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THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL
PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

MINUTES
PAAWG 2020-01

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) met on February 20, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mississauga Room, Regional Administrative Headquarters, 10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite A, Brampton.

Members Present: Gary Mountain, Chair, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Brian Wannamaker, Citizen-at-Large
Ed Russell, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Jennifer Innis, Regional Councillor
Karen Hutchinson, Caledon Countryside Alliance
Kristen Carberry, Peel Federation of Agriculture
Manjari Mehta, Citizen-at-Large
Merissa Nudelman, Ecosource
Paul Risebrough, Citizen-at-Large
Tom Dolson, Peel Federation of Agriculture
Victoria Stefaniak, Council & Community Relations for Regional Chair

Members Absent: Michael Palleschi, Regional Councillor
Stephen Dasko, Regional Councillor

Staff: Mark Head, Manager, Research and Analysis, Region of Peel
Don Campbell, Principal Planner, Region of Peel
Laura Dumbrell, Junior Planner, Region of Peel
Mark Eastman, Senior Coordinator, Agricultural Outreach, Credit Valley Conservation
Nadine Abrams, Rural Clean Water Program Coordinator, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

Guests: Victoria Kramkowski, Government & Community Relations Specialist, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Lynn Bishop, Vice President of Finance & Operations, ALUS Canada
Bronwynne Wilton, Principal & Lead Consultant, Wilton Consulting Group
Dawson McKenzie, Research Associate, Wilton Consulting Group

1) Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Gary Mountain, Chair.

2) Declarations of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3) Review and Approval of 2020-01 Agenda

Moved by Gary Mountain;

That the agenda for the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting held on February 20, 2020, be approved.

Carried PAAWG 2020-01

4) Review and Approval of Minutes from November 2019 Meeting

Paul Riseborough inquired about whether mileage expense claim forms had been circulated following the November PAAWG meeting. A number of PAAWG members confirmed that they had received and submitted their forms. Regional staff will follow up with Paul to ensure he is reimbursed for mileage expenses.

Moved by Tom Dolson;

That the Minutes from the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting 2019-05, held on November 20, 2019, be approved.

Carried PAAWG 2020-02

5) Proposed ALUS Pilot Project in Peel

Mark Head, Region of Peel

Lynn Bishop, VP Finance & Operations, ALUS Canada

Victoria Kramkowski, Government & Community Relations Specialist, TRCA

Mark Head provided a brief introduction to the proposed ALUS pilot project. He explained that this project would involve a partnership between the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP) and ALUS Canada, which is a national charitable organization that works with farmers and ranchers to produce valuable ecological services on Canadian farmland. Staff from the Region of Peel, CVC, TRCA, and ALUS Canada have been in discussions about launching a partnership that would bring these programs together.

Lynn Bishop gave a presentation on the ALUS Canada initiative, which she called 'the ALUS 101'. She explained that the organization's vision is to operate as a community-developed and farmer-delivered initiative that sustains agriculture, wildlife and natural spaces for Canadians. Its mission is to enable Canadians to provide direct support to a national network of farmers and ranchers delivering ecosystem services in their communities, including clean air, clean water, carbon sequestration, erosion control, flood mitigation, pollinator support and wildlife habitat.

Ms. Bishop discussed ALUS Canada's current operational communities, which include 21 communities across Canada and eight in Ontario (Norfolk, Grey-Bruce, Elgin, Ontario East, Peterborough, Lambton, Middlesex, and Chatham-Kent). While ALUS is a nationally registered charity, it operates on a community-led model. Each ALUS community establishes a Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC) to direct its local ALUS program. The Partnership Advisory Committee is a community based decision-making body with 50% farmer representation and 50% other local representatives. It advises the locally established legal entity, such as a municipality, conservation authority or other organization, overseeing the local ALUS.

The key principles of ALUS Canada are to be:

- Community-developed
- Farmer-delivered;
- Targeted;
- Market Driven;
- Voluntary;
- Integrated;
- Accountable; and
- Science-based.

The farmer-delivered principle is reflected in how projects are developed and implemented:

1. A landowner submits expression of interest form (voluntary)
2. The local Program Coordinator and landowner meet on farm to identify marginal lands which are difficult to farm using today's methods, determine the best use for each, and then develop potential project ideas that can be implemented using best management practices.
3. The Project Coordinator and the landowner develop a project proposal.
4. The Partnership Advisory Committee reviews and approves project
5. ALUS Canada helps establish the project
6. The landowner maintains project as per the Conservation Agreement
7. The landowner receives an annual payment for management and maintenance of project

The projects provide ecosystem services. Some examples of ecosystem services that may be provided through ALUS Canada projects include riparian buffers, erosion control, water purification, habitat creation, pollinator habitat, and windbreak/shelterbelt.

