MINUTES: Agriculture & Rural Affairs Advisory Committee
April 26th, 2007
Ancaster Fairgrounds, Marritt Hall Board Room

Present: Carl Loewith, Roy Shuker, Mel Switzer, Nancy Mills, Kevin Laidley, Philip Krakar, Cathy McMaster, Andrew Spoelstra, Dale Smith, Robert Saccomano, John Mantel, Henry Swierenga, Councillor Robert Pasuta, Councillor David Mitchell, Susan Coverdale, Paul Mason,

Absent/Regrets: Carol Pupo, Councillor Lloyd Ferguson, Doug Cranston, Sarah Megens

Visitors: Jillian Stephen, Steve Barnhart

Chair Roy Shuker welcomed the members, guest and staff and called the meeting to order.

1. CHANGES TO AGENDA – none

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – none

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Minutes of February 27th, 2007. Some member’s names were duplicated as being both present and absent, Sue to correct. Mel Switzer moved the minutes, seconded by Cathy McMaster, approved.

4. DELEGATION REQUESTS – none

5. CONSENT ITEMS – none

6. PUBLIC DELEGATIONS - none

7. STAFF PRESENTATIONS
7.1 Hamilton Recreational Trails Master Plan (RTMP)

Steve Barnhart presented to the committee information pertaining to the work being undertaken on the RTMP. The purpose of this plan is to identify a comprehensive multi-purpos e off-road recreational trail system to connect natural areas, cultural feature and major land use destinations within the City of Hamilton. Key stakeholder involved in the development process include several City of Hamilton departments, Hamilton Conservation Authority, Volunteer Groups, Adjoining municipalities and the community/general public. The public has been engaged through out the process with Council receiving updates in June 2005 and August 2006. The plan has looked at 6 key design principles that also take into consideration municipal planning initiatives such as GRIDS, Parks, Culture & Recreation Master Plan, HCA Waterfalls & Cascades of Hamilton and the Hamilton Cycling Program. Steve highlighted that trails are a vital connection to a healthy community from an economic, environmental and fitness perspective. This plan has looked at two off road trail styles – multipurpose which are hard paved surfaces or granular and the recreations trails which are a more natural less manicured surface. Extensive work has been done on trail classification which looked at width of the trail and sub-categories such as use, gradient, accessibility and difficulty rating. They have also done a great deal of trail data mapping or GIS data for proposed trails. Finally this plan has looked at a capital ranking score to determine and evaluate the whole trail network. This will look at usage, priority of linkages to determine which trails will become part of the capital budget allotted for developing this trail system. This ranking has identified the top ten links to be developed over the coming years. The rural trails issues included phasing priorities, lengthy timelines (25 – 30 years); a public process will need to occur with each capital initiative, negotiation with landowners, requirements for fencing and identification of trail crossing access points.

Recommendations / direction identified include that staff utilize the recreational trails master plan design criteria, trail classifications and phasing criteria for the planning of Hamilton future trail system. Staff will be reporting back with recommendations for trail development as part of the annual capital budget program. Members of the ARAAC committee discussed all of the issues outlined extensively and
supported this initial draft report and plan with assurances that this committee will be consulted as the process moves forward.

