MINUTES: Agriculture & Rural Affairs Advisory Committee
March 24th, 2005
Ancaster Marritt Hall

Present: Chair: Roy Shuker
Members: Carl Loewith, Cathy McMaster, Murray Ferguson, Susan Coverdale, Henry Swierenga, Dale Smith, Carol Pupo, Robert Pasuta, Mel Switzer, Doug Cranston

Absent: Members: Ralph Kikkert, David Mitchell, Nancy Mills, Robert Murphy, Frank Regan, Phil Krakar

Chair Roy Shuker welcomed the members, made introductions and called the meeting to order. Roy also thanked Carl Loewith for chairing the February 24th meeting with very little notice.

1. CHANGES TO AGENDA – none

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Robert Pasuta announced that Larry Freeman – HWFA and OFA Director was in attendance and would like to listen to staff presentation on Greenbelt, Provincial Policy Statement, Room to Grow and update on LEAR study. Committee welcomed Mr. Freeman to attend as an observer with no participation or input. Committee also agreed that if the public wanted to attend and make a presentation or participate in the discussion they would need to seek delegation status for the following meeting. Moved by Doug Cranston, seconded by Mel Switzer. CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes from February 24th, 2005

Robert Pasuta moved that the minutes of February 24th, 2005 be adopted as presented; seconded by Dale Smith. CARRIED

4. DELEGATION REQUESTS – none

5. CONSENT ITEMS – none

6. PUBLIC DELEGATIONS - none
7. STAFF PRESENTATIONS

7.1 City of Hamilton – Provincial Policy Statement, Room to Grow, Greenbelt and Lear Study Updates – Paul Mason and Joanne Hickey-Evans made a presentation and gave the committee an overview on these provincial legislations and status of Lear Study. Specifically, how it all fits together, where it is all going, where we are at the moment and finally next steps.

Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) – This legislation represents a major fundamental change in how the Province operates. Previously the municipalities were much more responsible for their own planning and land-use issues. The new PPS ultimately dictates that the Provincial Government is taking leadership and control of strategic planning issues. Staff felt this was a very good move and that the Province has been missing in action since the early 1970’s. The PPS are the general rules that apply across the Province and outline the minimum requirements; this PPS is much more specific with detailed directive plans applicable to the whole province. This document is more general that that of the Greenbelt or Room to Grow documents but has a clear vision to build strong healthy communities protecting our natural and man made resources. Some the guiding principles of the PPS are as follows:

- Stronger Urban Boundary rules
- More restrictive guidelines for settlement areas
- Looks specifically at Prime Agricultural Lands not specifically rural lands i.e. specialty crop, prime land classes 1 – 3
- Clearly gives highest level priority to aggregate resources
- Key feature – severances for the most part will be prohibited only allowing some surplus farm dwellings to be severed upon the joining of two farms

In the old PPS the wording allowed for some flexibility such as “shall have regard for” however, the new PPS clearly states “shall be consistent with”. This is much more conclusive and the City of Hamilton new official plan therefore must be consistent with this Provincial legislation. Staff will be working very closely with Provincial staff.

Room to Grow Bill 136 – This legislation is still in the draft development stage and is the flip of Greenbelt dealing with population and urban growth/expansion. Provincial staff will be receiving comments from municipalities prior to April 18th on this draft document. City staff will be presenting their comments to Planning and Economic Development Committee on April 5th. Final draft will be published by June with a 60 day public consultation process to take place over the summer. Final legislation should be implemented by fall. This document has very little relevance to the rural communities and will prohibit any change to Urban Boundaries for five years once legislated. This document will give specific growth guidelines for any development in urban areas i.e. 50 people minimum per gross hectare and a target of 40% urban intensification. The rules will be very specific and in all cases eliminate the appeal process currently allowed under the existing Provincial legislation. This legislation will be followed with a more detailed sub-plan addressing specifics such as long-term growth issues, transit, health and
infrastructure requirements. Everyone must work together as this sub-strategy will determine the final detailed plans for our community.