To close her presentation, Ms. Bishop highlighted the opportunity for ALUS communities to leverage existing agri-environmental programming in conjunction with ALUS programming in order to maximize impact.

Next, Victoria Kramkowski gave a presentation identifying alignments between the PRWQP and ALUS Canada. Two project categories that are eligible for the PRWQP are consistent with ALUS Canada's project types, including natural area enhancement/ creation and tree planting. PRWQP also has various structures and processes in place that could help facilitate a partnership with ALUS Canada, including an advisory/approval committee for projects, technical and advisory staff, a funding mechanism for projects, and a history of relationship-building with farmers.

The proposed pilot partnership would offer various benefits to the Region of Peel. It would increase funding available for restoration on agricultural lands across the Region, implement and offer an annual payment to farmers to steward ecosystem services, engage Peel's agricultural communities through a farmer-to-farmer model, and join two successful, complementary programs. The partnership would focus on relevant PRWQP project categories. PAAWG would act as the Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC), while existing Regional and Conservation Authority staff would deliver the program. Existing mechanisms would be utilized to administer grants and annual payments, and messaging and marketing would recognize all partners equally. Finally, the partnership would involve mutually beneficial initiatives, such as farm tours.

To conclude, Ms. Kramkowski indicated next steps for the pilot project, which will involve continuing discussions between the Region of Peel, CVC, TRCA, ALUS Canada, and PAAWG, and bringing the proposal to Regional Council, the CVC Board, and the TRCA Board as needed. She then initiated discussion around a few key points:

1. Do you think that a PRWQP-ALUS Canada partnership would be beneficial to Peel Region producers on agricultural lands?
2. What are your thoughts on integrating ALUS into the role of the PAAWG?
3. Other benefits, drawbacks and considerations regarding:
 - Administration
 - Engagement
 - Success of projects
 - Policy
 - Other

Questions/ Discussion:

There was general discussion around ALUS Canada's funding model and payments. Lynn Bishop explained that the W. Garfield Weston Foundation has provided the core funding component for the past ten years. Additional funding comes from other sources such as the federal and provincial governments and the Greenbelt Foundation. The legal entity overseeing a local ALUS program signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ALUS Canada and distributes the annual payments to farmers.

PAAWG members expressed some concern around the potential loss of agricultural land as a result of the ALUS Canada projects. Ms. Bishop noted that ALUS Canada aims to put nature back onto the agricultural landscape on marginal agricultural lands, rather than remove viable agricultural land from production. In some cases,

Councillor Innis noted that such a pilot project should not lead to reductions in local funding for the stewardship of ecosystem services, and that ALUS Canada funding would need to be combined with resources that already exist in order to leverage more opportunities and enhance outcomes.

PAAWG members inquired about ALUS Canada's history of partnering with rural water quality committees in other areas. Lynn Bishop explained that, in most ALUS communities, PACs include representatives from the rural water quality committee (if one exists), in addition to staff from the municipality, Conservation Authority, and drainage superintendent. PAAWG is unique in that it represents a rural water quality committee made up entirely of local stakeholders. Therefore, a partnership with the PRWQP would maximize the potential of an existing platform and reduce duplication of effort. Mark Head also noted that many PAAWG members balance multiple time commitments, and a partnership between ALUS Canada and the PRWQP would avoid members needing to join additional boards.

There was discussion regarding the need for clarity around which specific PRWQP applications would be eligible for ALUS funding. Nadine Abrams explained that only two PRWQP project categories align with ALUS, and that each project proposal for ALUS funding would explain how and why it aligns with ALUS policies. Some projects would receive ALUS funding, some would receive PRWQP funding, and some would receive both.

Finally, a PAAWG member inquired about whether farms outside the boundaries of the Region of Peel would be eligible for ALUS funding. Regional Staff and Conservation Authority staff confirmed that ALUS projects would have to be located within the Region's boundaries, like PRWQP projects. The MOU for the program would act as an agreement between the Region, Conservation Authorities, and ALUS only. As municipalities outside Peel would not be

providing funding, projects would have to be located within the Region. Mark Head suggested that, if the pilot was successful, it could be presented to the Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Alliance (GHFFA) and replicated in other jurisdictions. He noted that the proposed pilot project would be the first partnership with ALUS Canada in the Greater Toronto Area.

Moved by Karen Hutchinson;

That the proposed ALUS Pilot Project in Peel is supported by PAAWG under the condition that staff from the Region of Peel, TRCA, CVC and ALUS Canada report back with further details as the project moves forward and that the project receives endorsement from PAAWG prior to project implementation.

