



**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL**  
**PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP**

**MINUTES**  
**PAAWG 2021-02**

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) met on May 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Due to efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, only the Chair of PAAWG and Regional staff were in attendance at the Peel Conference Centre, 10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite B, Brampton, Ontario. Others participated in the meeting via Microsoft Teams.

**Members Present:** Gary Mountain, Chair, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association  
Ed Russell, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association  
Karen Hutchinson, Caledon Countryside Alliance  
Manjari Mehta, Citizen-at-Large  
Tom Dolson, Peel Federation of Agriculture  
Jennifer Innis, Regional Councillor  
Merissa Nudelman, Ecosource

**Members Absent:** Stephen Dasko, Regional Councillor  
Brian Wannamaker, Citizen-at-Large  
Kristen Carberry, Peel Federation of Agriculture  
Michael Palleschi, Regional Councillor  
Paul Risebrough, Citizen-at-Large

**Staff:** Mark Head, Manager, Research and Analysis, Region of Peel  
Don Campbell, Principal Planner, Region of Peel  
Marco Di Nizio, Junior Planner, Region of Peel  
Marsha Paley, Principal Planner, Region of Peel  
Raluca Vana, Council and Community Relations Officer, Region of Peel  
Mark Eastman, Senior Coordinator, Agricultural Outreach, Credit Valley Conservation  
Holly Shipclark, Coordinator, Agricultural Outreach, Credit Valley Conservation  
Nadine Abrams, Rural Clean Water Program Coordinator, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority  
Ben Roberts, Economic Development Officer, Town of Caledon  
Kyle Munro, Senior Planner, Town of Caledon

Marisa Williams, Manager, Policy, Heritage and Design, Town of Caledon

**Guests:** Margaret Walton, Senior Associate, Planscape  
Bronwynne Wilton, Principal and Lead Consultant, Wilton Consulting Group  
Riccardo Peggi, Research Associate, Wilton Consulting Group

**1) Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Gary Mountain who called the roll.

**2) Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**3) Review and Approval of May 20, 2021 Agenda**

Moved by Gary Mountain

*That the agenda for the May 20, 2021 meeting of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group be approved.*

Carried PAAWG 2021-07

**4) Review and Approval of Minutes from February 2021 Meeting**

Karen Hutchinson indicated that she should not be listed as present. It was noted that Item 10), Part 3 should be revised to indicate that the allocation of PRWQP funds remaining from 2020 will be considered by the CVC Board.

Moved by Tom Dolson

*That the Minutes of Meeting 2021-01 of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group, held on May 20, 2020, be approved as amended.*

Carried PAAWG 2021-08

**5) Peel 2041+ Official Plan Review and Settlement Area Boundary Expansion Study (SABE) Update**

*Mark Head, Region of Peel*

Mark Head noted that preliminary results of the Phase 1 SABE work had been presented to PAAWG in 2020. The Regional Planning and Growth Management

(RPGM) Division reported to Regional Council on the progress of the SABE study in December 2020. Regional Council directed Regional planning staff to review the need for additional employment areas within the proposed SABE and to consider the implications to the SABE Study further to direction received from Council regarding the GTA West Transportation Corridor. Staff are conducting further analysis in response to the Council directions and confirming a recommended SABE boundary with input from various technical studies and comments received to date. The study is still ongoing.

Mr. Head anticipated completion of the SABE analysis and a report to Council with a Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) in September. This anticipated report will include an updated SABE boundary and policies. At the November 18, 2021 PAAWG meeting Regional staff will review the SABE mapping and policies presented to Council. SABE is one of 13 Focus Areas in Peel 2041+. An Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) is part of the SABE work.

### **Questions/Discussion**

None.

#### **6) Peel 2041+ SABE Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)**

*Margaret Walton, Planscape*

Margaret Walton provided an update on the AIA. She explained that Planscape has been retained for the agricultural component of the Sabe study and to prepare the AIA. In Phase 1 Planscape had evaluated eight assessment areas within the Focus Study Area for the SABE as input to defining the conceptual SABE boundary.

Ms. Walton indicated that Peel's Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) and its refinement of the Provincial prime agricultural areas area mapping assisted the consultants in concluding that the Phase 2 AIA should examine the area within 1.5 km of the SABE boundary. The Phase 2 work involved an extensive analysis of Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) requirements. The AIA will consider questions such as:

- Where should development within the SABE occur first?
- What can be done to keep agricultural land within the expansion area in production as long as possible?
- What can be done to protect agriculture from the impacts of urban development? Where are buffers needed?

