THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL

PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

MINUTES
PAAWG 2018-02

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) met on May 24, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mississauga Room, Regional Administrative Headquarters, 10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite A, Brampton.

Members Present: Gary Mountain, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Ed Russell, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Britt McKee, Ecosource
Karen Hutchinson, Caledon Countryside Alliance
Manjari Mehta, Citizen-at-Large
Keith Garbutt, Peel Federation of Agriculture
Paul Risebrough, Citizen-at-Large
Jennifer Innis, Regional Councillor

Members Absent: Frank Dale, Region of Peel Chair
Heather Laidlaw, Chair, Peel Federation of Agriculture
Joanne Currie, Peel 4-H Association

Staff: Nadine Abrams, Toronto and Region Conservation
Michael Burke, Region of Peel
Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation
Melanie Williams, Region of Peel
Mark Head, Region of Peel
Marco Di Nizio, Region of Peel

Guests: Johanna Downey, Regional Councillor
Merissa Nudelman, EcoSource
Ryan Ness, Toronto and Region Conservation
Sonia Dhir, Toronto and Region Conservation

1) Welcome and opening remarks

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Gary Mountain, acting Chair.

2) Approval of 2018-02 Agenda

Moved by Keith Garbutt,
Seconded by Ed Russell;

That the agenda for the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting held on May 24, 2018 be approved.

Carried PAAWG 2018-01

3) Approval of 2017-04 Meeting Minutes

Moved by Britt McKee,
Seconded by Ed Russell;

That the Minutes from the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting 2017-03, held on November 23, 2017, be approved.

Carried PAAWG 2018-02

4) Toronto & Region Conservation Urban Agriculture Program
Ryan Ness and Sonia Dhir, Toronto & Region Conservation
Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) staff provided a presentation on TRCA's urban agriculture program in Peel Region. In 2018, the Region provided $149,000 for funding of agricultural extension, completion of Environment Farm Plans, and infrastructure development (e.g., greenhouse, water connections, road improvement, organic certification, wastewater upgrade, upgrades for accessibility, etc.). There are five TRCA agricultural land lease properties in Peel Region. Two are under the urban agriculture land lease program and three are traditional agricultural leases.

TRCA is also undertaking a ten year review of its urban agricultural policy for its agricultural land leases. PAAWG will be circulated a draft in July.

Discussion: PAAWG inquired how TRCA uses the Region's funding to support the tenants to move to a self-sustaining business model. TRCA clarified that all infrastructure upgrades remain the property of TRCA and are non-transferable to the tenant. TRCA also uses the funds to assist with farm-to-farm technical knowledge transfer and social capacity building in the community. PAAWG requested that TRCA look for opportunities to pilot and showcase PRWQP agri-environmental stewardship practices on the leased lands. It also requested that TRCA look at developing stronger networks between the farms and the local agri-food network (e.g., local food programs, farm markets, municipal and school cafeterias, etc.).

5) Provincial Agricultural System for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Provincial Agricultural Land Base Mapping and Draft Provincial Agricultural Impact Assessment Guidelines
Melanie Williams, Region of Peel

The Province has released the Provincial Agricultural System and its agricultural land base map. This map of the Provincial Prime Agricultural Area is now in effect until refined by the Region and incorporated into the Regional Official Plan. All Region and local municipal land use planning decisions must conform to the Provincial Plan policies for the Agricultural System. The

Region's refinement to the Provincial mapping will be done in accordance to the Provincial Implementation Procedures. Initial analysis of the Provincial agricultural land base in relation to the Region-Town Land Evaluation & Area Review technical study was presented. Regional staff will undertake a technical review applying the Provincial Implementation Procedures and methodology endorsed by PAAWG at its November 2017 meeting. Results will be presented to PAAWG in August.

The Province has also released a draft Provincial Agriculture Impact Assessment (AIA) Guidance Document for public comment on the Environmental Registry. The draft document is consistent with the Region's current AIA practices and addresses new policy direction in the Provincial Plans. Regional staff will be providing comment to the Province. The posting closes July 13, 2018.

