MINUTES: Agriculture & Rural Affairs Advisory Committee
June 23rd, 2005
Ancaster Marritt Hall

Present: Chair: Roy Shuker
Members: Carl Loewith, Cathy McMaster, Murray Ferguson, Susan Coverdale, Carol Pupo, Robert Pasuta, Mel Switzer, Phil Krakar, Ralph Kikkert, David Mitchell, Nancy Mills, Frank Regan

Absent: Members: Robert Murphy, Henry Swierenga, Doug Cranston, Dale Smith

Chair Roy Shuker welcomed the members, made introductions and called the meeting to order.

1. CHANGES TO AGENDA – none

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – none

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes from March 24th, 2005

Mel Switzer moved that the minutes of March 24th, 2005 be adopted as presented; seconded by Carl Loewith. CARRIED

4. DELEGATION REQUESTS – none

5. CONSENT ITEMS – none

6. PUBLIC DELEGATIONS - none

7. STAFF PRESENTATIONS

7.1 City of Hamilton – Draft Tree Cutting By-law – Cathy Plosz made a presentation. Topics discussed included:
   • Why the City is developing a new by-law
• Issues and Goals
• Content of the draft by-law
• Process to develop the by-law
• Public Consultation Results

Cathy reported that the by-law that the ARAAC members are seeing is very draft and changes are expected. Tree protection is very important and this by-law is one of many methods to ensure this protection. A strategy will be developed for restoration, stewardship, protection guidelines, urban replanting and monitoring. Cathy also pointed out that exemptions and different rules will apply to farm practices and rural harvest. In depth discussion took place with several key points being made by ARAAC members including terminologies. ARAAC member points were taken into consideration and asked by Cathy to continue to provide comments to her office. Carol Pupo explained that Halton is involved in the same process. Councillor Ferguson also indicated that this by-law will have two prongs rural verses urban. The next draft will be vetted through the ARAAC. Timelines for completion of the whole process are planned for late 2005.

7.2 Expansion of the Existing Airport Influence Area and to Create a Special Policy Area for Employment Purposes – Guy Paparella made a presentation to the ARAAC members on the proposed City of Hamilton Official Plan Amendments to rezone 3000 acres surrounding the Hamilton airport for industrial/commercial development. This special policy area for employment purposes has been approved by Council and will require extensive work over the next two years that will include lots of public input. Guy highlighted the proposed area affected (3,000 acres /1800 acres net). This expansion proposal is still subject to appeals and may face an OMB hearing if anyone appeals Council’s decision. Discussion evolved around the loss of agriculture lands with Councillor Ferguson being very specific that no one including any farms will have their lands expropriated. Guy also explained that this process will work hand in hand with the GRIDS process. The difficulty with this plan is that it removes prime agriculture lands from productivity however difficult choices needed to be made to compensate for the City of Hamilton’s need for employment lands to support our tax base and population growth. The Province of Ontario Greenbelt plan recognized the need for employment growth and exempted these lands from the Greenbelt. Lots of productive dialogue amongst ARAAC members and staff. Next steps will include:

• the adoption of the Official Plan amendment (including appeal process)
• prepare a detailed work plan including master servicing plan
• create a steering committee with various levels of government and stakeholders
• extensive open houses and public meetings
• final adoption of plan
• begin development application process.

This will be a very lengthy intensive process that will require input from this committee.
8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.1 Open Air Burning By-law – Staff from the Fire Prevention Office came to the meeting to address concerns forwarded to the ARAAC and HWFA regarding permits. Several incidents of difficulty in receiving permits were brought to the attention of staff. Staff reviewed the process and made note of some of the issues. Staff turnover and the Flamborough Municipal Centre were cited as a recognized issue and Fire Prevention will continue to educate staff on the process. It was agreed and recommended that for larger fires, rural residents should go directly to the fire prevention offices. Staff agreed that for farmers that operate multiple properties that one permit fee will be applicable but separate permits will be issued. Mel Switzer pointed out that his service at Glanbrook Service Centre has always been excellent. ARAAC members discussed the possibility of a long-term permit fee for farmers. Staff was responsive to this idea and if deemed appropriate ARAAC would need to bring a resolution back to staff for a report and recommendation to Council.

