

City of Chilliwack
AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022 - 3:30 pm
HELD ELECTRONICALLY

Council Members: Councillor Chris Kloot, Chair
Councillor Harv Westeringh, Vice-Chair

ARAC Members: Walter Goerzen, Community Member
Walter Dyck, Industry Representative
Jacqueline Boer, Community Member
Brett Payne, Industry Representative
Peter Vink, Industry Representative
Stan Vander Waal, Industry Representative
Jeremy Wiebe, Industry Representative

City Staff: Gillian Villeneuve, Manager of Development Planning
Glen White, Manager of Land Development/Approving Officer
Trish Alsip, Recording Secretary

Regrets: Steve Saccomano, Community Member
Chris Les, Industry Representative
Sarah Sache, Community Member

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councillor Chris Kloot was Chair and called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved /) That the Agenda for the Agricultural and Rural Advisory Committee meeting held
Seconded (Tuesday, January 25, 2022 be adopted as circulated.

Carried Unanimously

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved /) That the Minutes for the Agricultural and Rural Advisory Committee meeting held
Seconded (Monday, August 16, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

Carried Unanimously

4. CURRENT ISSUES TO ADDRESS

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) SAL00130 – 5690 and 5770 Extrom Road

The Manager of Land Development/Approving Officer provided a presentation regarding an application for a boundary adjustment within the subject property located at 5690 and 5770 Extrom Road. The information provided included the location map/ortho photo, proposal/factors, and recommendations.

The applicant is the sole owner of both properties located at 5770 Extrom Road and 5690 Extrom Road with the main historic generational farm located 5770 Extrom Road. A homesite severance was done in 2009 which created 5690 Extrom Road. The applicant would like to transfer 5.90 acres from 5690 Extrom Road to her alternate property located at 5770 Extrom Road which would allow the total land area at 5770 Extrom Road to increase to 4.6 hectares (11.5 acres). This increased property size would allow for a continued farming operation at 5770 Extrom Road by consolidating her resources to the original family farm and allow for enhancement of her horse breeding program. By adjusting along the existing fence line, it will allow maximum usage of her pastures for development of her program, horse training and grazing. The applicant plans to sell the 5690 Extrom Road property which will be reduced by 5.90 acres, leaving the property at a total land area of 1.30 hectares (3.2 acres), sufficient for a hobby farm.

Clarification was requested with respect to the original application to the Agriculture Land Commission (ALC); staff noted when the original application was forwarded to the ALC in 2006-2007, the applicant qualified for a homesite severance. As such, the application was approved as a homesite severance with the ALC acknowledging approval was being granted for a lot size outside the normal homesite severance configuration. With the location of the property, the ALC did not have reason to believe there would be any detriment to future development opportunities in the area.

As part of the Committee’s rationale, it was noted the proposed future boundary adjustment proposal fits the contour of the land well and would provide better utilization with respect to the enhancement of the owner’s horse breeding operation.

Moved /) That the Agricultural and Rural Advisory Committee supports the proposed boundary
Seconded (adjustment for properties located at 5690 and 5770 Extrom Road as it will allow for the
enhancement of the owner’s horse breeding operation.

Carried Unanimously

b) SAL00131 – 48786 Huston Road and 5295 Farnham Road

The Manager of Land Development/Approving Officer provided a presentation regarding an application for a boundary adjustment within the subject property located at 48786 Huston Road and 5295 Farnham Road. The information provided included the location map/ortho photo, proposal/factors, and recommendations.

The applicant would like to sell 23.91 acres of her property, 5295 Farnham Road, to her grandson, leaving her with 2.5 acres of property for homesite usage. Her grandson plans to take over as owner of 48786 Huston Road and is set to acquire the 23.91 acres which would increase the total land area of 48786 Huston Road to 12.6 hectares (31.21 acres). He is hoping to achieve organic farm status through the farming of a wide variety of blueberries, huckleberries, and currants.

5. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

Discussion ensued with respect to the viability for agricultural activity considering the ruggedness of the land, soil classification and elevation. In terms of zoning, the 2.5 acres would be the minimum lot size required for a boundary adjustment. Any lot size smaller than 2.5 acres would result in an application to the ALC to reduce the lot size.

Discussion ensued with respect to whether any Ryder Lake properties are required to have covenants on title with a requirement of a minimum of 10 acres; staff are not aware any such properties. Concern was expressed regarding whether a precedent is being set with respect to reducing large lot sizes. The rationale for this application is that although the classification of soils and the terrain, in comparison with the valley floor is significantly different, it would not be a detriment to agriculture. In fact, it would result in a larger, more viable agricultural property. An extensive study was undertaken, 'Policy Directive No. G-31 Boundary Adjustments in the ALR', whereby it was determined no resulting lot shall be less than 4ha (10 a) in size, unless there is an opportunity to reduce one (or more) of the parcels to the smallest homesite possible (1 ha / 2.47 a), with the benefit of creating (a) larger remainder parcel(s).