**Hamilton Transportation Master Plan (TMP)**

Jillian Stephen – staff from the City of Hamilton presented to the committee an overview of the TMP. This plan was developed to tie in with the City’s preferred GRIDS growth option adopted by Council in May 2006. This plan is based on creating nodes and corridors and creates complete communities in keeping with Vision 2020 and Provincial plans. The purpose of the TMP is to develop policies and strategies over the next 30 years for transit, cycling and walking, goods movement, travel demand management and roads. The TMP is intended to be a strategic plan that provides overall direction for subsequent processes such as secondary plans, official plans and special studies. All of this must completely confirm with the Class EA process. Several broad solutions were considered such as status quo, committed projects only, modest transportation expansion, aggressive transit expansion, roadway capacity optimization, road capacity enhancement, freeway expansion and finally demand management options. The preferred solution involves aggressive transit expansion, road capacity optimization and travel demand management. Status quo will result in serious problems and deficiencies by 2031. Some of the strategic initiatives tied in with the TMP include road improvements, goods movement initiatives, transit, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. The TMP outlines a long term vision with utility corridors used for the creation of off road trails. Concern has been raised that use or the introduction of trail networks would not be compatible with agricultural uses. The TMP will outline that long term vision does not necessarily reflect current uses or rights to land so it protects farmers and their farm land. Next steps include filing the TMP on the public record for a 62 day review period, completion of area-specific TMPs, include relevant policies in the official plan, include identified project in the capital budget for future years, add new projects in the next Development Charge updates, implementation of preferred options, including of the TMP recommendations in the Planning and Development approval processes and finally proceed with Phases 3 and 4 (planning and design process) of the Municipal class EA. Members of the committee
participated in discussions regarding this plan and staff will continue to update this committee accordingly.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.1 Final Draft Agricultural Action Plan

Margaret Walton from Planscape gave the committee an overview of the steps taken throughout this process from initial visioning exercise to BR & E interviews and finally draft format of the action plan. Margaret thanked the committee for their contribution and to the staff and members for comments received pertaining to the 1st draft.

Margaret and Sue discussed the focus of the action plan with the committee which includes the following areas:
- Economic Development
- Promotion
- Strategic Development and Direction
- Forming Partnerships and
- Financial Tools

Each focus area has identified four or five key tasks that could be undertaken as part of the action plan. It was decided that Margaret and Sue would meet and determine 10 – 12 achievable tasks that would benefit Hamilton’s agriculture community. Committee members wanted to be sure that this plan is achievable and could be implemented over the next three or four years. A final report will be presented to the committee for the June 28th meeting. Several members expressed appreciation for a great job done by Margaret and staff.

8.2 City of Hamilton Grants to Non-Profit Rural and Agricultural Organizations

Sue Coverdale informed the group that she has everything ready to mail out the grant applications to the non-profit rural and agricultural organizations. The committee was given an overview of the funding and process undertaken over the last few years. Phil reported that he liked the communication and reporting materials received last year. The committee agreed to proceed with the same evaluation criteria and recommended that Henry, Sue and Carol continue to be the evaluation team. The results will be finalized and submitted
to committee for the June meeting. Sue also explained that while the funding had been for $11,565.00, this could change depending upon Council's final budget approvals. Councillor Mitchell will do his utmost to ensure this funding does not decrease, Carl suggested that this committee think about asking for more funding in the early stages next year. Motion: Carl Loewith moved that we send out the applications to the Non-Profit Rural and Agricultural Organization based on the same evaluation criteria. Seconded by Mel Switzer. CARRIED.

8.3 Hamilton Rural Official Plan Follow-up – Response to draft Provincial Changes

Paul Mason updated the committee that in accordance with the Planning Act, MMAH is the approval authority for new official plans. Their role is to circulate official plans to all Ministries and adjacent municipalities for comment, evaluate proposed official plans for consistency or conformity with Provincial policies and plans and approve official plans, subject to any modifications or deferrals the Ministry deems appropriate. Paul wanted to update the committee on some of the issues that have come back to City staff that affect the rural area, in some cases staff will accept the changes and in other case they will appeal decisions but considering the amount of input received from ARAAC members during the development of the Rural Official Plan it was prudent to give the committee a brief update. Paul circulated various maps and outlined where certain changes might be taking place on land designations i.e. rural, agricultural, environmentally sensitive areas, some of the Ministry suggestions vary from the LEAR study and City staff recommendations. Staff have concerns that the information coming forward, decisions from the Province have been based on very inconclusive maps and information.