6) Peel Rural Water Quality Program
Nadine Abrams, Toronto & Region Conservation
Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation

a) 2018 PRWQP Budget Overview

There is $117,488 currently available to fund Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP) projects in 2018. This includes $75,000 in Regional funding and additional grants available from TRCA through federal and provincial programs. Unspent Regional funds within this budget can be reallocated by the Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) Board to other priority projects. Carryover of the 2017 Regional budget for project grants was reallocated.

Discussion: PAAWG inquired if there is a risk of the PRWQP budget being reduced in 2019. Program staff confirmed that on average the program spends close to or the full amount of available project grants however, in 2017 the pending renewal of the Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan grant process led to fewer applications than normal. PAAWG requested that the annual PRWQP budget with projects approved, continue to be presented at each meeting.

b) 2017 PRWQP Memorandum

Program staff reviewed the projects, outcomes and success of the program in 2017. Conservation Authority staff are planning for an increase of applications in 2018 with the upcoming release of new Canada-Ontario Environmental cost-share funding.

c) 2018 PRWQP Guideline Review

The Terms of Reference for PAAWG and the PRWQP directs for a review of the PRWQP guidelines every 5 years. While housekeeping amendments were made to the guidelines in 2017, a full review is identified for 2018. Program staff requested PAAWG complete a survey to identify how the PRWQP can continue to be relevant and effective for Peel farmers through project categories, grant amounts, education and technical extension. The survey results will be presented at an upcoming PAAWG meeting.

Discussion: PAAWG requested that program staff review other comparable Ontario Conservation Authority programs to identify the overall outcomes of agri-environmental stewardship programs and lessons learned that could benefit the PRWQP. PAAWG discussed if equipment sharing could be considered, with a central body coordinating the program. PAAWG also requested program staff review the use of social media to promote the program.

7) PRWQP Applications

Nadine Abrams, Toronto & Region Conservation

a) 02,03,04-TRCA-18 Cover Crop, Tree Planting & Livestock Access Restriction

Discussion: PAAWG members expressed concern on the type of cover crop used and the need for a chemical kill. It was questioned if the use of chemicals negated the environmental improvement provided by the cover crop. Program staff was directed to have the PRWQP guideline review assess the cover crop category encouraging the use of cover crops that have winter kill.

Moved by Karen Hutchinson,
Seconded by Keith Garbutt;

That the applications be approved and funding in the amount of $22,800 be provided for 02,03,04-TRCA-18 under the categories of “cover crop, tree planting, livestock access restriction”.

Carried PAAWG 2018-03

b) 05-TRCA-18 Natural Area Creation

Moved by Keith Garbutt,
Seconded by Britt McKee;

That the application be approved and funding in the amount of $14,688 be provided for 05-TRCA-18 under the category of “natural area creation” on the conditions of:

- completion of an Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan;
- landowner agreement for the PRWQP to monitor years 1, 2 and 5 of the project; and,
- project is made available to showcase as a knowledge transfer to other farmers.

Carried PAAWG 2018-04

c) 06-TRCA-18 Cover Crop

Moved by Ed Russel,
Seconded by Gary Mountain;

That the application be approved and funding in the amount of $5,000 be provided for 06-TRCA-18 under the category of "cover crop".

Carried PAAWG 2018-05

8) New Business
Melanie Williams, Region of Peel

a) Agricultural Burn Permits
An overview of the Town of Caledon's agricultural burn permit process was provided. PAAWG members discussed their experience with how the permits are administered.

b) PAAWG 2018-19 Work Plan
The draft 2018-19 PAAWG work plan was circulated. This includes PAAWG's support to the Region's refinement of the Provincial Agricultural System agricultural land base. PAAWG members were requested to provide any additional work plan items and future speaker topics.

9) Communication Items and Information Items

- Farmlands Forever – Minister Leal, OMAFRA
- Provincial Food & Organic Waste Framework and Policy Statement
- 2018 Grown in Peel Guide (guides distributed to attendees)
- Airport Road Environmental Assessment

10) Adjourn Meeting / Next Meeting

Moved by Karen Hutchinson,
Seconded by Keith Garbutt;

That the May 24, 2018, Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting be adjourned.

Carried PAAWG 2018-06

The meeting stood adjourned at 9:15 p.m. The next Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting will be held on August 23, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.