As part of the Committee's rationale, it was noted this application is in keeping with the Small Lot Agricultural Study, Policy G-31 (Boundary Adjustments in the ALR).

Moved /) That the Agricultural and Rural Advisory Committee supports the proposed boundary
Seconded (adjustment for properties located at 48786 Huston Road and 5295 Farnham Road as
it will allow for the enhancement of farming on the property at 48786 Huston Road
by creating a larger, viable agricultural property.

Carried Unanimously

Cassidy Silbernagel, Applicant, OTG Developments, was present.

c) SAL00132 – 9432 and 9466 Banford Road

The Manager of Land Development/Approving Officer provided a presentation regarding an application for a boundary adjustment within the subject property located at 9432 and 9466 Banford Road. The information provided included the location map/ortho photo, proposal/factors, and recommendations. The Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) Application Submission was provided.

The boundary adjustment application proposes realigning the property boundary between 9466 Banford Road and 9432 Banford Road such that it follows the Elk Brook watercourse. The watercourse currently bisects 9466 Banford Road, creating a natural division on the property. The proposed boundary alignment will result in the size of 9432 Banford Road being increased to 19.7 hectares (48.8 acres), and the size of 9466 Banford Road being reduced to 3.8 hectares (9.5 acres). The remaining property at 9466 Banford Road on the west side of the brook will continue to be used for small scale farming. The proposed boundary alignment along Elk Brook will result in 9466 Banford Road being smaller than the required area stated in Policy Directive No. G-31.

5. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

The Manager of Land Development/Approving Officer noted the proposed boundary adjustment follows the natural contour of the land. The area of 9466 Banford Road could be increased to meet the requirement by extending the property line beyond the watercourse; however, the land would not be accessible or useable by the owner. A query was raised with respect to whether the Elk Brook watercourse runs all year; staff noted the Elk Brook watercourse is wet throughout the year.

Moved /) That the Agricultural and Rural Advisory Committee supports the proposed boundary
Seconded (adjustment for properties located at 9432 and 9466 Banford Road as it will allow for the better utilization and enhancement of the owner’s overall farming operation at 9432 Banford Road and creates a boundary along the location of the existing watercourse that bisects both properties.

Carried Unanimously

Shannon Webb, Applicant, OTG Developments, was present.

Chair Kloot withdrew from the meeting at 3:50 pm declaring a potential conflict of interest for the following two applications: SAL00134, as one of the applicants is a family member; and, with respect to ALR00386, as he is the acting agent on behalf of the applicants. Vice-Chair Westeringh assumed the role as Chair.

d) SAL00134 – 6250 Chadsey Road and 41762 South Sumas Road

The Manager of Land Development/Approving Officer provided a presentation regarding an application for a boundary adjustment within the subject property located at 6250 Chadsey Road and 41762 South Sumas Road. The information provided included the location map/ortho photo, proposal/factors, and recommendations. The Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) Application Submission was provided.

The owners of property located at 6250 Chadsey Road would like to sell 13.83 acres, leaving them with 4.1 hectares (10.2 acres) for agricultural use. The remaining hectares will continue to produce crops for the Fraser Valley. The owners of property located at 41762 South Sumas Road are inclined to purchase the 13.83 acres to increase their current property of 1.0 hectares (2.49 acres) which is currently being operated as a small-scale feed harvesting operation. This would allow for an increase in their feed harvesting operation and a future expansion of their chicken farm.

Discussion ensued regarding the viability of farm land if 6250 Chadsey Road was reduced in size from a viable agricultural 17.90 acre lot to a 10.2 acre lot. Comment was provided with respect to future access through the property located off of 41762 South Sumas Road should the poultry farm operation be expanded to the newly acquired portion. A query was raised with respect to the dimensions of 41762 South Sumas Road; and, whether future buildings could be constructed on 41762 South Sumas Road due to the current dimensions; staff noted 41762 is approximately 50m in width.

5. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

Vice-Chair Westeringh invited the applicant to provide comment. The applicant noted he is representing the owners of both properties. He noted the owner of property located at 41762 South Sumas Road is open to several opportunities, with an original plan of a panhandle lot with access off Chadsey Road for farm vehicles and machinery access. This was noted to be challenging from a staffing perspective with respect to zoning due to the creation of an irregular lot-shape pattern. Upon further review by the owner, he has proposed access be maintained off of 41762 South Sumas Road as he is confident he can move all his machinery in through the property. The owner would also consider an easement to the south of the larger portion of 41762 South Sumas Road. As part of the rationale, the applicant noted both owners have a good working relationship and are seeking to expand each of their respective farming operations.

