

Cariboo Regional District

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee, held via Zoom on October 26, 2020 at 8:30 am

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Martin Rossmann, Chair	Kersley Farmers Institute
Rob Borsato, Treasurer	Quesnel Farmers Market
Matt Ziemer	Horticulture
Christa Pooley	BC Forage Council
Erin Durrell, Secretary	BC Cattlemen's Association
Nicole Pressey	Ministry of Agriculture
CRD Director John Massier	CRD Liaison

SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS PRESENT

Lori Fogarty, Liaison	Agriculture Working Group
Wilma Watkin	Agriculture Working Group
Lynda Atkinson	Agriculture Working Group

GUESTS

Amy Quarry	Regional Food Hub, Project Manager
Lindsay Miles-Pickup	Labour Specialist Partnerships & Outreach; Ministry of Agriculture
Nigel Whitehead	Manager of Planning Services – Cariboo Regional District

REGRETS

Tim Lofstrom	College of New Caledonia - Quesnel
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1. CALL TO ORDER

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

R/2020-49

It was moved and seconded

That the October 26, 2020 Agricultural Development Advisory Committee amended agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

R/2020-50

It was moved and seconded

That the minutes of the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee meeting dated March 9, 2020 be adopted.

CARRIED

4. DELEGATIONS

4.1 Amy Quarry, Regional Food Hub Project Coordinator: Regional Food Hub update

After a delay owing to COVID-19 and location negotiations, a 5-year lease agreement has been signed for a 2700 square foot building located at 101 Marsh Drive. The Regional Food Hub will co-locate with the Barber Shop currently located there. A Request for Proposals for construction was posted on Friday, drawings for the proposed layout are in the RFP section of the city website https://www.quesnel.ca/sites/default/files/docs/government/design-sprout_kitchen_food_hub.pdf. They are aiming for a February opening and hope to sign a contract with the vendor by mid-November and RFP closes by the end of November. The funding from the Ministry of Agriculture ends in March of 2021.

Funding of \$250,000 has been secured from the Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) to increase aggregation initiatives in the food production, processing and distribution sector and the project managers will try to secure another \$250,000 in the NDIT March intake for additional equipment purchases. The City of Quesnel has also committed funding for the lease. The ADAC members congratulated the Project Coordinator, Amy Quarry and Economic Development Officer Amy Reid for their hard work.

Nicole Pressey mentioned that the main themes of the NDP platform include Protecting Salmon, Grow-Feed-Buy, Innovation, Agri-tech, Regenerative Agriculture, New Worker Training, Land Acquisition Supports, & Precision Agriculture. More information may be found at https://www.bcndp.ca/sites/default/files/bcndp_platform2020_final4.pdf

Amy Quarry also mentioned that in working through the process of exploring various locations including the college, there seems to be new interest in agriculture by the College of New Caledonia.

4.2 Lindsay Miles-Pickup, Labour Specialist Partnerships & Outreach; Ministry of Agriculture: Labour Market update

Lindsay's background includes previous work in the area of skills training, work force development and small farm development. Lindsay's presentation included a review of employment statistics in agriculture in BC.

Lindsay noted there is a shortage of workers in the agriculture industry and the majority of the employment prospects in agriculture are the result of replacement of current workers, not due to growth in the industry. Because of the way data is collected, much information is not included i.e. Statistics Canada asks about primary source of income, and does not represent secondary or family member involvement.

To look at in the future:

- Increase awareness of opportunities in the agriculture industry;
- Encourage unemployed forestry workers to connect with Work BC Centre, to increase employment in agriculture as they transition into the workforce. Owing to regional differences in food systems there is an increased opportunity to work with new immigrants with the support of various agencies to build communities and strengthen language skills in communities;

- There are opportunities to work with Post-secondary Institutions – training and job skills for youth, in particular international students.
- Workforce – changing demands, fear, unknowns, working with employers on changing work modes.
- Making sure safe transportation is available, job descriptions transparent, and creating skill building opportunities. Reducing burdens to find short-term employees for the employer, to get the right people for short term positions. i.e. berry farms. Working collaboratively to connect employee with other farms as their temporary position is completed.
- BC Farm, Fish and Food Job Connector on the Ministry of Agriculture website <https://bcagjobs.gov.bc.ca/> was well utilized with about 1400 people looking at site daily. When there was focused marketing of the website, the number of visits increased substantially. Showcasing job opportunities has really worked well over the summer.

