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THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL

PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

MINUTES PAAWG 2019-05

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) met on November 21, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mississauga Room, Regional Administrative Headquarters, 10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite A, Brampton.

Members Present: Gary Mountain, Chair, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Karen Hutchinson, Caledon Countryside Alliance
Brian Wannamaker, Citizen-at-Large
Paul Risebrough, Citizen-at-Large
Merissa Nudelman, Ecosource
Tom Dolson, Peel Federation of Agriculture
Ed Russell, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Manjari Mehta, Citizen-at-Large
James Douglas, Chief of Staff to Peel Region Chair

Members Absent: Jennifer Innis, Regional Councillor
Kristen Carberry, Peel Federation of Agriculture
Michael Palleschi, Regional Councillor
Stephen Dasko, Regional Councillor

Staff: Mark Head, Manager, Research and Analysis, Region of Peel
Don Campbell, Principal Planner, Region of Peel
Laura Dumbrell, Junior Planner, Region of Peel
Tina Detaramani, Manager, Sustainable Transportation and Strategic Initiatives, Region of Peel
Mark Eastman, Senior Coordinator, Agricultural Outreach, Credit Valley Conservation
Nadine Abrams, Rural Clean Water Program Coordinator, Toronto and Region Conservation

Guests: Aviva Patel, Senior Manager, Ecology and Monitoring, Credit Valley Conservation

1) **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Gary Mountain, Chair.

2) **Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

The following conflicts of interest were declared with respect to Peel Rural Water Quality Program applications:

- Gary Mountain – with respect to application 10-CVC-19.

- Ed Russell - with respect to application 06-TRCA-19.

The Chair noted that each member would be asked to exit the room while the subject application was being considered.

3) Review and Approval of 2019-05 Agenda

Don Campbell advised that Mark Eastman proposed an addition to the agenda dealing with a proposal for the PAAWG 2020 Farm Tour. Members agreed that, time permitting, this would be included at the end of the meeting.

Moved by Paul Risebrough;

That the agenda for the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting held on November 21, 2019, be approved as amended.

Carried PAAWG 2019-13

4) Approval of Minutes from August 2019 Meeting

Moved by Tom Dolson

That the Minutes from the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting 2019-04, held on August 22, 2019, be approved.

Carried PAAWG 2019-14

5) Approval of PAAWG Meeting Schedule for 2020

There was general agreement that PAAWG would meet on February 20, May 21, August 20, and November 19, 2020. Members were asked to notify Don Campbell of any major conflicts with these dates as soon as possible.

6) Conservation Authority Natural Heritage System for the Region of Peel

Dr. Aviva Patel, Sr. Manager, Ecology & Monitoring, Credit Valley Conservation

Dr. Patel gave a presentation on CVC's Regional Natural Heritage System (NHS) Integration Project. The purpose of the project is to provide a watershed-based, scientifically reliable, and defensible Conservation Authority (CA) NHS for Peel Region. This may be used to inform:

- Official Plan (OP) reviews in accordance with provincial policy direction;
- watershed restoration and land stewardship programs;
- land securement and management; and

- understanding of natural cover in Peel for climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation.

Key project drivers include:

- the need for regular review of regional OPs;
- Peel's climate change risk and vulnerability analysis for natural systems, which recommended an increase in ecosystem connectivity/ protection and restoration of natural features, and
- CA monitoring results which found that the Region is below watershed targets for forest and wetland cover.

Next, Dr. Patel described the project's three phases:

1) CA NHS for Caledon: CVC led

This involved compiling available data from four CAs, the Province, the Region, and the Town; updating data and existing CA NHS mapping; and merging systems across boundaries using consistent rules.

2) CA NHS for Peel: CVC led

This entailed base-mapping of CA NHS's for the Region's three lower-tier municipalities, a review of inconsistencies and edge-matching along watershed and municipal boundaries, aquatic system mapping, and additional refinements based on municipal input.

Dr. Patel noted that the resulting NHS encompasses 34% of Peel but the majority of the system is already mapped in existing official plan natural heritage designations or subject to natural heritage policy direction.

3) Municipal refinements, stakeholder consultation: municipal led

In Caledon, in response to municipal input, CA NHS mapping excluded active aggregate sites except in areas with overlapping environmental zoning designations and settlement areas were subject to minor refinements. In Peel, stakeholder consultation is ongoing in connection with the Regional OP review.

Questions/Discussion:

CVC was asked to confirm whether this mapping is available online. Dr. Patel explained that various background reports are available on the CVC website, and that reports and mapping for Caledon's CA NHS will be available soon. The most recent report regarding a CA NHS for Peel will be circulated to PAAWG members and addressed in the Regional OP review.

7) **GTA West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment- Update**
Mark Head, Manager, Region of Peel

Mark Head gave a presentation on the GTA West Corridor EA. He explained that the presentation was intended to provide PAAWG with an update and an opportunity to raise questions that could be conveyed to the Province.