**Greenbelt Legislation** – This document / legislation will be fundamental in the development of the new official plan for the City of Hamilton. The Greenbelt Legislation gives municipalities a clear set of rules enabling them to move forward immediately. Greenbelt Legislation defines urban area boundaries (areas to be developed residential and employment lands), specialty crop areas (most restrictive), agricultural lands (next most restrictive), rural lands (some municipal flexibility with a scope of allowable uses i.e. golf courses, sports parks but absolutely no residential growth). Hamilton did see some changes to the boundaries from the original drafts with Pleasant View being added to restricted area and parts of lower Stoney Creek removed from restrictive and some changes to urban boundaries/development. A large area to the south of Hamilton has been designated for growth, the size is good however developing these lands will be very costly and poses some issues for the municipality. There is actually no real good rational for what is in and out of the specific designations. Existing incompatible uses in rural areas will be allowed to stay but very little to no growth potential. Natural areas and environmentally sensitive areas are strongly protected under the Greenbelt Legislation. Mineral aggregates in the Greenbelt areas will have some additional rules and guidelines compared to the Provinces overall high priority to aggregate lands. The municipality may have the opportunity to refine some of the natural resource areas identified in the plan, local articulation needs to take place. In the legislation small rural settlement areas require the municipality to set clear boundaries and will be given a one time opportunity to make some minimal adjustments. The ARAAC committee will be asked to assist with some of these decisions. Greenbelt is final with some retro-active elements being considered, however there will be no more land severances or incompatible uses. Again the appeal process will be eliminated because the guidelines are specific legislations.

**LEAR STUDY** – Staff has met with OMAF staff and has updated the committee that agreement is at the 90% stage. The Province will adopt the LEAR Study findings and results. This will be a technical document used to assist with the development of the official plan. Committee members will receive hard paper copies and/or CD once the final approvals have been received from the Province. Sue Coverdale will contact members to find out what format they want to receive the document in. The document will also be available on the City of Hamilton web site.

### 8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

#### 8.1 ARAAC Resolutions to City of Hamilton Council

Councillor Ferguson addressed this topic. In February a resolution was taken to Council to support the general economic crisis facing the Agriculture/Farming community. This resolution was discussed amongst a few ARAAC members but went to Council without the official passing of this committee in the form of a resolution. Councillor Ferguson and Chair Roy Shuker both apologized for this mistake and offered to rescind the
resolution. Committee members discussed the topic in detail and felt there was no need to rescind the resolution. Two issues were addressed that this type of resolution should if at all possible be voted on by the committee first and secondly there was concern that this committees mandate was not to be a lobbyist. Committee members were pleased by the show of support from the Mayor and both rural and urban Councillors. In the event that this type of urgent situation does arise Susan Coverdale and Roy Shuker will make every effort to personally contact each member to either seek approval or reject the request. Members were satisfied and this protocol was duly noted.

8.2 **2004 Grant Applications Evaluation Results** – Committee members were given a comprehensive report showing evaluation marks and results. Funds were disbursed accordingly to criteria approved by the committee and accordingly to the value placed on each category. Evaluation team discussed their findings and consequent decisions with some further discussion on the financial statements received from the applicants. Cathy McMaster suggested that next year we ask the groups to be very specific with regards to their financial statements including any investment funds on hand. Motion was made to approve the Evaluation results by Carl Loewith, seconded by Doug Cranston. CARRIED

9. **MOTIONS** – none

10. **NOTICES OF MOTIONS** - none

11. **GENERAL INFORMATION**

11.1 **One Voice Rally** - This event was very well organized with attendance at 8,000 strong. It appears an announcement will be made this next week regarding Provincial and Federal initiatives and funding to address this crisis in our agriculture industry.

11.2 **Farm Family of Year Banquet** – This was an extremely enjoyable event with 219 meals being served. This event was also a financial success ending with a slight profit or break even outcome, good sponsorships were received. Mark and Kari Comley were appropriately honoured. The guest speaker Eleanor Wood did an excellent job and was certainly another highlight to the evening.

11.3 **ARAAC Committee Member Update**

- Robert Pasuta announced that he has been asked to go to Ottawa to assist with the lobbying of the Federal Government for financial assistance and the need for change to Federal programs. Unsure of whether this will be required or that he will attend.
- Dale Smith had an update on behalf of the Soil and Crop Association. Indicated that there could be new monies from both the Federal and
Provincial Governments specifics to the Environmental Farm Plan. He highly recommended that everyone fill out the booklet regardless.

- Henry Swierenga announced the recent successes in favour of both the Equine and Maple Syrup producers with regard to commercial tax assessment imposed by MPAC. These decisions have been reversed and both industries will not receive a commercial assessment. He also announced that the $750 Water Permit imposed by Government has been cancelled.

12. **PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL** – none

13. **ADJOURNMENT** – Kathy McMaster moved that the meeting be adjourned.

Next Meeting:

TO BE DETERMINED - As required