

The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

COMMUNITY GROWTH & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

A regular meeting of the Community Growth & Economic Development Committee was held on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 9:30 AM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: Councillor Chapman, Chair
Councillor Pickles, Vice-Chair
Councillor Collier*
Councillor Kerr
Councillor Woo
Councillor Wotten attended the meeting at 9:32 AM
Regional Chair Henry
* **denotes Councillors participating electronically**

Also
Present: Councillor Ashe*
Councillor Carter*
* **denotes visiting Councillors participating electronically**

Absent: Councillor Shahid

Staff

Present: R. Adamsz, Manager, Facility Maintenance & Operations
E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Community Growth & Economic Development
M. Broderick, Manager, Business Development & Investment, Economic Development
A. de Vos, Economic Development Specialist
D. Dunn, Director, Transportation & Field Services
T. Fraser, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
S. Gill, Director, Economic Development & Tourism
C. Goodchild, Director of Community Growth
A. Harras*, Director of Legislative Services & Regional Clerk
B. Holmes, General Manager, Transit
J. Hunt, Director, Legal Services
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
J. Kelly, Manager, Integrated Growth Management & Policy

C. Leitch, Manager, Transportation Planning
L. Livery, Director, Rapid Transit & Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
A. Luqman*, Acting Manager, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
G. Macfarlane, Program Specialist, Agriculture & Rural Economic Development
H. Ng, Manager, Data, Mapping & Graphics
J. Severs, Manager, Marketing & Tourism, Economic Development
T. Shaver, Manager, Small Business Enterprise Centre, Economic Development & Tourism
K. Smith, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
L. Talling, Acting Manager, Agriculture & Rural Affairs, Economic Development
N. Taylor*, Commissioner of Finance
L. Trombino, Manager, Development Advisory Services
V. Walker, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
R. Woon, Senior Solicitor, Chief Administrative Office – Legal Services
*** denotes Staff participating electronically**

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest made.

3. Election of Community Growth and Economic Development Committee Vice-Chair

Chair Chapman called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Community Growth & Economic Development Committee.

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Kerr,
(10) That Councillor Pickles be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Community Growth & Economic Development Committee.

Moved by Councillor Kerr, Seconded by Councillor Woo,
(11) That nominations be closed.

CARRIED

Chair Chapman asked if Councillor Pickles wished to stand. Councillor Pickles indicated he would stand.

Councillor Pickles was acclaimed as the Vice-Chair of the Community Growth & Economic Development Committee.

4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Pickles, Seconded by Councillor Woo,

- (12) That the minutes of the regular Community Growth & Economic Development Committee meeting held on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, be adopted.

CARRIED

5. Statutory Public Meetings

There were no statutory public meetings.

6. Presentations

- 6.1 Lori Talling, Acting Manager, Agriculture and Rural Economic Development, and Allison de Vos, Economic Development Specialist, re: Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan Annual Report (2025-EDT-3) [Item 9.2 a.]

Lori Talling, Acting Manager, Agriculture and Rural Economic Development, and Allison de Vos, Economic Development Specialist, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to the Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan Annual Report.

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 from the Committee with respect to the location of the nearest abattoir to the Region; and the transportation challenges that farmers encounter travelling to the facility.

7. Delegations

- 7.1 Terry Rekar (In-Person Attendance), re: Transportation Master Plan

Terry Rekar, participating in person, appeared before the Committee regarding the Transportation Master Plan.

T. Rekar expressed concerns with respect to the raw materials that are used to manufacture batteries for electric vehicles; the methods used to mine cobalt, which is a metal element commonly used in lithium-ion batteries in electric vehicles; safety practices and health-related hazards for cobalt miners; how the cobalt that is used in the electric powered buses recently purchased by the Region was sourced; and whether an audit with respect to the sourcing of cobalt for Regional buses was conducted.

T. Rekar added that electric vehicles generate emissions as the electricity to power the batteries are produced from power plants, many of which burn fossil fuels and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

8. Community Growth

8.1 Correspondence

There were no communication items to be considered.

