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THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL

PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

MINUTES PAAWG 2022-01

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) met on March 31, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. Due to efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, the meeting was conducted via Microsoft Teams.

Members Present: Gary Mountain, Chair, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Kristen Carberry, Peel Federation of Agriculture
Karen Hutchinson, Caledon Countryside Alliance
Jennifer Innis, Regional Councillor
Manjari Mehta, Citizen-at-Large
Paul Risebrough, Citizen-at-Large
Ed Russell, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Brian Wannamaker, Citizen-at-Large

Members Absent: Stephen Dasko, Regional Councillor
Tom Dolson, Peel Federation of Agriculture
Merissa Nudelman, Ecosource
Michael Palleschi, Regional Councillor

Staff: Gail Anderson, Principal Planner, Region of Peel
Don Campbell, Principal Planner, Region of Peel
Marco Di Nizio, Junior Planner, Region of Peel
Mark Eastman, Agricultural Outreach, Credit Valley Conservation
Patrick Esson, Rural Clean Water Program Coordinator, Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA)
Therese Estephan, Risk Management Official, Region of Peel
Mark Head, Manager, Research and Analysis, Region of Peel
Stefan Herceg, Technical Specialist, Region of Peel
Ben Roberts, Economic Development Official, Town of Caledon
Holly Shipclark, Agricultural Outreach, Credit Valley Conservation
Melanie Williams, Principal Planner, Region of Peel

Guests: Raphael Adegboye, Citizen-at-Large
Calantha Elsby, Environmental Outreach, Credit Valley Conservation
Carolyn Puterbough, Agriculture & Rural Economic Development Advisor, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Namrata Shrestha, Watershed Planning and Reporting, TRCA
Megan Sipos, Greenbelt Foundation
Elizabeth Spelling, Watershed Planning and Reporting, TRCA
Holly Stemberger, Outreach & Education, Region of Peel

1) Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Gary Mountain who called attendance.

2) Declarations of Conflict of Interest

None identified.

3) Review and Approval of March 31, 2022 Agenda

Moved by Jennifer Innis

That the Agenda for the March 31, 2022, meeting of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group be approved (as amended).

Carried PAAWG 2022-01

4) Review and Approval of Minutes from November 18, 2021 Meeting

Moved by Paul Risebrough

That the Minutes of Meeting 2021-05 of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group, held on November 18, 2021, be approved.

Carried PAAWG 2022-02

5) Toronto & Region Conservation (TRCA) Natural Heritage System and Water Resource System Mapping Update

Namrata Shrestha, Toronto & Region Conservation

The Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) is currently engaged in an update of its Natural Heritage System (NHS) and Water Resource System (WRS) mapping. The original TRCA Terrestrial NHS was approved by the TRCA Board in 2007. This updated mapping builds on this, current provincial policies and new or updated scientific data.

The TRCA mapping and data is presented at a regional scale and assesses existing and targeted/potential NHS & WRS systems. Its intent is to inform watershed planning, land use and infrastructure planning, and restoration implementation. The methodology builds in natural system climate vulnerabilities so that the mapping can identify areas for resiliencies to better prepare these systems for the impacts of a changing climate.

From an agricultural perspective, updates to the mapping will:

- Not disrupt or prohibit existing permitted agricultural uses and normal farm practices or to change current decision-making processes;
- Identify opportunities and facilitate partnerships with landowners to establish natural heritage restoration opportunities such as tree planting, vegetated buffers and wetland enhancement; and,
- Inform and support collaborative programs such as the Peel Rural Water Quality Program and the ALUS Peel Pilot.

Questions/Discussion

None.

- 6) **Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) 019-4801: Proposed Regulatory Changes for the Beneficial Reuse of Excess Soil at Pits and Quarries in Ontario**
Gail Anderson, Principal Planner, Region of Peel

The Province is proposing changes to the in-effect excess soil framework in 'O. Reg. 406/19 On-Site and Excess Soil Management'. The Town of Caledon Planning and Development Committee passed a motion referring this matter to PAAWG for consideration.