Mark began with a review of the project's history. He explained that the project had been initiated in 2008 to examine long term transportation problems in the western GTA and opportunities for linking urban growth centres. In 2014 Stage 2 of the EA was initiated, identifying a focused analysis area and a range of route alternatives for public consultation. At the end of 2015 work on the EA was suspended and in February 2018 it was announced that the EA would not proceed.

In November 2018 the Province announced plans to resume the EA. In June 2019 it announced that the EA was resuming at the point that it left off in 2015. A Public Information Centre was held in September 2019 at which the Province released a technically preferred route and a draft focused analysis area.

Mr. Head indicated that the evaluation process used to identify and select the technically preferred route involved an agricultural impact assessment. Considerations included: soil classes; speciality croplands; impacts on agricultural facilities and operations; farm infrastructure assets, tile drainage infrastructure, and the presence of established farm communities. He reviewed how these agricultural factors and sub-factors were considered in the evaluation of route alternatives for different sections of the corridor. He noted, for example, that in Section 4 the preferred alternative was the most preferred from an agricultural perspective as it impacts the fewest high-investment farming operations.

As the study enters its preliminary design phase, mitigation, compensation, and/or enhancement measures will be considered as they apply to direct agricultural impacts, farm equipment traffic and route access on side roads, and construction impacts. Future steps are as follows:

- **Spring 2020:** Confirmation of preferred route and focused analysis area, commencement of preliminary design.
- **Fall 2020/ Spring 2021:** Development of community value plans, which are tools that incorporate public input into design to reflect the social, cultural, historical, and environmental interests of the community.

- **Fall/ Winter 2021:** Public Information Center #3 and presentation of preliminary design.
- **Fall/ Winter 2022:** Submission of the final environmental study report.

Questions/Discussion:

There was general discussion around the need to ensure that Peel's agricultural community has access to up-to-date information from MTO about next steps before ground-proofing begins in the spring. Members expressed a preference for increasing MTO's engagement with PFA than having a representative from MTO present at the next PAAWG meeting.

8) **Peel Rural Water Quality Program**

1) **2019 PRWQP Budget Overview**

Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation

Mark Eastman provided a summary of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program project approvals and the status of the budget. There was a total of \$102,000 available to fund Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP) projects in 2019. This included \$75,000 in Regional funding, \$7,000 carrying forward from 2018, and additional grants available from TRCA through federal and provincial programs. At the start of the November 21 meeting, the Program had a remaining balance of \$27,950.27. In the current agenda seven projects were proposed with grant allocations totalling \$44,881.52. Thus if all projects were approved, the PRWQP would be in a budget deficit with a negative balance of \$-16,931.25. Therefore, projects 08-CVC-19, 09-CVC-19 and 10-CVC-19 could only be approved on the condition that CVC sources surplus funds from another budget to support the projects or funding is available in the 2020 PRWQP budget.

2) **PRWQP Applications**

Nadine Abrams, Toronto & Region Conservation

Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation

a) 05-TRCA-19 Tree Planting

Moved by Ed Russell;

That TRCA project 05-TRCA-19 be approved for funding in the amount of \$8,535 under the category of "Tree Planting."

Carried PAAWG 2019-15

b) 06-TRCA-19 Cover Crop

Ed Russell left the room during discussion of this item due to a conflict of interest.

PAAWG members requested that CVC and TRCA staff clarify limits around participation for previous applicants. CVC and TRCA staff explained that applicants may apply once for each type of project per lifetime.

Moved by Tom Dolson;

That TRCA project 06-TRCA-19 be approved for funding in the amount of \$5,000 under the category of "Cover Crop."

Carried PAAWG 2019-16

Ed Russell returned to the room.

c) 07-TRCA-19 Tree Planting

Moved by Ed Russell;

That TRCA project 07-TRCA-19 be approved for funding in the amount of \$9,783 under the category of "Tree Planting."

Carried PAAWG 2019-17

d) 07-CVC-19 Tree Planting

PAAWG members inquired about a notch in Area B of the project map. CVC explained that a berm area exists south of the notch, and in order to mitigate negative impacts to the integrity of the berm, trees should not be planted here.

Moved by Paul Risebrough;

That CVC project 07-CVC-19 be approved for funding in the amount of \$572.52 under the category of "Tree Planting."

Carried PAAWG 2019-18

e) 08-CVC-19 Cover Crop

CVC noted that the applicant was the same as the applicant for the 07-TRCA-19 tree planting project. It was also noted that the applicant expressed some

reluctance to use cover crops and was considering renting tillage equipment in the spring.

CVC requested that PAAWG members provide input on whether the PRWQP would provide financial support for the rental of tillage equipment to help with cover crops. Members agreed that PRWQP should not cover these costs, noting that the program already provides generous subsidies and that this would not provide an adequate rural water quality benefit.

Moved by Ed Russell;

That CVC project 08-CVC-19 be approved for funding in the amount of \$5,000 under the category of "Cover Crop" on the condition that Credit Valley Conservation sources surplus funds from another budget to support the project or the funding is available in the 2020 Peel Rural Water Quality Program budget.