On April 16, 2007, MMAH issued this response including proposed modifications to the Rural Hamilton Official Plan for municipal consultation. This report is the last opportunity for Council to provide input before the Minister issues a final Notice of Decision. Once that Notice has been issued, all outstanding concerns which Council or members of the public may have with the approved document can only be resolved through an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board.
In addition to the Ministry’s proposed changes which are largely wording change and mapping designations and land classifications (ESA’s etc.). City staff also proposed a series of minor modifications to address matters that have come to our attention since September:

- Small wording changes for clarification, which in no way change the intent or effect of the policies;
- Small wording changes to correct minor omissions, typographic errors, etc. For example, adding the words “or any development permits” to parts of Section C.5.1.3 to include Niagara Escarpment Plan development permits. This change ensures that Niagara Escarpment development permit applications for new rural uses meet the same Sustainable Private Servicing conditions as all other planning applications;
- Addition of new title words as ‘placeholders’ for imminent future amendments;
- Revisions to Appendix D on the Hamilton International Airport Noise Exposure Forecast Contours to reflect results of the study recently approved by Council;
- Two small mapping changes to reflect approvals from the OMB and the Committee of Adjustment that were finalized since September; and
- Two new policies have been proposed:
  1. Adding a new policy (new subsection to C.3.1.4) to generally permit temporary garden suites (granny flats) in the Rural Area, subject to certain conditions which is already permitted in Rural Settlement Areas by the policies of the Plan. This new policy corrects a small error of omission and adding new policies to sections F.1.13.2.1 and F.1.13.2.6 to clarify the manner in which lot addition severances are to be addressed, including a requirement that lot additions for agricultural purposes support long-term viability of the resultant property for agriculture. This modification provides a reasonable opportunity for lot additions in the Rural Area and maintains consistency with other policies protecting agricultural land and the creation of future rural residential lots.

General discussion and a broad overview took place at the meeting with committee members asking questions with open dialogue on this subject with Paul Mason. Staff expects all final approvals and changes from the Province
will be in place by June with the rural official plan becoming an officially approved document. This plan will still be subject to the OMB appeal process.

8.4 Update – Anti-Idling By-law

Councillor’s Pasuta and Mitchell have lots of concerns as to whether this by-law is enforceable. The ARAAC committee’s motion to change the wording to exempt all non-licensed farm equipment was put forward to staff for implementation into the by-law. There are many concerns that this by-law would not be enforceable or legal and that a comprehensive education program would be a better first step. This item is scheduled to appear at the next Committee of the Whole on May 10th at 6:00 p.m. for further discussion and/or approvals. Phil recommended that by-laws of this nature and the pesticide by-law would be beneficial if the Province stepped forward and had one unified law or education program that is implemented across the Province otherwise these initiatives will not be effective.

8.5 Update New Committee of Adjustment Structure

Council has approved a one committee structure that consist of five urban and four rural representatives. Staff strongly encouraged a one committee structure as the most effective next step. Advertisements for these positions will be in the paper and on the website in the next few weeks. The committee strongly encouraged Dale Smith to continue his good work on this committee as a strong voice of the rural community.

8.6 Election of Officers for ARAAC Members Term of Office 2007 – 2010

The committee began the process of electing new offices for the next term from 2007 – 2010. Henry Swierenga and Kevin Laidley agreed to oversee the election process. Nominations took place with Carl Loewith accepting the position of Chair of this committee. Vice Chair was not decided at this time and will be re-visited at the next meeting. The committee thanked Roy Shuker for all of his hard work and commitment to this committee over the last six years. Sue Coverdale will continue as the Secretary of the committee with support from the Clerks Department.
9. MOTIONS - none

10. NOTICES OF MOTIONS - none

11. GENERAL INFORMATION

11.1 ARAAC Committee Member Update

Henry updated the committee on his work with Environment Canada on the Road Salt Working Group. They are making tremendous progress with 80% of municipalities across Canada having salt management plans and 90% of all salt domes being covered now. This great work will continue to progress and Henry will keep the committee up to date.

Roy updated the committee that two representatives from the Ministry of Natural Resources will be at the HWFA May 8th meeting talking about “species at risk”. All members were encouraged to attend the meeting and let area farmers know about this meeting topic.

12. PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL – none

13. ADJOURNMENT – Roy Shuker moved the meeting be adjourned.