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The Regional Municipality of Durham
Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes

Monday, November 10, 2025

A regular meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Monday, November 10, 2025 in the Pickering Meeting Room, Lower Level, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:30 PM

Z. Cohoon assumed the Chair.

1. Roll Call

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

Members

Present: Z. Cohoon, Chair
B. Smith, Vice-Chair
N. Swain, Vice-Chair
T. Barrie, Clarington
R. Death*, Whitby
B. Hulshof*, Uxbridge
J. McKay*, Durham Farm Fresh
G. O'Connor, Member at Large
D. Risebrough, Member at Large
H. Schillings, Member at Large
D. Stevenson*, Oshawa
T. Watpool, Brock

Members

Absent: N. Guthrie, Ajax
M. Shiers, Durham Region Federation of Agriculture
M. Somerville, Member at Large
G. Taylor, Pickering
W. Wotten, Regional Councillor

Staff Present: R. Inacio, S. Jibb*, M. Scott, K. Smith

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

H. Schillings requested that the minutes of the October 14, 2025 Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting be amended under Presentations Item 4. A) in the second paragraph to read as follows “**no** development charges **on**

agriculture **building permits**; and concerns with consistency in **agriculture** policy across Durham Region". It was the consensus of the Committee to amend the minutes as requested.

Moved by N. Swain, Seconded by T. Barrie,
That the minutes of the regular Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting held on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, as amended, be adopted.

Carried

4. Discussion Items

A) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update

S. Jibb provided the following update:

- Brock Township held their public meeting for the North Durham Agriculture Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses (OFDUs) project on October 27, 2025; Scugog Township will be presenting a report to Council in early December to finalize the necessary updates on the project; the Region is working on addressing key issues such as road widening and development charged for OFDUs; the application toolkit has been updated to be fillable and more user friendly; a new landing page will be launching with information and FAQs related to the project; and an educational video for applicants and workshops for staff will be launching in the new year.
- Durham Farm Connection and Durham Farm Fresh are holding a joint Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 17, 2025 starting at 5:00 PM at Brooks Farms.
- The Clarington Board of Trade is holding an agriculture roundtable on November 28, 2025 and MPP David Piccini and MPP Todd McCarthy will be in attendance. Committee members can provide feedback to be shared during the roundtable.
- There are two workshops being held next week as part of Global Entrepreneurship Week and registration is required: Diversify your Farm's Future on November 18, 2025 (hosted by Invest Clarington) and Farm Succession & Continuity Planning Workshop on November 19, 2025 (hosted by 33 Seven).

S. Jibb responded to a question with regards to whether Scugog is experiencing any issues with the motion made regarding farm business registration number requirements.

B) Agricultural Advisory Committee Clarington Update

T. Barrie advised there was no Clarington Agriculture Advisory Committee update at this time as the next meeting is being held on Thursday, November 13, 2025.

C) Durham Farm Fresh Update

J. McKay advised he was not in attendance at the last Durham Farm Fresh meeting and will provide an update after the Annual General Meeting (AGM) taking place on Monday, November 17, 2025. S. Jibb further advised the AGM is taking place at Brooks Farms, begins at 5:00 PM and is being held jointly with Durham Farm Connections.

D) Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance Update

M. Scott advised there is no Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance update at this time.

E) Durham Region Federation of Agriculture Update

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

F) Agriculture Mental Health Training

M. Scott advised that the Agriculture Mental Health training is tentatively scheduled for January 20, 2026 at the Scugog Island Hall. Once confirmed with Agriculture Wellness Ontario, promotional material will be sent out to increase attendance. He stated the event will be similar to last year's with a half-day workshop and lunch provided.

Discussion ensued with regards to different ways to advertise the workshop to ensure it is reaching the appropriate audience; utilizing social media to promote the workshop; moving the workshop date into February; ensuring the message is being communicated appropriately; preparing an information sheet on ways to identify individuals struggling with mental health; creating messaging Committee members can use; and using a catch phrase to identify it is opening the door for conversation.

M. Scott advised he will push the Agriculture Mental Health Training to a date in February 2026.

G) 2026 Municipal Outreach Presentation Slides

M. Scott provided a brief overview of the draft presentation that is to be provided to each lower tier municipality by Committee members. He advised the Ajax presentation is scheduled for January 19th, Brock is scheduled for January 12th, Clarington and Pickering are scheduled for February 2nd, and Uxbridge is tentatively scheduled for February 14th. M. Scott requested that Committee members volunteer for the remaining lower tier municipality presentations.

Discussion ensued with regards to adding agriculture education to the presentation to bring awareness to agriculture issues.

In response to a question from a Committee member, M. Scott advised Zac Cohoon will be providing a presentation to the Community Growth & Economic Development Committee on January 6, 2026 on the DAAC 2025 Annual Report and 2026 Workplan.

H) Bill 60 – Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025

M. Scott provided the following update:

- From a planning perspective, the Province is looking to streamline official plans to create simplified and standardized official plans that are more predictable and streamlined. There is concern as every municipality faces unique challenges in terms of planning and development.
- For septic systems for on-farm worker housing, the Province is proposing changes to allow more small-sized septic systems for on-farm housing for agricultural workers to be regulated under the Building Code and to also move certain types of systems to the Environmental Activity and Sector Registry (EASR) allowing the systems to be built faster while continuing to safeguard human health.

M. Scott responded to questions with regards to whether all official plans are approved by the Province.

M. Scott requested that any further questions from Committee members be directed to him after the meeting.

Discussion ensued with regards to rules around septic systems and the engineering involved, and the size of weeping beds and leaching beds for different sized homes.

5. Information Items

A) #2025-EDT-15 – Enabling Agriculture-Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses in North Durham – Project Overview and Update

A copy of Report #2025-EDT-15 of the Commissioner of Community Growth & Economic Development was provided as Attachment #2 to the agenda and received.

B) Technical Briefing – Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025

A link to the Technical Briefing – Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025 was provided as Attachment #3 to the agenda and received.

C) #2025-CG-12 – Planning Fees and Charges Review

A copy of Report #2025-CG-12 of the Commissioner of Community Growth & Economic Development was provided as Attachment #4 to the agenda and received.

In response to a question from a Committee member, M. Scott advised that planning fees and charges for the lower tier municipalities are set at their municipalities.

D) This Week in Durham Stories – Rooted in Durham: Cultivating our Agriculture Future

A link to This Week in Durham Stories – Rooted in Durham: Cultivating our Agriculture Future was provided as Attachment #5 to the agenda and received.

6. Other Business

A) December 9, 2025 Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting

M. Scott advised that Senator Robert Black has been invited to provide a presentation to the Committee at the next meeting. The meeting invite will be extended to the Clarington Agriculture Advisory Committee and will be taking place in Regional Council Chambers.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025 at 7:30 PM.

8. Adjournment

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by T. Watpool,
That the meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Z. Cohoon
Chair

K. Smith
Committee Clerk