Carried PAAWG 2019-19

f) 09-CVC-19 Cover Crop

PAAWG members requested that CVC confirm whether the subject property is in Peel Region, as it appears to be near Halton Region. CVC confirmed that the property is in Peel, though it is close to the Halton boundary.

Moved by Manjari Mehta;

That CVC project 09-CVC-19 be approved for funding in the amount of \$5,000 under the category of "Cover Crop" on the condition that Credit Valley Conservation sources surplus funds from another budget to support the project or funding is available in the 2020 Peel Rural Water Quality Program budget.

Carried PAAWG 2019-20

g) 10-CVC-19 Tree Planting

Gary Mountain left the meeting room during discussion of this item due to a conflict of interest. Tom Dolson assumed the chair for this portion of the meeting.

PAAWG members inquired about what was to be planted in Area 1 on the project map. CVC staff responded that, due to snow drift, mainly shrubs are planted here.

PAAWG members also noted that, as Area 3 is adjacent to a woodlot, deer browsing may occur. CVC acknowledged this and noted that the applicant might install tree covers to mitigate impact.

PAAWG members requested that CVC confirm whether all four areas shown on the project map qualify for funding under the PRWQP. CVC confirmed that all four areas do meet program criteria.

Moved by Ed Russell;

That CVC project 10-CVC-19 be approved for funding in the amount of \$10,000 under the category of "Tree Planting" on the condition that Credit Valley Conservation sources surplus funds from another budget to support the project or funding is available in the 2002 Peel Rural Water Quality Program budget.

Carried PAAWG 2019-21

9) Agricultural/ Rural System Policies and Mapping
Don Campbell, Region of Peel

Don Campbell provided an update on the Region's agricultural and rural system policies and mapping as part of the Peel 2041 Official Plan Review. He noted that comments had been received from the Peel Federation of Agriculture (PFA) and will be addressed in the next version of the policies and mapping. Comments also had been received from the Province. The Region will provide detailed written responses to both PFA and the Province.

PAAWG members were given an opportunity to provide any additional input on the draft policies and mapping. Members requested that Regional Staff clarify the classification of lands under the prime agricultural area designation. Regional Staff explained that the definition comes directly from the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), which indicates that, in addition to class 1-3 lands, specialty crop areas, organic soils, and class 4-7 lands may all be included in prime agricultural areas.

Members also raised some questions concerning agricultural impact assessments, excess soils, and fill. Regional staff explained that an aggregates policy review is currently underway, and that this review, in conjunction with agriculture work, will provide an opportunity to address excess soils and fill.

Regional staff requested that PAAWG put forward a Motion to endorse the draft policies and mapping, as they will be before Council on December 12th, 2019.

Moved by Tom Dolson;

That the Region of Peel's draft agricultural and rural system policies and mapping as part of the Peel 2041 Official Plan Review are endorsed by PAAWG under the condition that comments from PFA are acknowledged and receive a detailed written response from the Region.

Carried PAAWG 2019-22

10) Communication and Items for Information

a) Limited Time Funding for Private Land Tree Planting

The Province has cancelled the 50 Million Tree program. Mark Eastman indicated that if anyone is interested in larger block-like planting projects, they should apply before Provincial support ends in Spring 2020. Additional funding opportunities through the federal government may emerge.

b) Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) - Update

Don Campbell advised that the GHFFA plans to update its Action Plan in the next year and will retain a Consultant to assist it. PAAWG will be asked to provide input.

c) Peel Food Action Council- Update

The Peel Food Action Council is currently in the process of developing a strategic plan, which will involve extensive consultation with various stakeholder groups possessing an interest in food and/ or agriculture.

d) Other Items

PAAWG members inquired about mileage expense claims for 2019. Regional Staff will follow up and send along forms so that claims can be processed before year-end accounting deadlines.

11) PAAWG 2020 Farm Tour

Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation

Mark Eastman presented ideas for updating the PAAWG Farm Tour in order to draw in a new audience, including politicians, local food champions, the SWP Committee, farmers, and eaters, and to celebrate local food and farmers. The proposed tour would be an all-day event taking place in late July or early August and may be self-directed or involve a bus tour of Grown in Peel farms. Mark presented a draft agenda and suggested that both participants and farms be surveyed after the event in order to evaluate success.

PAAWG members were supportive of these changes and suggested looking at events that different Federations of Agriculture have held throughout the Province for further inspiration. Members suggested including sunflowers and scheduling tours of dairy farms and grain elevators. It was also recommended that a nominal participation fee be introduced in order to ensure the attendance of those that register.

Karen Hutchinson volunteered to work with Mark Eastman and Nadine Abrams on planning the PAAWG 2020 Farm Tour, with more details to come.

11) Adjourn Meeting/ Next Meeting

Moved by Ed Russell;

That the November 21, 2019, Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting be adjourned

Carried PAAWG 2019-23

The meeting stood adjourned at 9:33 pm. The next Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting will be held on February 20, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.