What can regional groups, associations, and Farmers' Markets do? A number of support programs exist across the province, but the programs operate across various ministries, so it can be confusing and going through the process can be challenging.

- Community Employer Programs– address workforce needs; social innovation i.e. food hubs; funding to support barriers to employment i.e. disabilities.
- Sector Labour Market Programs (Advanced Education), engage other employers or industry associations to produce an awareness program, as an example, to develop a resilient workforce.
- Skills Training – i.e. meat processing, employer grant, community focus as well i.e. Forestry, First Nations, Tourism
- Work BC can provide financial supports – i.e. apprenticeship, meat processing at TRU, youth employment, youth skills at the Federal level.

Rob Borsato noted that the summer program worked well for market gardening and they relied on the support of the Member of Parliament for successful implementation.

4.3 Nigel Whitehead, Manager of Planning Services – CRD: Proposed Agricultural Land Reserve Exclusion Application Policy

A letter from Nigel Whitehead outlined that under changes implemented by provincial Bill 15, the Agricultural Land Commission will no longer be accepting Agricultural Land Reserve exclusion applications from private landowners as of September 30, 2020. In preparation for this change, CRD staff presented a discussion paper to the August 20th, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting, seeking Board direction for the development of a policy outlining how the Board and staff will handle exclusion requests from private landowners. The CRD Policy Committee resolved to refer the proposed policy to the North Cariboo Agricultural Development Advisory Committee for comment. The ADAC will follow up on this request.

5. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5.1. ADAC membership review: The following organizations have had a member representative

serving on the ADAC since 2018 and their representative term is up for renewal for a 2-year term:

- Kersley Farmers Institute
- Quesnel Farmers Market
- Cattlemen's Association
- College of New Caledonia

The current member may decide to renew the term or a new member representative may be chosen. A letter will be sent out to the organization for consideration by December 1.

5.2. Agriculture sector support - COVID recovery

Nicole noted that now that the election is over, the Ministry can announce some of the upcoming programs in support of the growth of small and/or new farms and the implementation of farm business plans and growth strategies.

The following links will provide more information on this program:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/small-business-acceleration-pilot-program>.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/programs/small-farm-business-acceleration-program/ap-00_small_farm_business_acceleration_pilot_program_-_terms_and_conditions_web.pdf.

5.3. Agriculture Area Plan

Committee members discussed options for the funding of a regional Agriculture Area Plan. John Massier has had some discussion at the board level and with Nicole Pressey and wondered if the 50% shared funding is still available from the Investment Agriculture Foundation? Nicole confirmed she will check it out.

Other considerations include the development of an Agriculture Area Plan for the full region and how to get sub-regional representation for the plan, whether through Agricultural Advisory Committees, food security groups or the sub-regional Advisory Committees currently in place.

5.4. College of New Caledonia update and Community Advisory Committee ADAC representative

Erin Durrell has been confirmed as the ADAC representative to the CNC Community Advisory Committee.

5.5. ADAC sub-committee report: Ministry of Agriculture Intention Paper: Rural Slaughter Modernization

ADAC sub-committee members met and a response has been developed to forward to the CRD Board.

R 2020-51

It was moved and seconded

That the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee response to the Ministry of Agriculture Intention Paper: Rural Slaughter Modernization be approved and forwarded to the Cariboo Regional District Board.

CARRIED

5.6. Report and assessment of ADAC's 3-year term of work

A survey has been developed and sent out to ADAC members to assess the work of the committee since 2018 and to comment on the future direction of the committee. It was requested the survey be completed by October 29th to be included in the annual report to the North Cariboo Rural Caucus.

