Present: Philip Krakar, Cathy McMaster, Councillor David Mitchell, Councillor Robert Pasuta, Nancy Mills, John Mantel, Roy Shuker, Henry Swierenga, Paul Shaker, Andrew Spoelstra, Kevin Laidley, Carl Loewith, Susan Coverdale, Doug Cranston

Absent/Regrets: Dale Smith, Councillor Lloyd Ferguson, Robert Saccomano, Sarah Megens, Mel Switzer, Doug Cranston

Visitors: Joanne Hickey-Evans, Dr. Tom Nugent

THE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRESENTS REPORT 08-002(a) TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE AND RESPECTFULLY ADVISES:

1. Discussion on Speeding on Hamilton’s Rural Roadways (Item 5.7)

   The Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee requests a report from City of Hamilton staff regarding the feasibility of standardizing the speed limits on all rural roadways to 60 km’s per hour unless otherwise posted.
FOR INFORMATION

1. **CHANGES TO AGENDA** – Item’s 4.1 and 5.7 will be combined and presented under item 4.1 as they relate to the same issue “Growing the Greenbelt.” Dr. Tom Nugent has requested that he be allowed to address the committee on this issue and was given approval following the staff presentation and prior to the committee discussion on this item.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – none

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Minutes of March 25th, 2008. Motion to approve by Cathy McMaster, seconded by Councillor Pasuta. **CARRIED.**

4. **PRESENTATIONS**

4.1 Policy Planning Division – Joanne Hickey Evans gave the committee an overview of a request from the Province of Ontario for staff and the ARAAC committee to comment on proposed criteria pertaining to “Growing the Greenbelt”. Joanne outlined the following:

   The Province of Ontario introduced the Greenbelt Plan in 2005. The purpose of this plan was to permanently protect agricultural land, natural heritage and water systems and provide for economic and social activities for rural communities. The Province recognizes there may be municipal requests to expand the Greenbelt Plan area, so they are introducing six criteria (each criterion has a set of requirements) that must be met prior to approval of any expansions. **Deletions from the Plan are not permitted.**

   There are six proposed criteria and associated requirements as follows:
   All additions must:
   1. be a request initiated by the municipality;
   2. Embrace the Greenbelt purpose (i.e. balance the needs of the communities while protecting the agricultural land and Natural Heritage System);
   3. Be a logical extension to the Greenbelt Plan (i.e. ensure no deletions from the Plan, and that land is contiguous);
   4. Connect to the Greenbelt system (i.e. build on the environmental and Agricultural systems);
   5. Compliment the Places to Grow Growth Plan; and,
   6. Compliment the timing and relationship to other Provincial initiatives (i.e. allow source water protection plans to be completed.)

   Staff and the City support the six proposed criteria and under Council direction brought this information to this committee for their input and direction.
Motion by Phil Krakar seconded by Nancy Mills to accept the staff report with the following amendments (identified in bold). Carried.

Motion: The Agricultural and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee accepts and supports City of Hamilton Report #PED08018 with minor changes to staff recommendations (a) and (b) as outlined in bold letters as follows:

(a) That City Council inform the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing that the City supports the six proposed criteria, in principle, but would request the Ministry include specific requirements (i.e. what groups and such groups must include all local agricultural organizations, and minimum number of public meetings) for public consultation to ensure a transparent and equitable process across all municipalities.

(b) That Report PED08108 be forwarded to the four Conservation Authorities and the Royal Botanical Gardens for their information.

Dr. Tom Nugent spoke to the committee with regards to his concerns over the Greenbelt Legislation and how it negatively affects our agricultural and rural community. In writing and through his presentation Dr. Nugent identified his concerns specifically relating to the ability to have lands removed from the greenbelt designation. Chair Loewith thanked Dr. Nugent for his thoughtful and professional presentation. Motion: That the Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee receives this information and presentation and subsequently send a letter to Dr. Nugent acknowledging his presentation and thanking him for addressing the committee. Forwarded by Councillor Mitchell, seconded by Councillor Pasuta. CARRIED.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.2 Grant Program for Non Profit Agriculture and Rural Organizations
– Sue Coverdale and Henry Swierenga distributed the recommendations for distribution of funds to the non-profit organizations as determined by the committee reviewing the application. ARAAAC members thanked Henry, Sue and Carol Pupo for their efforts and job well done evaluating the applications and unanimously supported the recommendations. Sue Coverdale will forward all the documentation to the Grants committee for payment distribution. Motion: The Agricultural and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee approves the recommendations to distribute the
$15,000 according to the review committee recommendations. Forwarded by Nancy Mills, seconded by Roy Shuker. CARRIED.

