MINUTES: Agriculture & Rural Affairs Advisory Committee
Thursday, February 26th, 2009
Ancaster Fairgrounds – Marritt Hall

Present: Cathy McMaster, Nancy Mills, Roy Shuker, Andrew Spoelstra, Carl Loewith, Doug Cranston, Councillor David Mitchell, Councillor Robert Pasuta, Councillor Lloyd Ferguson, Susan Coverdale, Robert Saccomano, Paul Shaker, Dale Smith, Philip Krakar, John Mantel,

Absent/Regrets: Henry Swierenga, Mel Switzer

Visitors: Kevin Clugston, Sharon Clugston, Judy Musitano, Kevin deBlieck, Andrea Otten, Wes Vandervie, Elaine Pasuta, Robert Clackett, Bill Young, Vince Ormond

CALL TO ORDER
Chair Carl Loewith called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Chair Loewith welcomed all committee members, staff and visitors.

1. CHANGES TO AGENDA – none

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – none

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Minutes of January 12th, 2009. One correction John Mantel was not present but absent with regrets. Motion to approve as amended by Roy Shuker, seconded by Bob Saccomano. CARRIED.

4. Public Delegation – Sign By-law (see item 5.1). Representative from the agricultural community delivered a strong message of concern regarding issues being enforced with regards to the City of Hamilton sign by-law
5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1 Municipal Law Enforcement – Rural Areas – Sign By-law

A lengthy debate and issues pertaining to recent activity in the rural agricultural areas with regards to sign by-law enforcement, destruction of signs, removal of signs and exemption of agricultural signs in the rural area from the by-law. Visitors, committee members and staff debated this issue and it was agreed that this matter would be reviewed and brought back to Council through a report in April or May of 2009. In the meantime City staff would not enforce any sign restrictions on rural agricultural operations until further resolution. The ARAAC committee made the following motion. **Motion:** That all agriculturally related signs erected on public and/or private property by an agricultural farm operation is exempt from the sign by-law and in compliance with the traffic and pedestrian safety standards of the City of Hamilton. Motion by Roy Shuker, seconded by Phil Krakar – Carried.

5.2 Defining What is Local Food

Sue Coverdale and Robert Clackett briefly debated with the committee what they felt was to be considered local food. All agreed this was a much larger issue and that local food could and likely does exceed our municipal borders and recommended staff work to determine a boundary or guidelines.

5.3 Update on the Status of the Draft Rural Zoning By-law

Robert Clackett updated the committee on the status of the rural zoning by-law. Mapping is the key hold-up at this point but this by-law will be thoroughly vetted through this committee in the coming months. Councillor Ferguson emphasized to the committee his concerns with regards to the amount of rural agricultural lands that are identified as ESA’s and that development on farm could be severely hampered by this unless we send a strong message that farmers and agricultural operations need to be allowed some flexibility and definite growth potential. The following motion was made as a result of the dialogue. **Motion:** The Agricultural and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee request that the Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) identified in the rural areas of the City of Hamilton be subject to requirements and fees that allow for the long term viability of the agricultural community thereby allowing this sector to grow and prosper. Motion by Doug Cranston, seconded by Cathy McMaster – Carried.
5.4 Application for Registered Agricultural Provision for Garbage Container Limits – Documentation for Review

Committee members reviewed the document produced by staff from Waste Management and supported the document with a few changes. Motion as follows. **Motion:** The Agricultural and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee supports the "Application for Registered Agricultural Provision for Garbage Container Limits" to be forwarded to registered farm businesses in the City of Hamilton subject to the removal of the following three items currently on the draft application: Acreage, Main Source of Income and Gross Income. Motion by Andrew Spoelstra, seconded by John Mantel – Carried.

5.5 Viability of a Farmers Market for Ancaster Agricultural Society

Councillor Ferguson presented the idea of requesting the City of Hamilton and the Province of Ontario to fund a study to see if a “Farmers Market” would be viable at the new Ancaster Fairgrounds. Committee debated this issue and the following motion was made. **Motion:** The Agricultural and Rural Affairs committee supports the recommendation put forward by Councillor Ferguson to undertake the process of conducting a feasibility study to determine if a farmers market would be viable at the Ancaster Agricultural Society and further supported his request that $5,000 be requested from the City of Hamilton Economic Development Division budget along with an application for matching funds to the appropriate Province of Ontario funding program lead by Councillor Ferguson. Motion by Doug Cranston, seconded by Dale Smith – Carried.

6. GENERAL INFORMATION

**ARAAAC Committee Member Update**

None

7. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.