5.7. Agriculture, Connectivity and the CRD – Nicole Pressey

Unfortunately, the Ministry of Agriculture representative was unable to participate in this conference call meeting with CRD Chief Administrative Officer, John MacLean and CRD Director Maureen LeBourdais. The ADAC Administrative Assistant did participate in the meeting and reported that the CRD is progressing through a plan to identify the needs of the rural communities in regards to upgrading the broadband and cellular service. They have selected Tanax Engineering Corporation out of Invermere BC to provide reliable network solutions for the region. The CRD will first identify the needs of the rural communities and then with this information develop a plan and cost analysis. They will then apply for grants to help fund the infrastructure. The CRD will be asking organizations and the agriculture industry to collect the required information as to the needs of the regional groups, businesses and individuals in regards to the technology and apps needed.

5.8. Agriculture zoning- Wilma

Agriculture Working Group member, Wilma Watkin wanted to draw to the attention of ADAC members the tax structure of industrial zoning in the Agricultural Land Reserve. She noted that the taxes paid on ALR industrial zoned land is significantly higher and that to facilitate industrial agriculture growth and the profitability of operations, it may be helpful for the CRD to reduce the taxes on industrially zoned agriculture land. She also noted it might be helpful to have a small area zoned industrial with reduced taxes, which might help the agriculture industry to grow.

Nicole noted that the Agricultural Land Commission Industrial Land Committee might have information coming out now that election is over and she will follow up.

6. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

6.1. Ag Working Group Administrative Report

Unfortunately, the ADAC Administrative Assistant hired to record minutes of the ADAC meetings, had to resign her position, owing to COVID 19 and an increased work load at the hospital. If any members are aware of a suitable replacement for this part-time position, please let the Agriculture Working Group members know. i.e. a person with skills in recording the minutes of the meetings and perhaps an interest in agriculture.

The unofficial ADAC budget to date was shared with the members.

6.2. FARMED Rural Dividend Project Development Grant update

Owing to COVID-19 and the closure of schools after the spring break in March through to May, followed by restricted attendance in June, implementation of several components of the Agriculture Education Program were not able to proceed. Although schools are now open, the facilitator is reluctant to go to the schools and add to the current challenging teaching environment. In addition, the hired facilitator has experienced several health and business disruptions this year and has had difficulties proceeding with the project. The team has applied to

the Rural Dividend office for a one-year extension.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1. Email communication

- 7.1.1 2020 August 21 - Area B resident requesting information on Farm Protections: Received and forwarded to the Ministry of Agriculture ADAC member.
- 7.1.2 2020 September 22 – Emily Colombo: Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program: Received and a conference call meeting with interested members held on October 8th.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/cerip>
- 7.1.3 2020 September 24 - John MacLean CRD CAO: Ministry of Agriculture - Release of Intentions Paper for Rural Slaughter Modernization; Received and the ADAC report is in progress.
- 7.1.4 2020 September 25 - Dale Bubela: Request for Public Submissions Regarding the Public Interest in the Proposed Transfer of Non-Replaceable Forest License A79982 (extended): Received.
- 7.1.5 2020 October 1 - Nigel Whitehead, Manager of Planning Services – CRD: Proposed Agricultural Land Reserve Exclusion Application Policy: Received and comments from ADAC are in progress.
- 7.1.6 2020 October 9 - Nigel Whitehead, Manager of Planning Services – CRD: Proposed Agricultural Land Reserve Exclusion Application Policy revision: Received.
- 7.1.7 2020 October 9 - Request for a letter of support from the ?Esdilagh First Nation for a Class A Abattoir: Received; ADAC Letter of Support sent on October 22, 2020.

R 2020-48

It was moved and seconded

That the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee approve the request by the ?Esdilagh First Nation for a letter of support for the grant application for a Class A Abattoir located along Highway 97 between Williams Lake and Quesnel.

CARRIED

7.2. Upcoming events

8. ROUNDTABLE

Discussion took place in regards to the platform for future ADAC meetings. Options will be investigated and reported at the next meeting.

9. QUESTION PERIOD

10. ADJOURNMENT

Next Meetings:

Friday, October 30th, 2020 from 8:30-9:30am via Zoom to discuss the Proposed Agricultural Land Reserve Exclusion Application Policy

Friday, November 20th 2020 from 8:30 – 10am via Zoom – regular member meeting
Agenda Submission Deadline: Friday, November 13, 2020

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Martin Rossmann". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

M. Rossmann, Chair

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