5.3 Airport Expansion Committee Meeting Update – Doug Cranston was not available to give the committee an overview, however Councillor Mitchell and Cathy McMaster have been attending the meetings and all minutes were distributed to the ARAAC committee. Cathy felt the public presentation and meetings went very well with excellent questions and feedback from the audience. Phase I of this project has been completed and work will begin on the next phase of work. Regardless, this is going to be a long process with lots factors to be considered with feedback from all levels of government, special interest groups etc. Sue Coverdale will continue to received the minutes and forward to the committee.

5.4 Discussion and update regarding “Changes to Federal Packaging Regulations” – A letter was sent as requested at the last meeting to identify the City of Hamilton and this committee’s concerns regarding Canada’s packaging regulations. The Prime Minister announced today that there would be significant changes to this regulation with public consultations to follow. At this time two specific packaging criteria had been identified as a template for moving forward but final outcomes and wording will be forthcoming. This is going to require public education however the committee cautiously felt this was a step in the right direction.

5.5 Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee – Councillor Pasuta updated the committee that this initiative will begin on June 4th. At this stage both Councillor Pasuta and Sue are unsure of the agenda and the committee mandate. It appears this committee will have good representation from staff and the agricultural and rural community. Sue Coverdale, Robert Pasuta and Sarah Megens all sit on this committee and will bring regular updates as required.

5.6 Update on Official Opening of Ottawa Street Farmers Market and launch of 2008 Eat Local Map – The launch of the Ottawa Street Farmers Market and new Eat Local Map were a great success and well done. The event was well attended and a great success. The City of Hamilton and the Friend’s of the Greenbelt have secured a one time seed funding for the new Ottawa Street Farmers Market to hire a market manager and for transition funding, positive news on all fronts.

5.7 Discussion on Speeding on Hamilton’s Rural Roadways – Councillor Mitchell brought forward this discussion with regards to speeding on our rural roadways and inconsistency of policies. Some roads at 80km’s, others are 50 km’s and speeding is becoming an increasing problem. Members of the committee discussed sign
pollution, inconsistencies, police enforcement, legalities of changing speed limits and overall concerns and made the following recommendation. Motion: The Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee request a report from City of Hamilton staff regarding the feasibility of standardizing the speed limits on all rural roadways to 60 km’s per hour unless otherwise posted. Forwarded by Councillor Mitchell, seconded by Roy Shuker. CARRIED. – (As outlined in Item 1 of this Report)

6. GENERAL INFORMATION

6.1 ARAAC Committee Member Update – Kevin Laidley announced that the Premiers Awards of Excellence will be announced and at least one winner was from the local area. Regional events will be taking place with announcements and invitations in three weeks. Kevin also announced that Carol Pupo will be staying at the Vineland Research Centre for another year and her job is currently posted and should be filled ASAP. If you know anyone qualified please forward the posting or contact Kevin for the information.

Carl Loewith recently returned from Argentina where he was visiting on business. While he was there the farmers staged a huge protest and blockade of roads because the Country was proposing a 50% tax on the export of Soy Beans. The issue was eventually suspended but Carl did point out that the farmers protest literally stopped all activity.

Councillor Mitchell would like us to officially discuss his concern regarding road widening allocation required by the City of Hamilton in the rural areas. This is becoming a very costly problem for farmers losing too much land when applying for a severance, minor variance, rezoning etc. The committee agreed to ask staff to attend a meeting this fall to discuss this issue.

7. ADJOURNMENT – Councillor Pasuta moved the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl Loewith, Chair
Agriculture and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee

Susan Coverdale,
Business Development Consultant
Agriculture and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee
May 22, 2008