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The Regional Municipality of Durham
Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

A regular meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, September 9, 2025 in Meeting Room 1-B, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:30 PM

N. Swain assumed the Chair.

1. Roll Call

Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.
* indicates individuals who participated electronically.

Members

Present: N. Swain, Vice-Chair
R. Death*, Whitby
N. Guthrie, Ajax
J. McKay*, Durham Farm Fresh
G. O'Connor, Member at Large, attended the meeting at 7:34 PM
D. Risebrough, Member at Large
H. Schillings, Member at Large
M. Shiers, Durham Region Federation of Agriculture
M. Somerville, Member at Large, attended the meeting at 7:36 PM
D. Stevenson, Oshawa
G. Taylor, Pickering
T. Watpool, Brock

Members

Absent: T. Barrie, Clarington
Z. Cohoon, Chair
B. Hulshof, Uxbridge
B. Smith, Vice-Chair
W. Wotten, Regional Councillor

Staff Present: M. Broderick, N. Gibson, R. Inacio, S. Jibb, M. Scott, K. Smith

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by H. Schillings, Seconded by T. Watpool,
That the minutes of the regular Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting held on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, be adopted.

Carried

4. Presentations

A) Maylene Broderick & Nicole Gibson, Invest Durham
Re: Planning for the Development of a Workforce Development Strategy

Maylene Broderick and Nicole Gibson, Invest Durham, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to Planning for the Development of a Workforce Development Strategy.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Future Growth Outlook
- Workforce Strategy Development
- Growing Agri-Food Durham
- Growing North Durham
- Ready Set Future
- Key Goals: People Pillar
- Target Industries
- Established and Future Economic Sectors
- Agri-Food
- Future Energy
- Next Gen Mobility
- Applied Digital Technology
- Electronics & Semiconductors
- Life Sciences
- Workforce Strategy Development
- List of Ecosystem Partners
- Draft Vision
- What We've Heard So Far
- Next Steps

Committee members provided suggestions with regards to reaching out to producer organizations to obtain feedback from them; and finding out what agricultural supports are required when hiring for specific jobs and providing base training for them.

Discussion ensued with regards to agriculture workforce issues; consistency of policy implementation throughout Durham Region; and temporary foreign workers or seasonal agricultural workers contributing to the agriculture industry and workforce.

N. Swain asked Committee members to provide any feedback on the Workforce Development Strategy to S. Jibb who will forward it to the presenters.

5. Discussion Items

A) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update

S. Jibb provided the following update:

- The Enabling Agricultural Related Uses & On Farm Diversified Uses in North Durham project has been endorsed by each of the Townships of Scugog, Uxbridge and Brock Councils. Scugog is having a public meeting on September 15, 2025. The team is continuing to support the project and is working with the applicant toolkit and will assist applicants prior to the pre-application meeting.
- The Gather at the Farm campaign has started and is a digital campaign to promote farmers markets, farm experiences, harvest, and festivals.
- There is a funding opportunity called the Rural Ontario Development Program and farms located in rural postal-code areas are eligible to apply if they have at least 1 employee on payroll

B) Agricultural Advisory Committee Clarington Update

T. Barrie was not in attendance to provide the Agriculture Advisory Committee Clarington update.

C) Durham Farm Fresh Update

J. McKay provided the following update:

- Durham Farm Fresh is meeting tonight for the first meeting after summer break.
- It was a challenging growing season with the summer heat and draught.
- There are many farms now open for apple picking and fall activities.

D) Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance Update

M. Scott advised he attended a tour of farms with the Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance.

S. Jibb advised the next meeting is taking place on September 22, 2025 and were asked to provide a presentation on the Enabling Agricultural Related Uses & On Farm Diversified Uses in North Durham project.

E) Durham Region Federation of Agriculture Update

M. Shiers advised they are currently having a Zone 10 election and that all members should have received their ballot in the mail.

Concerns were raised with regards to how Durham Region Federation of Agriculture advertises their meetings and M. Shiers advised he could bring these concerns back to the Federation for feedback.

F) 2025 DAAC Farm Tour Recap

D. Risebrough thanked Committee members and staff for their support and help with the tour.

D. Risebrough advised that due to the weather on the day of the farm tour, Kubota allowed the lunch portion to be moved inside their facility. He stated that considering the weather, 129 people attended the event.

M. Scott advised he sent a thank you message to Kubota for all their efforts on the farm tour. He further advised that the feedback received was positive and the only complaint was that the tour did not take place on a farm. A copy of the keynote speaker presentation will be provided to Committee members.

6. Information Items

A) Greenbelt Foundation – Housing Needs and Actions for the Agricultural Sector in Rural Greenbelt Communities

A link to the Greenbelt Foundation – Housing Needs and Actions for the Agricultural Sector in Rural Greenbelt Communities was provided as Attachment #2 to the agenda and received.

B) OFA Agriculture Economic Development & Planning Community of Practice Webinar – Working with Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Formula and Guidelines

A link to the OFA Agriculture Economic Development & Planning Community of Practice Webinar – Working with Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Formula and Guidelines was provided as Attachment #3 to the agenda and received.

7. Other Business

A) Development Charges

H. Schillings raised concerns with regards to development charges for building permits on agriculture lands and requested clarity. Discussion ensued with regards to development charges for agriculture related uses and on farm diversified uses. S. Jibb suggested Finance staff could provide a presentation on development charges at a future Committee meeting to provide clarity.

B) Mental Health Training

M. Scott advised he will be reaching out to Agriculture Wellness Ontario to schedule mental health training for January.

C) Upcoming Meetings

M. Scott advised that the workplan and annual report will be on an upcoming agenda for discussion. M. Scott further advised that upcoming DAAC meetings will be held in the meeting room on the lower level.

D) Township of Scugog Public Meeting

S. Jibb asked Committee members if they wish to provide comments on the Township of Scugog's public meeting for the proposed official plan amendment and zoning by-law amendment for Agriculture-Related Uses and On-Farm Diversified Uses. Discussion ensued and M. Scott advised he would reach out to Scugog staff to have them provide a presentation to the Committee.

E) Celebrate Agriculture Gala

N. Swain advised the Celebrate Agriculture Gala is taking place on October 23, 2025 at the Royal Ashburn Golf Club and they are looking for nominations for the following three awards: Family Farm Award; Spirit of Agriculture Award; and Leadership Award.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 7:00 PM.

9. Adjournment

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by N. Guthrie,
That the meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM

Respectfully submitted,

N. Swain
Vice-Chair

K. Smith
Committee Clerk