



**Northumberland County
Agriculture Advisory Group Meeting
Minutes
April 19, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Conference Technology**

Present: Chair M. Opsteen, Deputy Warden M. Martin, L. Meekes, P. Burnham, A. Carruthers

Staff Present: M. Ellis, J. Moore, G. Dees, T. Mellor, K. Stubbings, D. Marshall

Guests Present: B. Currelly, D. Campbell

Regrets: A. Cole, B. Buttar, D. Grey, M. Dejong, P. Linton

1) Welcome

- Chair Marty Opsteen welcomed Dwayne Campbell, Land Use Planning & Inspection Services Manager to the meeting.

2) Approval of the April 19, 2021 Agenda / Additional Items

- Agenda accepted as presented.

3) Approval of the February 23, 2021 Minutes

- Minutes approved as presented.

4) Action Items and Follow Up from Previous Meetings

- N/A

5) Correspondence

- N/A

6) New/Other Business

a) Northumberland Next: Official Plan Update

- Dwayne Campbell provided an overview of the Northumberland Next Official Plan Update process and discussed key background information.
- He highlighted recent consultations/public meetings that have taken place and indicated that feedback received is being shared with the consultant and that maps are being refined.
- A key priority is ensuring that growth occurs in a way that aligns with the rural character of Northumberland County.
- Official Plan update workplan has been broken into 6 key changes / amendments.
- 1) Natural Heritage System - implementation of plan was endorsed by County Council in 2020.
- 2) Agricultural System
 - Agricultural Plan is in its early stages.
- 3) Growth forecast and lands need assessment
- 4) Water resources system
- 5) Affordable Housing
- 6) Climate Change
- A working group has been established that has representation from Member Municipalities.
- Dwayne will share mapping with Agriculture Advisory Group once completed.

b) Municipal Drainage Act (all)

- A discussion on municipal drains took place and it was indicated that municipal drains typically start with a petition from the landowners.
- At the last meeting, the Municipal Drain in Port Hope was discussed, which originated from a group of landowners wanting to drain their lands.
 - A formal agreement was developed, and everyone contributes to the cost (this drain is managed by the Municipality of Port Hope).
- Lisa indicated that a recent roundtable discussion with Minister Hardeman and MPP Piccini took place and there was reference to the 'Drainage Commissioner', which is a resource available to municipalities.
- It was discussed how farmers have limited opportunities to drain their lands.
- Drainage Act does not cover surface water.
- Mapping indicates that central Ontario has no municipal drains other than the municipal drain in Port Hope.
- The group discussed the importance of municipal drains to farmers and to the productivity of agriculture.
- Local municipalities are able to hire a Drainage Superintendent and many of these people are also Building Inspectors.

- Drainage Superintendent help agriculture community and municipalities navigate drainage issues.
- **Action:** Jennifer indicated that she will discuss this topic at a future meeting of Northumberland County CAOs.
- Staff will also need to do research on what other municipalities are doing.
- Denise indicated that staff have had discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority and hope to organize a meeting in order to better understand municipal drains from a policy and regulation perspective.
- Denise also explained that research is required to learn the legislative role of the County vs. the local municipalities.

c) 2021 State of the County – Presentation

- Jennifer highlighted progress made in 2020 on key projects/initiatives.
- She also discussed key initiatives planned for 2021.
- Glenn Dees provided an update on the 2021 County budget.
- The group expressed interest in the Community Safety Well-being plan, and Jennifer indicated that County staff can be invited to a future meeting to present on this item.
- A discussion on property assessment and tax shifts also took place.

d) COVID-19 Response & Vaccinations

- Jennifer indicated that the HKPR Health Unit website has a dashboard that is updated weekly with COVID-19 statistics.
- Ken indicated that County operations remain status quo and highlighted that the OAFVC remains operational.

7) Next Meeting – July 27, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.