Edge planning and the location of natural heritage system features are important planning considerations for agriculture and are being addressed in the AIA.

## Questions/Discussion

Karen Hutchinson asked whether any urban expansion will be on prime agricultural land and if the Region is adjusting population numbers due to pandemic. Margaret Walton indicated that all of the lands within the urban expansion area are identified as prime agricultural area. She indicated that it is not her role to comment on population changes over time. Her goal is to work with land use planning policies to understand agricultural trends and implications.

Karen Hutchinson followed up by asking what Peel can do to avoid being a hot zone for a future pandemic and what are the lessons learned for Peel from the pandemic. Mark Head said that this topic is being examined. Currently, post-pandemic trends are unknown. He observed that working from home is likely to continue post-pandemic with people splitting their time between working from home and in an office. Longer term trends in employment, housing, and work from home will need to be monitored going forward to fully understand what land use planning responses might be needed.

Karen Hutchinson further inquired about the relationship between how the Region is growing and Peel being a COVID hotspot. Councillor Innis responded that Peel has accrued hotspot status because of its large employment in essential services, its large households and its role as a transportation hub. Ms. Hutchinson asked whether planning can address these conditions. Mark Head indicated that the Region is looking at this through different lenses. Some of the responses “to build back better” by improving policies for affordable housing, healthy communities, natural heritage, equity, diversity, and inclusion are part of the analysis. Gary Mountain added that the population of Peel will increase significantly along with other Regional Municipalities which will mean growth in neighbouring Regions will impact Peel. Margaret Walton said she analyzes the agricultural linkages between Regions and that there need to be inter-regional services for the agricultural community.

### 7) **Town of Caledon Official Plan Review – Agricultural Trends Study** *Bronwynne Wilton, Wilton Consulting Group*

Bronwynne Wilton began by explaining that the purpose of the study was to identify agricultural trends and planning policy that can support those trends. The findings of this study will inform the direction of Caledon’s agricultural policies in their Official Plan Review.

The study covered the issues that impact farming in Caledon. Three underpinning values emerged in the study: a relationship exists between agriculture and the environment, maintaining food production is part of a healthy community, and agricultural and rural communities are core components of Caledon’s thriving economy. Important trends include: increasing interest in local

food and a widening and changing consumer palate; growing agritourism, intensive indoor agriculture; and urban agriculture.

Ms. Wilton went on to identify the key findings of the study: that agriculture is a valued part of Caledon's economy and local heritage, that Caledon can embrace innovative agri-food technologies and urban agriculture, and that Caledon's agricultural system can provide a unique visitor experience.

Ms. Wilton suggested that Caledon may want to consider establishing a countryside line as Waterloo Region has done to control development. She also recommended that Caledon consider community improvement plans for agriculture and create policies that enable urban agriculture.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Tom Dolson questioned whether there is an increase in sales of local food. He suggested that the sales of local food have decreased. Ms. Wilton responded that the reports that Wilton Consulting Group analyzed indicate a growing interest in local food.

Kyle Munro advised that a copy of the study is available on Caledon's OP Review webpage. Residents can reach out to him if they have problems accessing the report.

Karen Hutchinson commented that there is an increased focus on local food but thought that there are statistics that would state otherwise. Ms. Hutchinson wondered whether additional statistics can be included in the Wilton Consulting Group's study. Ms. Wilton indicated that Wilton consulting Group will consider including additional statistics on local food sales.

Gary Mountain asked whether the countryside line in the Region of Waterloo will be maintained if Waterloo continues to be a growth area. Ms. Wilton responded that it is a struggle to contain urban expansion but aggressive intensification typically helps.

### **8) Town of Caledon Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications Pertaining to Cannabis Cultivation**

*Tom Dolson, Peel Federation of Agriculture*

Tom Dolson explained that the Peel Federation of Agriculture (PFA) has had concerns with Town of Caledon's Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments pertaining to cannabis cultivation. Farmers have looked at hemp as a cash crop and acreages are increasing by 30% each year. Tom Dolson reported that the PFA asked the Town of Caledon to defer the amendments until PFA had

commented. He noted the Town of Caledon adopted a 300m setback for cannabis cultivation.