8.2 Setting the Planning Context for Rural Hamilton – Public Open Houses were held throughout the month of June seeking discussion and questions from the general public and ARAAC members on setting the planning context for Hamilton’s rural area. A session was held just preceding the ARAAC meeting and most members attended. Paul Mason gave the committee a brief overview of the sessions saying that they had modest attendance but had received good comments. This process will be taking place over the next six months and this committee will be asked to provide input and support to Long Range Planning Staff.

8.3 Hamilton Eat Local Project – ARAAC members received a handout from Environment Hamilton Committee regarding a project to promote and advertise local produce and products. Committee members were asked for their input and supported the concept that a write-up be included in the HWFA newsletters sent to over 650 farmers in Hamilton seeking their support and input directly to Environment Hamilton. HWFA Board of Directors had agreed to support this project in this way and the ARAAC members agreed this was the best means of getting the information out to local farmers. Sue Coverdale indicated that this type of project might eventually tie in with the Hamilton Agriculture Action Plan to promote local products.

8.4 Hamilton Conservation Authority – Low Water Response Committee The HCA are looking to solicit more support and membership from the rural agriculture community to participate on this important committee. ARAAC members reviewed that draft plan and supported the initial report. Phil Krakar sits on this committee and explained its plan and purpose in greater detail to the committee. Again, the ARAAC members suggested that the HCA contact the HWFA secretary to include a brief description in their newsletter seeking input and support from that membership.
8.5 **Agricultural Action Plan** - Sue Coverdale outlined to the committee that the City of Hamilton had received a $100,000 cheque from the Province of Ontario to complete an “Agricultural Action Plan”. Timeline to begin this project is slotted for fall 2005. This action plan will be a shared vision of shared actions to be undertaken by the agricultural industry and all levels of government.

8.6 **Correspondence from OMAF** – Council referred a letter received from Minister Steve Peters thanking the City of Hamilton for their letter to his Ministry recognizing the importance of agriculture to Hamilton and asking the Provincial Government to step forward with a support strategy to assist farmers in Ontario. ARAAC members appreciated the letter and some of the actions being taken by the Province and also recognized with gratitude the action of Council for the City of Hamilton.

8.7 **Correspondence from Ottawa RE: Elimination of Retirement Farm Lots** – ARAAC members reviewed correspondence received from the Deputy City Clerk for Ottawa asking Ontario Municipalities to support their motion asking the Government of Ontario to reconsider its decision to disallow and eliminate retirement farm lots for bona fide farmers. Ottawa does not want to see retirement lots eliminated and is seeking support amongst Municipalities. ARAAC members feel very strongly that the Government of Ontario has made the right decision and retirement lots should be eliminated. Carl Loewith moved that the City of Hamilton should not support Ottawa’s request to support their motion and that this be reported back to City of Hamilton Council through the minutes of this meeting. Seconded by Philip Krakar. CARRIED

9. **MOTIONS** – none

10. **NOTICES OF MOTIONS** - none

11. **GENERAL INFORMATION**

11.1 **Ontario Mayor’s for the Future of Agriculture** – Councillor Mitchell gave the ARAAC committee an overview of this one day event. Norfolk County Mayor planned this event that was very well organized with strong attendance from rural Mayors including key staff participation. At the conclusion of the day (initiated by Councillor Mitchell) this group asked the City of Hamilton to bring forward a resolution from the Ontario Mayors for the Future of Agriculture recommending that the Province of Ontario immediately develop effective funding mechanism specifically to support rural and agricultural development issues. This included that all Ontario municipalities endorse this recommendation through their respective Councils. This action was carried out by City of Hamilton Council at its meeting of July 13, 2005. Meetings of the Ontario Mayors for the Future of Agriculture will resume again later this fall.
11.2 Update on status of Grants to Non-Profile Rural Organizations – Roy Shuker and Sue Coverdale updated the committee on the status of these grant cheques. This has been a very time consuming and slightly frustrating process. Just prior to the meeting through Councillor Ferguson’s intervention we expect this process to wrap up in the next week. (Since this meeting cheques were received in Sue Cloverdale’s office and mailed the first few days of July.) Excellent work was done by this committee once again in the distribution of these important grants.

11.3 ARAAC Committee Member Update - none

12. PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL – none

13. ADJOURNMENT – Roy Shuker announced the meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: Thursday, August 25th, 2005
Ancaster Marritt Hall – Boardroom
7:30 p.m.

(Note: Important discussion and presentation regarding Proposed Ban of Pesticides/By-law)

(Agenda will be emailed on Monday, August 22nd and distributed at the meeting due to staff holidays.)