Carried PAAWG-2020-03

6) Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan
Bronwynne Wilton, Wilton Consulting Group

Bronwynne Wilton lead a discussion around the update to the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan now underway. The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) has retained Wilton Consulting Group to refresh this plan for the next five years. In order to build a vision and direction for the plan, the project team is organizing a Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Summit on Wednesday, April 1 at the Milton Banquet and Conference Centre. Ms. Wilton encouraged individuals to register for the event online.

Meeting attendees were then organized into pairs and provided with two questions to prompt conversation prior to a larger group discussion:

1. How does being part of the GHFFA support agriculture and food production at the local level?
2. How could the GHFFA provide better support to the local agricultural and food sectors?

The groups identified various benefits associated with GHFFA affiliation, including networking opportunities for planners, circulation of news and updates, and access to research on topics relevant to the Region's agri-food sector.

PAAWG members also identified several ways in which the GHFFA could provide more support to Peel's agri-food sector. Some strategies included communicating more regularly with local advisory committees, playing an advocacy role to help farmers market their products across the Golden Horseshoe, providing support to increase the number of abattoirs in the region, and reducing government-imposed red tape regarding inspections and permits.

Members inquired about the rationale for including only jurisdictions in the Golden Horseshoe in the GHFFA, rather than creating an Ontario-wide alliance. Ms. Wilton explained that the agricultural system within the Golden Horseshoe, constitutes a distinct economic cluster in Ontario. In addition, the Golden Horseshoe is set apart from the rest of Ontario by the unique conditions that arise when farming in proximity to a rapidly growing metropolitan area.

7) **Peel Rural Water Quality Program**

1) **2019 Status Report**

Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation

Mark Eastman presented a 2019 status report on the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP), including types and number of projects approved, grants paid and/or to be paid, program accomplishments, and environmental benefits. In 2019, nineteen projects were approved, while eighteen projects have been completed or are in progress. The total value of grants paid and/or to be paid on 2019 projects is \$117,871.98 leveraging an additional \$90,369.98 from project proponents and other funders for these eighteen projects. 2019 was an above average year for both projects completed/ to be completed and grants paid/to be paid.

Between 2004 and 2019, the PRWQP has engaged 75 individual farm businesses and has paid/allocated a total of \$963,405.96 in funding towards 192 agri-environmental projects. These funds have leveraged an additional \$3,500,290.53 to complete projects valued at \$4,463,696.49.

In 2019, advertisements for the PRWQP were run in the Caledon Enterprise every other month. The program was also promoted via social media and at a variety of events and workshops.

2) **2020 Budget Overview**

Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation

Mark Eastman provided an update on the status of the PRWQP budget, including a review of the 2019 budget and a summary of the 2020 budget. There was a total of \$120,318.00 available to fund PRWQP projects in 2019. This included \$75,000.00 in Regional funding, \$7,000.00 carrying forward from 2018, and \$38,318.00 in TRCA contributions. Annual expenditures totalled \$117,871.98, including \$31,076.77 in grant payments and \$86,795.21 in grant allocations held, with a remaining balance of \$2,446.02.

For 2020, a total of \$75,000 in Peel Region funding is available for PRWQP projects.

3) PRWQP Application

Nadine Abrams, Toronto & Region Conservation

a) 01-TRCA-20 Well Upgrade

Nadine Abrams noted that this application would provide retractive funding for a project completed in 2019. She also explained that, since the PRWQP technical review forms were submitted, the applicant had fulfilled the second condition and submitted original receipts detailing all work undertaken and costs incurred for review and verification by TRCA and Region of Peel Public Works Infrastructure Planning and Growth staff.

Concerning the first condition, a PAAWG member requested clarification around the definition of a well record. Nadine Abrams explained that this is a legal document filled out by a contractor, containing specific details about the location, depth, construction material, and other characteristics of a well. Because this project involved an old well that was already in place, the well record would not include information about the pumping test and soil types. A well record must be provided in order to meet program requirements for this type of project.

Moved by Brian Wannamaker;

That TRCA project 01-TRCA-20 be approved for funding in the amount of \$2,843 under the category of "Well Upgrade" subject to the following conditions:

- That the updated well record signed by a licenced well contractor in accordance with Ontario Regulation 903 of the Ontario Water Resources Act be submitted to the TRCA and Region of Peel Public Works Infrastructure Planning and Studies staff for verification that the work was completed in accordance with program eligibility requirements.
- That the project funding amount be paid subject to confirmation that amounts submitted have been justified to the satisfaction of Region of Peel Public Works Infrastructure Planning and Growth staff.

