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**The Regional Municipality of Durham**  
**Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes**

**Tuesday, January 13, 2026**

A regular meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, January 13, 2026 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  
R. Death\*, Whitby  
N. Guthrie, Ajax  
B. Hulshof, Uxbridge  
J. McKay, Durham Farm Fresh  
D. Risebrough, Member at Large  
M. Somerville\*, Member at Large  
D. Stevenson, Oshawa  
G. Taylor, Pickering  
T. Watpool, Brock  
W. Wotten\*, Regional Councillor

Members

Absent: G. O'Connor, Member at Large  
H. Schillings, Member at Large  
M. Shiers, Durham Region Federation of Agriculture

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

**2. Election of Officers for 2026**

K. Smith called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by B. Smith,  
That Zac Cohoon be nominated for the position of Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

K. Smith asked if Z. Cohoon wished to stand. Z. Cohoon indicated he would stand.

Moved by N. Swain, Seconded by T. Watpool,  
That nominations be closed.

**Carried**

Z. Cohoon was acclaimed as the Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

K. Smith called for nominations for the position of First Vice-Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Moved by N. Guthrie, Seconded by T. Watpool,  
That Nicole Swain be nominated for the position of First Vice-Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

K. Smith asked if N. Swain wished to stand. N. Swain indicated she would stand.

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by Z. Cohoon,  
That nominations be closed.

**Carried**

N. Swain was acclaimed as the First Vice-Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

K. Smith called for nominations for the position of Second Vice-Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Moved by Z. Cohoon, Seconded by N. Guthrie,  
That Bryan Smith be nominated for the position of Second Vice-Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

K. Smith asked if B. Smith wished to stand. B. Smith indicated he would stand.

Moved by G. Taylor, Seconded by T. Barrie,  
That nominations be closed.

**Carried**

B. Smith was acclaimed as the Second Vice-Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

### **3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

#### 4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by B. Smith, Seconded by N. Swain,  
That the minutes of the regular Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025, be adopted.

**Carried**

#### 5. Presentations

- A) Melisa Luymes, Headlands Ag-Enviro-Solutions  
Re: Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) Supporting Farmers and Water Quality
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Melisa Luymes, Headlands Ag-Enviro-Solutions, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) supporting farmers and water quality.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- A changing watershed
- Modelling phosphorus (P) losses
- Cost-share funding
- The model needs real soil data
- Lake Simcoe Watershed Workshop

M. Luymes advised that they hired modelers from the University of Waterloo and the Toronto Metropolitan University to look at the soil maps in the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) to ensure a good understanding of what could happen in the future under different climate scenarios and different development scenarios with respect to water quality. The purpose of the modelers is to determine how phosphorus losses that are going into Lake Simcoe can be reduced; and determining where and when to use Best Management Practices (BMPs) with respect to cover crops, planting trees, manure management, and the use of conservation tillage. M. Luymes stated that she is working with farmers to determine what works for farmers and how best the LSRCA can support farmers.

M. Luymes requested feedback from the Committee members, through the use of Mentimeter, on the following questions:

- Where are you from?
- Have you done BMPs? And got funding?
- What are your thoughts on the cost-benefit of these BMPs?
- If you were the conservation authority (CA), where would you put money for most impact?
- What are the most important ways a CA can support farmers?

Discussion ensued with regards to increasing the percentage of cost share to farmers; the difficulty in filling out forms when applying for BMPs funding; concerns around inviting a CA onto your property for help with funding and what the results may be; receiving agricultural education on BMPs and how they can help the agricultural system; whether farmers feel that they are being listened to by their CA's and the Regions; friction between the agricultural sector and CA's; the definition of a wetland and whether it is still considered "wet" after it has been drained; and lack of equality between CAs.

M. Luymes further advised that they are looking for real soil data from properties located within the Lake Simcoe watershed; and encouraged Committee members to register for the Lake Simcoe Watershed Workshop being held on Monday March 2, 2026, and Tuesday, March 3, 2026.

Further discussion ensued with regards to the amount of phosphorus that is attributable to agriculture and to lake side development; reducing the amount of active waterfront and having more naturalized waterfronts; and where the blame on resulting high phosphorus levels are being placed.

