and Fire Services, and Matt Muirhead, Fire Prevention Officer, were in attendance at the January 9, 2024 meeting to answer questions with regards to migrant worker housing.
- A subcommittee was formed to investigate migrant worker housing issues in Clarington.

Discussion ensued with regards to issues around migrant worker housing throughout Durham Region.

D) Durham Farm Fresh Update

J. McKay provided the following update:

- The Annual General Meeting had a small turnout.
- The new website for Durham Farm Fresh will be going live soon.
- Long term board members Rob Alexander and Garry Geissberger have both stepped down from the Board of Directors.
- The Durham Farm Fresh brochures will be going out soon and more were printed this year compared to last year.
- There are now 20 weeks of Durham Farm Fresh radio advertisements being broadcasted with paid farmers.

E) Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance Update

M. Scott advised that there has been no Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance meeting since DAAC last met.

F) Durham Region Federation of Agriculture Update

M. Shiers was not in attendance to provide the Durham Region Federation of Agriculture Update.

G) 2025 DAAC Area Municipality Outreach

M. Scott encouraged Committee members to be aware of Official Plan reviews being conducted at their lower tier municipalities. M. Scott provided a brief overview of the Official Plan reviews that have begun.

M. Scott responded to questions with regards to future plans for the lands that were previously designated for an airport in the City of Pickering; and the shift in responsibility from the Region of Durham to the lower tier municipalities with respect to excess dwelling severances.

Discussion ensued with regards to providing agricultural input for the previously designated airport lands in Pickering; potential opportunities for the land in Pickering; and potential difficulties for the Northern municipalities having different planners and policies to conform to.

M. Scott also provided a brief overview of the draft presentation that is to be provided to each lower tier municipality by Committee members.

Discussion ensued on the presentation with regards to providing numbers based on Durham Region as a whole rather than each individual municipality; focusing the presentation to each municipality's local issues and how the Committee can

help the municipalities; and including information about using the Committee as a resource.

H) 2025 DAAC Farm Tour Discussion

D. Risebrough advised that the 2025 DAAC Farm Tour will be taking place on Thursday, September 4, 2025 at the Kabota Warehouse and will focused on equipment supply source and education for technicians.

6. Information Items

A) #2025-COW-2 – Durham Region’s 2025-2035 Strategic Plan

A copy of Commissioner’s Report #2025-COW-2 of the Chief Administrative Officer was provided as Attachment #2 to the agenda and received.

B) Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness News Release – Ontario Increasing Support for Farmers

A link to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness News Release – Ontario Increasing Support for Farmers was provided as Attachment #3 to the agenda and received.

C) Council Correspondence – Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan

Correspondence from Alexander Harras, Director of Legislative Services and Regional Clerk regarding Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan was provided as Attachment #4 to the agenda and received.

D) Appointment to the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee

Memorandum from Alexander Harras, Director of Legislative Services and Regional Clerk regarding Appointment to the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was provided as Attachment #5 to the agenda and received.

E) #2025-EDT-3 – Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan Annual Report

A copy of Commissioner’s Report #2025-EDT-3 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development was provided as Attachment #6 to the agenda and received.

F) New Release: Minister of Transport announces the Pickering Lands will not be used for a future airport site

A link to the news release: Minister of Transport announces the Pickering Lands will not be used for a future airport site was provided as Attachment #7 to the agenda and received.

7. Other Business

A) Mighty Harvest

N. Guthrie encouraged Committee members to visit D. Stevenson's vertical farm, Mighty Harvest, and take a tour of the facility.

B) Free Family Day Skate

N. Guthrie advised the Brooklin Spring Fair Association is sponsoring a free Family Day skate on Sunday, February 16 from 2:30-4:30 PM at Luther Vipond Memorial Arena.

C) Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

T. Barrie advised that Jason Mauck from Pennsylvania will be attending the April 4, 2025 Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association meeting.

D) Introduction to Mental Health in Agriculture

In response to a question from D. Risebrough, M. Scott advised he would reach out to Agriculture Wellness Ontario regarding a workshop for Committee members that are interested.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, March 18, 2025 starting at 7:30 PM.

9. Adjournment

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by H. Schillings,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Z. Cohoon, Chair

K. Smith, Committee Clerk