Carried PAAWG 2020-04

8) Proposed Changes to the Provincial Drainage Act

Mark Head, Region of Peel

Mark Head provided an update on proposed changes to the Provincial Drainage Act. He noted that a Drainage Act Discussion Paper was released on January 17, 2020 by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) summarizing the proposed changes, which would, if passed:

- Create a new streamlined *Drainage Act* process for minor improvements to drainage systems;
- Enable a simplified process to update the engineer's report to account for changes to the design made during construction; and
- Provide the Minister with legislative authority to adopt technical protocols such as the Drainage Act and Regulations Team (DART) Protocol by reference in regulation

Regional staff requested that PAAWG members consult with the Peel Federation of Agriculture (PFA) regarding the proposed changes, and report back with any additional comments.

9) Peel Farm Tour and OFA Involve Fund

Tom Dolson, PFA

Mark Eastman, CVC

Nadine Abrams, TRCA

Tom Dolson provided an update on the PFA's support for the 2020 Peel Farm Tour. He explained that feedback on the proposed concept has been positive and that the PFA has committed to providing 500\$ from the OFA Involve Fund to support the event.

Mark Eastman then gave an overview of the proposed 2020 Peel Farm Tour. He explained that this year's event will be a bus tour of Peel farms with an emphasis on local food production and consumption. The tentative date is Saturday, August 29th. The tour will commence in Mississauga in order to attract an urban audience and highlight both urban and rural agriculture. Tour stops will offer fresh food samples with the intent of exposing visitors to the local food scene and encouraging them to visit farms in the Grown in Peel Guide. Tour guests will be charged a small fee to participate in the event. This will help offset costs and ensure those who register are committed to attending. Social media promotion will also help drive engagement.

Tom Dolson agreed to help organize a committee from the PFA to support Mark Eastman in planning the tour.

10) Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, Bill 156

Mark Head, Region of Peel

Tom Dolson, Peel Federation of Agriculture

Mark Head provided an update on the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, Bill 156, which was introduced by OMAFRA on December 2, 2019. He noted that the Bill aims to protect Ontario farm animals, farmers and farm families and the safety of the entire food supply by addressing the ongoing threat of unwanted trespassing and unauthorized interaction with farm animals.

Tom Dolson explained that the PFA strongly supports Bill 156 and appreciates the initiative the provincial government has taken to provide stronger protection for Ontario's farms, animals and food.

Mark Head noted that Bill 156 defines specific zones to be covered by the legislation. He plans to review these zones and their significance further and suggested that PAAWG members keep this in mind when reviewing the Bill.

11) Peel 2041 Regional Official Plan Review Update

Mark Head, Region of Peel

Mark Head notified PAAWG members of the upcoming Peel 2041 Regional Official Plan Review open houses in Brampton, Caledon, and Mississauga. He encouraged PAAWG members to attend the open houses to learn about current and upcoming focus areas, including information about the ongoing settlement area boundary expansion study.

12) Communication and Items for Information

Don Campbell, Region of Peel

Mark Head, Region of Peel

Don Campbell and Mark Head explained that the following 'for information' items may be relevant to PAAWG members. They were included in the printed meeting package for review.

- a) *OFA Submission Regarding the Provincial Policy Statement Review*. October 21, 2019.
- b) *Working with Ontario Farmers to Improve Soil Health and Water Quality*. OMAFRA News Release, December 5, 2019.
- c) *Ontario Introduces Legislation to Protect Ontario's Farmers, Farm Animals and Food Supply. Unique risks associated with on-farm trespass focus of new bill*. OMAFRA News Release, December 2, 2019.
- d) *A look back at Ontario agriculture in 2019*. OFA Commentaries, December 19, 2019.
- e) *Canada, Ontario Committed to Protecting Environmentally Sustainable Agri-Food Production*. OMAFRA News Release, December 20, 2019.
- f) *Helping to Bring Ontario Agri-food Innovations to Market. Governments Invest in Enhancing Commercialization to Grow Ontario Agri-food Sector*. OMAFRA News Release, January 10, 2020.

- g) *OFA agri-food priorities for a new decade*. OFA Commentaries, January 3, 2020.
- h) *Building Rural Ontario Together. Province moving forward with new intake for Rural Economic Development program and three broadband pilots*. OMAFRA News Release, January 20, 2020.

13) Adjourn Meeting/ Next Meeting

Moved by Ed Russell;

That the February 20, 2020 Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting be adjourned.

Carried PAAWG 2020-05

The meeting stood adjourned at 9:17 pm. The next Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting will be held on May 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.