O. Reg 406/19 states when excess soil can be reused, how it can be managed, and how to minimize negative impacts. The proposed regulatory measures will require aggregate operators to retain qualified professionals to provide oversight at sites receiving large quantities of excess soil or if placing excess soil below water table, and to keep a standard of detailed records on soil quality standards.

Regional staff will be responding to the ERO posting, monitoring Provincial policy development and applicable policies as part of the upcoming Regional Official Plan aggregate policy review and update. The aggregate policy review will be undertaken subsequent to the Peel 2051 Regional Official Plan Review.

Questions/Discussion:

PAAWG would like to participate and comment on the forthcoming Regional Official Plan aggregates policy review.

- 7) **Region of Peel Source Water Protection Incentive Program**
Therese Estephan, Risk Management Official, Region of Peel

The Region has approved a new Source Water Protection Incentive Program (SWPIP) to support landowners in wellhead protection areas in implementing voluntary projects identified in an approved Risk Management Plan, under the Clean Water Act. These landowners are eligible for up to \$30,000 in cost-share funding, which is reviewed and approved by the Region's Risk Management Official. Opportunities to apply to the SWPIP are directly through the Region's Risk Management Office.

The SWPIP aligns with program goals and project categories of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program and ALUS Peel Pilot, and there will be opportunities to align cost-share funding across each of these programs.

Questions/Discussions

None.

- 8) **Peel 2051 Regional Official Plan Review Update**
Don Campbell, Principal Planner, Region of Peel

The draft Peel 2051 Regional Official Plan will be presented to the Regional Planning and Growth Management Committee (PGMC) at the April 7th, 2022, meeting. At this meeting, changes to the draft Official Plan will be presented with a request that it be brought forward to Regional Council for adoption. Once adopted by Regional Council, the Official Plan will be submitted to the Province for approval.

Questions/Discussions

None.

9) Draft PAAWG 2022 Work Plan
Melanie Williams, Region of Peel

The draft PAAWG 2022 work plan builds on the approved PAAWG four-year work plan and focuses on specific project and program opportunities for the year. PAAWG is encouraged to identify additional needs of Peel's agricultural community and tools needed to support Peel's agricultural system.

Questions/Discussion:

None.

10) Grown in Peel Local Food Guide 2022 Update
Marco Di Nizio, Grown in Peel Co-Chair, Region of Peel

Regional staff presented on the relaunch of the 2022 Grow in Peel Local Food Guide. Recruitment of farm and farmers market listing is being undertaken, along with the development of a new, more interactive website and online map, and updated communications plan to promote the program's online presence. If there are enough listings to proceed, the guide would be launched exclusively online for 2022, meaning that no paper guide will be printed this year.

Questions/Discussions

None.

11) Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP)

a) PRWQP 2021 Status Report
Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation

Ten PRWQP projects were approved in 2021, with tree planting and education being the most common categories. This is below the average of twelve projects per year. This decline in projects is due to the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Questions/Discussion

Program staff clarified how the statistical information is calculated (e.g., how the tonnes of nutrients managed through PRWQP projects are calculated in an everyday equivalent such as truck loads)

b) PRWQP Financial Update

Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation

In 2021, \$47,592, in PRWQP grant funds were paid or allocated to PRWQP projects. This left a budget of \$57,407, of which \$20,000, was carried forward to the 2022 PRWQP program year and the remainder was redistributed to other internal Conservation Authority program priorities. The outstanding amount in 2021 was influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For 2022, the operation budget is \$95,000. As this is the first meeting of 2022, no expenditures have been identified at the time of the meeting.

Questions/Discussion

None.

c) PRWQP Projects

Holly Shipclark, Credit Valley Conservation

• **01-CVC-22 – Cover Crop**

This project places a cover crop on 12.5 ha (31 acres) to assist with the management of soil health and erosion control.

Questions/Discussions

Program staff clarified that the land is managed by a tenant farmer. As this project is not a fixed structure or permanent land change, that tenant is able to apply directly for the cover crop project, instead of the landowner.

Moved by Ed Russell

That the application 01-CVC-22 be approved and that funding be provided in the amount of \$3,100 under the category "Cover Crops".

Carried PAAWG 2022-03

- **02-CVC-22 – Cover Crop**

This project places a cover crop on 5.6 ha (14 acres) to assist with the management of soil health and erosion control.