An enquiry was raised with respect to whether the owner of 6250 Chadsey Road would consider leasing a portion of 41762 South Sumas Road; the applicant noted leasing has not been considered at this stage. Comment was provided with respect to possible push-back from neighbouring residents should chicken barns be constructed behind residential properties.

A query was raised with respect to setback requirements, should there be a chicken barn proposed at the rear of the new portion of property located at 41762 South Sumas Road; staff noted there is a 30m setback requirement, or 15m with a buffer installed between adjacent property lines. Fans would be required to blow in to the property, not to any other adjacent properties.

Vice-Chair Westeringh requested further clarification with respect to future plans of both property owners; the applicant noted each owner plans to expand their farming operation. The owner of 41762 South Sumas Road property was not intending to seek this much land to expand his farming operation; however, in keeping with the City of Chilliwack's Small Lot Agricultural Study, Policy Directive No. G-31 Boundary Adjustments in the ALR, the boundary was adjusted and the current application put forth with the required minimum of 10 acres. The owner of 41762 South Sumas Road is willing to reduce boundary adjustment so as to keep the 6250 Chadsey Road property larger. The owner's goal is to have sufficient space at the rear of the 41762 South Sumas property to construct chicken barns with the required setbacks to allow minimal conflict with the existing neighbours.

As part of the Committee's rationale, it was noted the proposed application technically meets the criteria with respect to the minimum lot size of 10 acres as per the City of Chilliwack's Small Lot Agricultural Study, Policy Directive No. G-31 Boundary Adjustments in the ALR; however, is not an advantage for agriculture due to the nature of the shape of the two properties and the configuration off of South Sumas Road.

The applicant provided further comment with respect to the Small Lot Agricultural Study, noting the study provided information stating that a significant percentage of 10 acre lots are viable farming properties; and, for a large, intensive farming operation, a 50 acre (or greater) lot would be best suited. Therefore, the property located at 6250 Chadsey Road, at 17.90 acres, is not currently suited for large, intensive farming operations; but rather more suitable as a 10 acre parcel for a range of medium-sized agricultural activities. The applicant noted the boundary adjustment proposal would allow for two medium-sized lots still appropriate for a variety of agricultural activities.

5. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

Moved /) That the Agricultural and Rural Advisory Committee does not support the proposed boundary
Seconded (adjustment for properties located at 6250 Chadsey Road and 41762 South Sumas Road for
properties located at 6250 Chadsey Road and 41762 South Sumas Road as the proposal does
not represent an enhancement to the farming operation at 6250 Chadsey Road.

Carried Unanimously

Arnold Devry and Pete Devry, DeVry Nurseries Ltd. were present.

e) ALR00386 – 10370 and 10420 Gillanders Road

The Manager of Development Planning provided a presentation regarding this application for a boundary adjustment within the subject property located at 10370 and 10420 Gillanders Road. The information provided included the location map/ortho photo, proposal/factors, and recommendations.

The applicant is requesting a boundary adjustment to facilitate a future greenhouse and shipping facility expansion for DeVry Greenhouses which is currently in operation on the properties. As a result of the proposal, 10420 Gillanders Road will be relocated in its entirety from the northern portion of the site to the south, utilizing Castleman Ditch as the proposed property line.

Moved /) That the Agricultural and Rural Advisory Committee supports the proposed boundary
Seconded (adjustment for 10370 and 10420 Gillanders Road and recommends Council forward the
application to the Agricultural Land Commission “with support”.

As part of the Committee’s rationale, it was noted the proposal supports agricultural opportunities for both properties through creation of two large and viable farming parcels while limiting potential for urban / rural conflict.

Carried Unanimously

Cassidy Silbernagel and Shannon Webb, OTG Developments, and Arnold Devry and Pete Devry left the meeting at 4:11 pm.

Chair Kloot returned to the meeting at 4:12 pm and resumed the role as Chair.

6. PRESENTATION / DELEGATION

7. INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

a) Memo: Temporary Farm Worker Housing (September 21, 2021)

A brief discussion ensued regarding Temporary Farm Worker Housing with respect to provision of amenity areas, security, physical distancing, etc. Council requested the Agricultural and Rural Advisory Committee (ARAC) review the standards in place and make further recommendation to Council, as necessary. The Committee felt it was not within their purview to make recommendations regarding these standards as they are programs and regulations established by the Federal and Provincial governments.

7. INFORMATION / DISCUSSION (continued)

Jacqueline Boer, Community Member, noted the Chilliwack YMCA offers free six-month membership passes to individuals in the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program.

b) Memo: ARAC Recommendations / ALC Decisions 2021

A memo was provided to the Committee for information regarding the ARAC Recommendations and 2021 ALC Decisions.

c) 2022 Terms of Reference

The 2022 Terms of Reference was provided for information

d) 2022 Membership List

The 2022 Membership List was provided for information

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held at the call of the Chair.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:16 pm.

Councillor Chris Kloot, Chair