Mr. Dolson noted that the Town deems cannabis cultivation to be a major facility which conflicts with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) which classifies it as an agricultural use. He asked for the Town's policies of cannabis cultivation to conform to the PPS.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Mark Head reported that the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) is looking into additional guidance based on odour. Land use compatibility guidelines are also under review by the Province and are currently out for consultation through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO). He indicated that there are no Regional OP policies on cannabis but the OP does define agricultural uses consistent with the PPS. He indicated that Regional staff will review the Town of Caledon's recent official plan amendment and zoning regulations regarding cannabis cultivation and processing.

### **9) ALUS Peel Pilot Project – Initial Discussion Respecting Implementation**

*Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation*

*Nadine Abrams, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority*

Nadine Abrams noted that ALUS is a national program that recognizes farmers as providers of ecosystem services and makes annual payments to compensate who undertake projects to provide ecosystem services. The overall principles and goals of ALUS are similar to the those of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP). The ALUS program uses annual payments to increase farmer participation in maintaining and restoring ecosystem services.

Ms. Abrams explained that the Peel pilot is to be for three years with a proposed start around October 2021. Ms. Abrams indicated that there is a target of 15 projects and 75 acres of land restored in Peel. Eligible projects could include erosion control structures, livestock fencing, natural area enhancement and creation, and tree planting. The annual payment is yet to be determined.

The presentation concluded with a list of discussion questions for PAAWG members:

- Typically, ALUS annual payments are based on average farmland rental rates. What is the average rental rate in Peel?
- Would PAAWG members be supportive of offering increased annual payments for high value and difficult to implement projects.

- Do PAAWG members agree with making annual payments for land that will be grazed or hayed? If so, should annual payments for those lands be reduced by 50%?
- Do PAAWG members support offering farmers annual payments for lands that were previously restored acres if they enroll an equal or greater amount of new lands?

### **Questions/Discussion**

Tom Dolson commented that it may be difficult to get responses from farmers on how much they pay to rent land. Gary Mountain suggested that, if the land is being taken out of production forever, shouldn't the farmer be paid more or should the annual payments increase over time.

Mark Head asked whether there is an alternative method for Peel to determine the going rental rates. He asked whether an anonymous survey could be sent to farmers to collect information on rental rates. Tom Dolson observed that rental rates are much different in Peel than in other Regions and suggested that it is best to discuss this topic with the PFA. Rental rates this year are high compared to previous years. Tom Dolson and Ed Russell concurred that this question should be taken to the next PFA board meeting for PFA input.

Mark Head advised that Don Campbell will be presenting an annual Staff Report on PAAWG to Regional Council on May 27 seeking council endorsement of the ALUS pilot project.

### **10) Ontario Soil Online Roadtrip – Potential Peel Participation**

*Holly Shipclark, Credit Valley Conservation*

Holly Shipclark presented the one-page overview of the program from the Ontario Soil Network (OSN). She indicated that she wanted to connect it to the context in Peel Region.

Ms. Shipclark explained that the smartphone app for the Ontario Soil Online Roadtrip enables farmers to learn about soil management from other farmers who have placed their profiles on the app.. The OSN is a non- profit organization that seeks to connect farmers to increase soil health. It has had success in making connections between farmers in and beyond the province.

To connect the project to Peel, the OSN would need to add profiles from Peel farmers. Local organizations could submit an application to the PRWQP for funding to participate as an education and training program. Holly Shipclark would facilitate a potential submission and funding proposal. She asked whether there was interest. Holly Shipclark further noted that contact information is on the last page of the agenda package.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Tom Dolson indicated that he would bring this idea to the PFA. He added that this idea may be more geared to the Peel Soil and Crop Association (PSCA) represented by Gary Mountain.

Mr. Mountain asked if this is for all Ontario Counties and Regions. Holly Shipclark stated that the OSN wants to focus on Peel because of the PRWQP, but it ultimately wants to highlight good farming practices wherever possible.

Ed Russell suggested that the Roadtrip should be accessible through a desktop computer as well as not all farmers have smartphones.

### **11) Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP)**

*Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation*

*Nadine Abrams, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority*

*Holly Shipclark, Credit Valley Conservation*

#### **1. Financial Update**

Mark Eastman reported that the PRWQP started this year with \$75,000. It was unable to bring unspent money from 2020 forward to be available for projects in 2021. The TRCA has added to the funding available in 2021 with a contribution of \$30,000. If the projects to be considered at this meeting are approved, the remaining balance will be \$69,498.89.

### **Questions/Discussion**

No questions identified.

