MINUTES: Agriculture & Rural Affairs Advisory Committee
March 25th, 2008
Ancaster Fairgrounds, Marritt Hall Board Room

Present: Philip Krakar, Cathy McMaster, Councillor David Mitchell, Susan Coverdale, Sarah Megens, Councillor Robert Pasuta, Doug Cranston, Nancy Mills, Mel Switzer, John Mantel, Andrew Spoelstra

Absent/Regrets: Roy Shuker, Dale Smith, Henry Swierenga, Councillor Lloyd Ferguson, Paul Shaker, Kevin Laidley, Carl Loewith, Robert Saccomano

Visitors: Salter Hayden, Adrienne Press, Pat Parker

CALL TO ORDER
Chair Carl Loewith is absent tonight. Doug Cranston will Chair the meeting. Doug welcomed the members and called the meeting to order.

1. CHANGES TO AGENDA – Councillor Mitchell requested we add item 5.5 CanGro Plant in the City of St. David’s – Discussion re: request for changes to Packaging Regulations.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – none

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Minutes of January 24th, 2008. Item #5.2 Ottawa Street Farmers Market, change location from Ottawa Street to Britannia Avenue to reflect exact location. Motion to approve by Cathy McMaster, seconded by Phil Krakar. CARRIED.

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Public Works – Solid Waste Division – Pat Parker and Adrienne Press gave committee members an overview of the Waste and Recycling Programs for the City of Hamilton. Extensive discussion around the calendars, award programs, recycling programs, Hotz depot, re-use store
and specifically waste programs/allowances for the agricultural sector. Staff gave an overview of the meeting at Carl Loewith’s and how best to service the agriculture industry and what could be incorporated into the weekly collection (allowable items). Biggest concern from staff is how to identify what is actually an agricultural operation in the rural communities. Staff will follow-up with the idea of identifying farmers by their membership through official agricultural organizations such as the HWFA, CFFA, etc. Sue Coverdale will work with Pat Parker to forward contacts for these organizations so staff can establish the linkages to the farm community and establish a waste collection policy unique to agricultural operation in the City of Hamilton.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1 Line Fences Act - Discussion on draft reports – Salter Hayden from the Clerks Department presented a draft report recommending that the City of Hamilton introduce a new by-law to resolve all fence line disputes in both the rural and urban parts of the City of Hamilton. Members of the committee discussed their concerns with a one size fits all and that it would not be favourable for the rural/agricultural communities. Committee members support a by-law for the urban area but recommend that the City of Hamilton maintain the line fences act for rural communities and rural agricultural lands. Salter will take these recommendations into consideration in drafting the final report and submit the amendments to the committee members for their input and review prior to Council approval. 

MOTION: The Agricultural and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee recommends that the City of Hamilton maintain the line fences act with local fence viewers for rural communities and agricultural lands. Moved by Mel Switzer, seconded by Cathy McMaster. CARRIED.

5.2 Grant Program Criteria Review for Non-Profit Farm and Rural Organizations – Sue Coverdale gave the committee an overview of the criteria for the grant program, seeking committee recommendations for change or endorsement of current criteria. Sue explained the timelines for the reviewing of the applications (May), committee approvals (May meeting) and distribution of funds (end of June.) Motion: The Agricultural and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee endorses the continuation of the current criteria for funding applications and recommends a panel consisting of Susan Coverdale, City of Hamilton, Henry Swierenga, OFA and Carol Pupo, Vineland Resource Centre review the grants and make recommendation to committee for distribution of funds to qualified applicants. Motion forwarded by Nancy Mills, seconded by Andrew Spoelstra. CARRIED. Councillor Mitchell recommends that the ARAAC members consider asking the Grants Sub-committee to increase the annual funding from $11,565 to $15,000 for this years grant distribution. Motion: The Agricultural and
Rural Affairs Advisory request the City of Hamilton Grants sub-committee increase the funding to the Non-profit Agricultural and Rural Organizations be increased from $11,565 to $15,000. Motion forwarded by Andrew Spoelstra seconded by Mel Switzer. CARRIED.

5.3 Airport Expansion Committee Meeting Update – Doug Cranston gave the committee a brief overview of the meetings discussions including the various issues being discussed and the progress to date. Doug will try to update the committee on a regular basis and recommends that Sue Coverdale contact James Goodram to get a copy of the monthly minutes from these meetings for distribution to the ARAAC members. Sue will make sure these minutes are obtained and circulated monthly. (Attached minutes from November 2007 to February 2008).

5.4 Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee – Sue Coverdale, Councillor Pasuta and Sarah Megens gave the committee an overview of the role of the new Food Security committee. Terms of reference, application forms and overview materials were distributed to ARAAC members. This committee is seeking a representative from the ARAAC committee to participate and volunteer on this committee. No one at the meeting felt they could spare the time to meet on a regular basis and all declined to participate. A major concern for ARAAC members was the timing of the meeting from 4 – 6 p.m, this was not an ideal time for the agriculture community. Sue Coverdale will try to circulate interest amongst other committee members and area farmers. She will notify Vicki Edwards that the timing is not good for the agriculture industry and will give the committee an update at the next meeting.

5.5 CanGro Plant in the City of St. David’s – Discussion re: request for changes to Packaging Regulations – Councillor Mitchell updated the committee on the recent closing of the CanGro plant in St. David’s and the detrimental effect this will have on local growers. Companies are now outsourcing the fruit from other countries and are still able to put Product of Canada on packaging as long as 51% of the product is Canadian. The problem is that the actual can, label and syrup can be Canadian product but the fruit can be from other countries. The committee recommended that the City of Hamilton send a letter from Mayor Eisenberg and Council to the appropriate sources asking for immediate change to this legislation. Motion: The Agricultural and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee ask that the City of Hamilton send a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada, the local Members of Parliament, the Minister of Agriculture and Agrifood and FCM to request that legislation be passed to require Canadian food manufacturers to use Canadian grown produce or, at the very least that food packaging regulations be amended to prohibit food that has been outsourced from foreign
countries to be labeled as products of Canada. Forwarded by Phil Krakar, seconded by John Mantel. CARRIED.

6. GENERAL INFORMATION

6.1 ARAAC Committee Member Update - none

7. ADJOURNMENT – Doug Cranston moved the meeting be adjourned.