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The Regional Municipality of Durham
Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

A regular meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025 in the Uxbridge 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
N. Guthrie, Ajax
G. O'Connor, Member at Large
D. Risebrough, Member at Large
H. Schillings, Member at Large
M. Somerville, Member at Large
D. Stevenson*, Oshawa
G. Taylor*, Pickering
W. Wotten*, Regional Councillor

Members

Absent: R. Death, Whitby
B. Hulshof, Uxbridge
J. McKay, Durham Farm Fresh
M. Shiers, Durham Region Federation of Agriculture
T. Watpool, Brock

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

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

M. Sommerville made a declaration of interest under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act with respect to Item 4. A) Paul Wirch, Principal Planner, City of Pickering, re: Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan. He indicated that he is an employee at the City of Pickering and has contributed to the policies behind the Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by B. Smith, Seconded by T. Barrie,
That the minutes of the regular Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting held on Monday, November 10, 2025, be adopted.

Carried

4. Presentations

- A) Paul Wirch, Principal Planner, City of Pickering, and Zahrah Khan, Senior Project Manager, City of Pickering
Re: Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan
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Paul Wirch, Principal Planner, City of Pickering, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to the Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Land Acknowledgement
- Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan
- Timeline
- Envision Durham
- Pickering Map
- Vision and Guiding Principles
- Natural Heritage System
- Overall Density
- Community Structure
- Regional Centre
- Mixed Corridor
- Community Nodes
- Prestige Employment
- Urban Residential Areas
- Transportation
- Urban Agriculture
- Cultural Heritage
- Implementation Policies
- Next Steps
- Comments and Input

P. Wirch responded to questions from the Committee with regards to how much agricultural land was removed during the production of the plan; the percentage of lands within the plan that are already owned by developers; whether the lands would have been required if Envision Durham was projected for a lower density; when the development of the Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan will begin; whether the lands have airport height restrictions; whether nutrient density is being considered within the plan; whether an Agricultural Impact Study was

conducted on the lands and if the results of the study are available; how much of the land is classified as Class 1 and Class 2 farmland; and what would be the impact of those lands being spared from development.

Discussion ensued with regards to managing the movement of topsoil; the minimum distance separation standards for livestock on farms; the consideration of adding to the plan that lots are specific to urban agriculture; and the need for employment area that is specifically geared towards agriculture.

5. Discussion Items

A) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update

S. Jibb provided the following update:

- The Township of Scugog's Agriculture-Related and On-farm Diversified Uses Project Recommendation Report with draft amendments to the Official Plan, Zoning By-law, Site Plan Approval By-law and Fees By-law was brought forward to Scugog Council at the Planning and Community Affairs Committee on December 8, 2025. All staff recommendations were endorsed. It will need to be ratified by Council at their December 15, 2025, meeting and then a 20-day appeal period will follow. The policies and project recommendations are anticipated to be in place by January.
- The Township of Brock is on track to have their updated policies ready in the first quarter of 2026 and have already held a public meeting.
- The Clarington Board of Trade hosted an Agriculture Roundtable and invited Minister McCarthy, Ontario Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Key topics of discussion included the importance of educating and raising awareness of agriculture and where food comes from, temporary foreign workers, and the changing role of conservation authorities.

S. Jibb responded to questions from the Committee with regards to the status of the On-Farm Diversified Uses (OFDU) project for the Township of Uxbridge and provided a further explanation on why the specification to have a farm business registration number was removed.

Discussion ensued with regards to the requirement for a farm business registration number when an application is submitted for an OFDU and potential issues from non-farmers who want to apply for an OFDU.

B) Agricultural Advisory Committee Clarington Update

T. Barrie provided the following update:

- Andrew Janes provided a presentation on Regional Road Capital Program with a focus on rural roads in Clarington.
- There was discussion on the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) merging with other conservation authorities to form a new Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority.
- The Courtice Road and Taunton Road roundabout will be moving 100 metres to the east and will extend onto Pingle's Farm Market property.
- There is an opening for a new member on the Agricultural Advisory Committee of Clarington.
- Sheep farmers will be allowed to accommodate livestock guardian dogs.
- Invest Clarington is teaming up with Invest Durham for the Planting the Seed: Diversifying Your Farm's Future event and a workshop was held on November 18, 2025.
- There was an off-camera discussion on foreign land and the article can be found in Voice of Farmer.

C) Durham Farm Fresh Update

J. McKay was not in attendance to provide the Durham Farm Fresh update.

D) Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance Update

M. Scott advised that 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 would be taking place on February 25, 2026, at the Scugog Recreation Centre in the Township of Scugog and would be presented by Agricultural Wellness Ontario. He advised that information on how to register would be shared with committee members and that members would be encouraged to share within their communities.

G) 2026 Municipal Outreach

M. Scott advised that all of the 2026 Municipal Outreach presentation dates have been finalized and will take place as follows:

- Town of Ajax on January 19, 2026
- Township of Brock on January 12, 2026
- Municipality of Clarington on February 2, 2026
- City of Oshawa on January 12, 2026
- City of Pickering on February 2, 2026
- Township of Scugog on February 23, 2026
- Township of Uxbridge on February 9, 2026
- Town of Whitby on March 9, 2026

Discussion ensued with regards to who will be providing the presentations at each of the municipalities.

H) 2026 Farm Tour

M. Scott and Z. Cohoon requested that Committee members begin brainstorming ideas for where the 2026 Farm Tour can be hosted.

Discussion ensued with regards to various locations in Durham Region and the content that can be covered at different locations.

I) Durham Climate Change Adaptation Plan Workshop Request

M. Scott advised that a workshop will be taking place on January 12, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 2:30 PM at Regional Headquarters with respect to the Durham Climate Change Adaptation Plan. He advised that staff have requested to have agriculture representatives at the workshop and to let him know if any committee members would be interested in attending.

J) Conservation Authority Changes

M. Scott advised that the Province is proposing significant changes to the conservation authority structure by reducing the number of Conservation Authorities from five to three within Durham Region. He advised that Community Growth will be submitting comments in relation to agriculture and will provide further information to committee members at a later date.

6. Information Items

A) #2025-COW-37 – Regional Comments on the Proposed Changes to Ontario Building Code and Proposed Changes in Bill 60, Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025

A copy of Report #2025-COW-37 of the Commissioner of Finance, Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development, Commissioner of Works and Commissioner of Legal Services was provided as Attachment #2 to the agenda and received.

B) #2025-INFO-89 – Durham Resilient Agricultural Lands Program – Marginal Lands Initiative

A copy of Report #2025-INFO-89 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development was provided as Attachment #3 to the agenda and received.

M. Scott advised that the Conservation Authorities have come together and applied for funding to roll out the Durham Resilient Agricultural Lands Program over the summer to help support farmers for the restoration of marginal lands, and to support natural heritage resiliency and agricultural best practices across the Region.

7. Other Business

There were no Other Business items considered.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 7:30 PM.

It was the consensus of the Committee to cancel the Tuesday, February 10, 2026, DAAC meeting.

9. Adjournment

Moved by M. Sommerville, Seconded by N. Guthrie,
That the meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Z. Cohoon
Chair

K. Smith
Committee Clerk