



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN

MINUTES of a **REGULAR** meeting of the **REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE** held in the Board Room at the Regional District Office on Thursday, April 18, 2013

Members:	Director M. Macnabb Bruce Naka Director S. Fowler Alt. Director C. Fraser Director B. Fleming Director R. Fairbairn Mike Randell Dennis Lapierre Ian Eggen Mohammad Asif Tom Boeve Peter Stockdale Ralph van Daltsen Tony Van den Tillaart Joel Allen Wendy Aasen Doug Gordon	Electoral Area "C" Member at Large City of Armstrong Township of Spallumcheen Electoral Area "B" Electoral Area "D" Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Agricultural Commodity Farmer's Market Member at Large Young Farmer	Chair Vice Chair
Staff:	R. Smailes A. Kittel A. Bevan	General Manager, Planning and Building Regional Growth Strategy Coordinator Executive Assistant (taking minutes)	
Others:	Members of the Public		

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Regional Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting – April 18, 2013

Moved and seconded by Director Fowler and Bruce Naka

That the agenda of the April 18, 2013 regular meeting of the Regional Agricultural Advisory Committee be approved with the following additions:

- D.3 – Shoots and Blooms
- E. 1 – Business Arising from Delegations (BEE Safe – Genetically Modified Organisms).

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Regional Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting – March 21, 2013

Moved and seconded by Ian Eggen and Alt. Director Fraser

That the minutes of the March 21, 2013 regular meeting of the Regional Agricultural Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

DELEGATIONS

Huguette Allen – BEE Safe (Genetically Modified Organisms)

- Sustainable Agriculture enhances community
- Proposed OK Eco Village (property in rural Lumby) supports ban on GMO crops
- Over 60 communities in BC have voted for a ban on GM crops
- Monopoly of seeds and chemical companies
- GM crops are not sustainable
- GM crops not sustainable economically
- Local food increases local economy
- Want to advise seed companies, real estate companies and government organizations that communities have a moratorium on GM crops.
- Electoral Areas “D” and “E” have voted no to GM crops

Results (numbers) were given in regards to surveys/votes held in Electoral Areas “D” and “E”. In response to a question, Ms. Allen advised that organic crops may contain approximately 2-5% of GM crops.

NEW BUSINESS

Genetically Modified Organisms

Moved and seconded by Director Fleming and Doug Gordon

That the letter dated March 22, 2013 from the Township of Spallumcheen regarding Genetically Modified Organisms be received for information.

CARRIED

Agricultural Land Commission Application

KRAUSE, Alan & Kim [File No. 13-0101-F-ALR]

- Application for a second residence at 7261 Highway 97A

Discussion regarding the three options of the Board regarding second residence applications:

- Authorize the application to be sent to the Agricultural Land Commission
- Not authorize the application to be sent to the Agricultural Land Commission
- Authorize building inspector to issue a building permit for the proposed second residence

Comments:

- Proposed house location is a very steep location and not on viable farm land
- Supports continuation of family business
- Concern regarding construction value of the proposed house

- Brilliant idea, exactly what we are looking for, not on viable farm land, or taking away from farm land

Moved and seconded by Mike Randell and Ian Eggen

Whereas the promotion of family farming is a part of the Regional District of North Okanagan policy and this application for a second residence on the property located at 7261 Highway 97A, Electoral Area "F" preserves viable farmland; the Regional Agricultural Advisory Committee recommends to the Board of Directors that the building permit be issued as requested by the owner.

CARRIED

Shoots n Blooms

Shoots n Blooms is put on by the Food Action Society, Sunday, April 21, from 1:00 – 4:00 pm at Fieldstone Organics, 4851 Schubert Road, Armstrong. There will be over 20 vendors promoting local agriculture, a farm tour, and activities for kids. Free admission.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM DELEGATIONS

BEE Safe (Genetically Modified Organisms)

The Regional Growth Strategy Coordinator gave brief overview of the federal GMO food regulation and regulation of biotechnology products.

Local and regional government does not have regulatory authority over normal farm practices or agricultural product regulation; the bans that communities have passed are symbolic.

Discussion ensued regarding the issue of GMOs:

- Need to look at both sides, educate ourselves
- Discussion about GMOs will be several sessions in order to make an informed decision.
- GMO products resist labelling
- Need to separate philosophical and scientific, if it isn't enforceable then it's not a ban so the word ban should not be used
- No one can prove that no harm is done, first GMO crops went on the market in the 1970's, there are no GMO syndromes, no one has proven it one way or another, RDNO has no particular expertise or funding, can't prove the negative, it's not our place now to decide, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) does not stop labels from stating GMO free – it would just have to be proven to be GMO free.
- Our job should be to educate our residents on what a GMO is. Consumers are going to dictate what will happen.
- Worries from looking at the science, industry does product testing, universities and federal government do research.
- Committee is not tasked with making a decision, comments to help the Board to make an informed decision regarding GMO crops.
- Ultimately up to the consumer
- Does the Regional District have a mandate regarding people doing "harm" by having GM crops next to places who don't want GM crops? No, Right to Farm Act comes into play
- Labeling is great, should be the GMO products that should be labeling, not the GMO free products. Gives the consumer a choice, right now they have no choice in the case of cross contamination.
- Issue is separating GMO and non-GMO

- Potential impact on organic farms is an issue
- Production has increased in the past 20 years from the use of new seeds, trees, etc. (ex. used to be 20 bins per acre, now 100 bins per acre)
- Vancouver Island has a thriving agriculture community, proven that it does work, ultimately it's up to the consumer whether they buy GMO or GMO-free products
- GMOs may be very beneficial or harmful, it is not one sided or the other
- Number of organic farms in Spallumcheen has increased, will look into the statistics for the Regional District
- Reason why organic food costs more than non-organic food

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Certified Correct:



Chair



Corporate Officer