## **6. Discussion Items**

### **A) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update**

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S. Jibb provided the following updates:

- The Township of Scugog's Agriculture-Related and On-farm Diversified Uses Project is in the implementation phase and the appeal period has closed. Staff are working with applicants and are receiving interest from farmers across the Township of Scugog on the project;
- The Township of Brock is looking to bring amendments to Brock's Council this month;
- S. Lemon is working on developing a workshop for the Agriculture-Related and On-farm Diversified Uses Project and will provide an update in the coming months; and
- Staff are working on developing an agriculture one-page fact sheet to have available for politicians to hand out during municipal elections and to have for Committee members to hand out during the Municipal Outreach presentations.

### **B) Agricultural Advisory Committee Clarington Update**

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T. Barrie provided an update regarding the Clarington Agriculture Advisory Committee and stated that the Thursday, January 8, 2026 meeting provided a review of the progress that has been made over the years; a review of the Municipal Outreach presentation that is being presented to Clarington Council on Monday, February 2, 2026; and a discussion for the 2026 workplan. He advised that there is a new Committee member who is a non-farmer rural resident.

C) Durham Farm Fresh Update

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J. McKay provided an updated regarding Durham Farm Fresh and stated that they are currently sharing a coordinator with Durham Farm Connections and that they are looking to potentially get their own coordinator. He advised that they are planning to have the Durham Farm Fresh booklet ready for distribution in March of this year.

D) Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance Update

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M. Scott advised that there was no Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance update at this time and that the next meeting would take place in two weeks.

E) Durham Region Federation of Agriculture Update

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

F) Agriculture Mental Health Training

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M. Scott advised that the Agriculture Mental Health training flyer should be finalized by the end of the week in order to distribute to Committee members and open registration.

G) 2026 Municipal Outreach

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M. Scott stated that the first two Municipal Outreach presentations have been made to the Township of Brock and the City of Oshawa's councils.

M. Scott advised that T. Watpool delivered the presentation to Brock's Council and received questions around the farm receipt numbers; the Ontario Federation of Agriculture numbers; how tariffs are affecting commodities and farmers; backyard chickens and battery storage units.

M. Scott further advised that D. Stevenson delivered the presentation Oshawa's Council and received questions with respect to the movement of topsoil around the Region.

M. Scott further advised that the Town of Ajax's presentation will take place on Monday, January 19, 2026.

H) 2026 Farm Tour

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D. Risebrough suggested the formation of a subcommittee that would be responsible for arranging the farm tour for this year. It was the consensus of the committee that D. Risebrough, B. Smith, B. Hulshof, N. Swain, D. Stevenson and Z. Cohoon comprise the subcommittee.

Discussion ensued with regards to potential farm locations and getting back to hosting it at a farm type operation location.

D. Risebrough advised that he would set up a subcommittee meeting prior to the next DAAC meeting.

## **7. Information Items**

### **A) #2025-CG-14 – Regional Response to ERO #025-1257 – Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities**

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A copy of Report #2025-CG-14 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development was provided as Attachment #2 to the agenda and received.

### **B) Notice of Adoption of Official Plan Amendment No. 13 (By-law No. 53-25) and Notice of Passing of Zoning By-law Amendment No. 54-25 Agricultural-Related Uses and On-Farm Diversified Uses The Corporation of the Township of Scugog**

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A link to the Notice of Adoption of Official Plan Amendment No. 13 (By-law No. 53-25) and Notice of Passing of Zoning By-law Amendment No. 54-25 Agricultural-Related Uses and On-Farm Diversified Uses The Corporation of the Township of Scugog was provided as Attachment #3 to the agenda and received.

### **C) #2026-CG-1 – Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2025 Annual Report and 2026 Workplan**

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A copy of Report #2026-CG-1 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development was provided as Attachment #4 to the agenda and received.

Z. Cohoon provided a brief overview of the presentation that he provided to the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee on Tuesday, January 6, 2026.

M. Scott advised that the 2026 Farm Tour invitations for politicians will be sent out from the Regional Chair’s office.

## **8. Other Business**

There was no other business to be considered.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 7:30 PM.

**10. Adjournment**

Moved by B. Smith, Seconded by T. Barrie,  
That the meeting be adjourned.

**Carried**

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM

Respectfully submitted,

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Z. Cohoon  
Chair

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K. Smith  
Committee Clerk