Questions/Discussion

Program staff clarified that the clover was planted into the wheat, and it is only the clover that qualifies for the program.

PAAWG requested that program staff revisit the PRWQP Cover Crop program category to assess if project eligibility changes should be made to establish more upfront or a longer-term commitment to cover crops. PAAWG requested that program staff look to examples from other water quality stewardship programs and bring this discussion to the Peel Federation of Agriculture.

Moved by Manjari Mehta.

That the application 02-CVC-22 be approved and that funding be provided in the amount of \$1,400 under the category “Cover Crops”.

Carried PAAWG 2022-04

- **03-CVC-22 – Cover Crop**

This project places a cover crop on 13 ha (32 acres) to assist with the management of soil health and erosion control.

Questions/Discussion

Program staff clarified that each of 01-CVC-22, 02-CVC-22 and 03-CVC-22 were from separate applicants, on separate parcels of managed land and each having a different farm business registration number.

Moved by Ed Russell.

That the application 03-CVC-22 be approved and that funding be provided in the amount of \$3,200 under the category “Cover Crops”.

Carried PAAWG 2022-05

- **04-CVC-22 – Nutrient Management Plan & Strategy**

The purpose of the project is to encourage the most effective use of nutrients so to protect ground and surface water sources within a source water protection area.

Questions/Discussion

Program staff clarified that all nutrient units on the property (e.g., poultry and hog) will be considered in the calculation of nutrients in the nutrient management plan.

Moved by Paul Risebrough.

That the application 04-CVC-22 be approved and that funding be provided in the amount of \$5,000 under the category "Nutrient Management Plan Strategy".

Carried PAAWG 2022-06

12) ALUS Peel Pilot

a) Launch Communications

Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation

Calantha Elsby, Credit Valley Conservation

The ALUS Peel Pilot Project MOU has been signed by the Region of Peel, CVC, TRCA and ALUS Canada. CVC has produced an ALUS Peel communications plan for the program launch and the 2022 program year to raise program awareness. PAAWG was requested to review the messaging and use the messaging to cross-promote the program through their organization's communication platforms.

b) ALUS Peel Pilot Guidelines

Don Campbell, Region of Peel

Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation

Patrick Esson, Toronto and Region Conservation

Program staff presented the ALUS Peel Pilot Guidelines, which have now been finalized based on the comments received at the October 2021 PAAWG meeting. Program staff reviewed how monitoring of the annual payments and program implementation will be undertaken. This is being aligned to reflect the process used in the PRWQP program.

Questions/Discussion

PAAWG requested that program staff present the ALUS Peel Pilot to the Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Alliance and the Peel Federation of Agriculture.

13) Communication and for Information Items

- [GHFFA January Newsletter](#)
- [GHFFA February Newsletter](#)
- [GHFFA March Newsletter](#)
- [Understanding How Greenbelt Agriculture Feeds the Regional Economy and Greenbelt Farmers: Economic Network Case Studies](#)
- [Greenbelt Farmers: Economic Network Case Studies](#)

- [Year of the Garden- 2022](#)

14) Round Table – Other Business

a) On-farm Management of Invasive Species

PAAWG discussed that policies on the management of invasive species should be consistent throughout the Province. There seems to be inconsistencies on how farms are being told that they can manage invasive species on their properties by different Conservation Authorities.

b) Defining Urban Agriculture

PAAWG discussed the draft Peel 2041 Regional Official Plan definition of 'urban agriculture'. Regional staff clarified that the Region supports the local municipalities in defining urban agriculture and the local municipal implementation of urban agriculture policies and strategies. The Region is proposing a broad definition of 'urban agriculture' in the draft Official Plan to enable all forms of growing and food access to be permitted.

c) 2022 PAAWG Meeting Format

It was confirmed with PAAWG that the 2022 meetings will remain virtual, with the potential of hybrid meetings based on COVID-19 permissions at the time.

15) Adjournment

Moved by Ed Russell

That the March 31, 2022, meeting of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group be adjourned.

Carried PAAWG 2022-07

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 pm. The next PAAWG meeting will be held virtually on Thursday, May 19, 2022, at 7pm.