#### **2. PRWQP Projects**

##### **01-TRCA-21 – Livestock Crossing and Tree Planting**

Nadine Abrams reported that the applicant had received PRWQP funding for livestock fencing on this property in 2020. The property is in an environmentally sensitive area. The current application would fund a livestock crossing to protect the watercourse on the property. Fencing would be installed on either side of the path using the crossing. Native trees and shrubs would be planted to restore the area disturbed by construction of the crossing and also adjacent to the woodlot to the east in an area of marginal land. The application asks for \$30,000 in Peel Rural Water Quality Program Funding (\$20,000 for Fencing and \$10,000 for Tree Planting).

### **Questions/Discussions**

No questions identified.

Moved by Tom Dolson

*That the application 01-TRCA-21 be approved and that funding be provided in the amount of \$30,000 under the categories “Livestock Crossing” and “Tree Planting”.*

Carried PAAWG 2021-09

### **03-CVC-21 – Education and Training**

Holly Shipclark explained that Peel 4H had applied for funding for a remote learning program for a year’s worth of monthly meetings of the Cloverbuds program. They put together training kits to send home to 4H families. Each month they explore new topics. For June, their goal is to promote on farm biodiversity. If successful, Peel 4H will work closely with the CVC on putting together the activity kit to ensure that the PRWQP objectives are met. The budget for this project is \$852.50 and the project is possible eligible for 100% funding.

### **Questions/Discussion**

No questions identified.

Moved by Karen Hutchinson

*That the application 03-CVC-21 be approved and that funding be provided in the amount of \$852.50 under the category “Education and Training”.*

Carried PAAWG 2021-10

## **12) Farm Etiquette Awareness Communication Campaign**

*Marco Di Nizio, Region of Peel*

Marco Di Nizio explained that this campaign has been developed by Region of Peel and Town of Caledon with input from the OFA. He explained that farm etiquette is a set of guidelines to be followed by members of the public when visiting a farm. The purpose of these guidelines is for visitors to maintain safety, respect on-farm agricultural practices, and maintain COVID-safe behaviour. The call for farm etiquette communications has been raised with Regional staff at various times over the past few years and more recently as an immediate priority by Councillor Innis to address increased levels of trespassing on farm properties.

Mr. Di Nizio stated that the proposed communications plan involves a series of tweets and Instagram posts, information in the Connect 2 Peel newsletter, information in Councillors' newsletters, and a joint media release from the Town of Caledon with the Region of Peel and OFA as partners, which has yet to be confirmed.

Mr. Di Nizio invited feedback and ideas from PAAWG members including any key messaging that needs to be included.

### **Questions/Discussions**

Tom Dolson asked about language barriers and whether the signage can be displayed in multiple languages or whether it might be possible to develop friendlier "No Trespassing Signs" as options for landowners. Marco Di Nizio noted that signage in multiple languages can be costly. He indicated that Peel staff will bring up the suggestions for future consideration by Regional, Caledon, and OFA staff.

## **12. Other Business**

### **Brampton Stormwater By-law**

Tom Dolson thanked PAAWG for its discussion of the stormwater by-law, and specifically thanked Councillor Palleschi, as his efforts from the following up the discussion from the 2021-01 PAAWG meeting.

## **13) Communication and Information Items**

The following items were attached to the agenda for information:

[Stormwater Charge for Working Farms](#). Staff report to Brampton City Council dated March 12, 2021.

[Minutes of March 24, 2021 meeting of Brampton City Council](#). See item 10.6.1, pp. 16-17 re Stormwater Charge for Working Farms.

[OFA is optimistic about environmental benefits of a Clean Fuel Standard](#), *OFA Viewpoint*, February 8, 2021.

[The Power of Soil – An Agenda for Change to Benefit Farmers and Climate Resilience](#). Greenbelt Foundation, March 1, 2021.

[OFA continues to emphasize need for reliable broadband accessibility across rural Ontario](#), *OFA Viewpoint*, March 8, 2021.

[New economic study to estimate cost of carbon tax on Ontario agriculture](#), OFA News Release, March 11, 2021.

[MZOs jeopardize long-term productivity and sustainability of Ontario's farmland](#), OFA Viewpoint, April 19, 2021.

**14) Adjournment**

Moved by Ed Russell

*That the May 20, 2021 Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting be adjourned.*

Carried PAAWG 2021-11

The meeting stood adjourned at 9:37 pm.

The next Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting will be held on August 26, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.