8.2 Reports

There were no Community Growth Reports to be considered.

9. Economic Development

9.1 Correspondence

There were no communication items to be considered.

9.2 Reports

A) Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan Annual Report (2025-EDT-3)

Report #2025-EDT-3 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development, was received.

Staff responded to a question from the Committee with regards to the Region's role in streamlining the policies and procedures in place, specifically relating to zoning and on-farm diversified uses, to allow business in the agriculture industry to advance in a timely manner.

Moved by Councillor Wotten, Seconded by Councillor Pickles,
(13) That Report #2025-EDT-3 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development be received for information.

CARRIED

B) 2024 Convergence Music, Arts, and Cultural Festival (2025-EDT-4)

Report #2025-EDT-4 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Wotten, Seconded by Councillor Pickles,
(14) That Report #2025-EDT-4 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development be received for information.

CARRIED

C) Do It In Durham Entrepreneurship Week – Business Advisory Centre Durham (2025-EDT-5)

Report #2025-EDT-5 from B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development, was received.

Moved by Councillor Wotten, Seconded by Councillor Pickles,
(15) That Report #2025-EDT-5 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development be received for information.

CARRIED

10. Advisory Committee Resolutions

10.1 Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee

A) Resolution to Support the Need for Provincial Action on Salt Pollution from Road Salt

Moved by Councillor Woo, Seconded by Councillor Pickles,
(16) That the Community Growth & Economic Development Committee recommends that the resolution received from the Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee to support the need for provincial action on salt pollution from road salt be referred to the Works Committee.

CARRIED

11. Confidential Matters

There were no confidential matters to be considered.

12. Other Business

12.1 Federal Announcement Regarding Pickering Airport Lands

B. Bridgeman stated that on January 27, 2025, the Federal Minister of Transport and Internal Trade made an announcement that the federally owned lands located in northeast Pickering will not be used as a future airport site.

B. Bridgeman further stated that in 1972 these lands were expropriated from the federal government with the intention of developing an international airport in the future. He identified the lands as being located north of Highway 407 and west of Brock Road, containing approximately 8,700 acres, including portions that fall within the Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine boundaries.

B. Bridgeman added that the federal announcement also stated that the federal government intends to transfer the high conservation value lands to Parks Canada, which would be added to the Rouge National Urban Park.

B. Bridgeman advised that a formal consultation process to determine the future use of these lands will take place and added that staff will monitor the process and provide further updates to the Committee as they become available.

B. Bridgeman responded to questions from the Committee with respect to whether the current zoning regulations for the lands will be removed; and the legislative process for doing so.

12.2 Economic Development Update Regarding Proposed Tariffs Between the United States and Canada

S. Gill provided an update with respect to the proposed tariffs between the United States (U.S.) and Canada and stated that the U.S. has put a 30-day hold on the proposed tariffs following commitments relating to border security made by the Prime Minister.

S. Gill stated that the proposed tariffs, if implemented, would have broad economic impacts across Canada, and noted that the severity of those impacts would depend on the duration the tariffs are in place. He further stated that the industries in the Region that are expected to be the most impacted by the tariffs are the home building industry; the automotive industry; and producers of certain primary goods and agriculture products. S. Gill noted that tariffs would not be imposed on services and intangible goods.

S. Gill advised that at an emergency meeting was held with the Durham Economic Development Partnership (DEDP) and all chambers and boards in the Region to discuss immediate response activities to be taken. He stated that a list of potentially affected businesses has been shared with the province's representative in Washington and the Economic Development departments at the area municipalities. S. Gill advised that a landing page will be created that will contain updated information and helpful resources for businesses.

S. Gill stated that the Region is also looking to diversify trade partnerships in other international markets and advised that Canada and the European Union have a tariff-free trade agreement in place. He added that staff is working with area municipal partners to develop a trade diversification program.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Community Growth & Economic Development Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 9:30 AM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

14. Adjournment

Moved by Councillor Kerr, Seconded by Councillor Pickles,
(17) That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 AM

Respectfully submitted,

B. Chapman, Chair

V. Walker, Committee Clerk