

TERMS OF REFERENCE – 2024

Agricultural and Rural Advisory Committee

PURPOSE:

The Agricultural and Rural Advisory Committee (ARAC) is a Select Committee established by Council.

The committee will serve as an advisory/liaison body between Council and the rural neighborhoods in the City of Chilliwack (COC). The committee will concentrate its rural advisory efforts on policy issues with respect to service delivery in rural areas.

ARAC will also provide advice to Council on matters relating to agriculture, agri-businesses, and agri-tourism in the City of Chilliwack (COC) including:

1. Applications initiated under the *Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) Act*, which are to be considered by Council.
2. Applications to amend the Official Community Plan (OCP) and/or Zoning Bylaw where the subject property is within or neighbouring the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).
3. Applications to amend the OCP and Zoning Bylaw where the subject property is zoned agricultural or is adjacent to agricultural zoned property.
4. Assisting with the comprehensive reviews of the documents listed below as they relate to agriculture, agri-businesses, and agri-tourism matters in the COC:
 - (a) Bylaws;
 - (b) Official Community Plan;
 - (c) Agricultural Area Plans;
 - (d) Neighbourhood and Comprehensive Development Plans;
 - (e) Farm 'Edge' Policies;
 - (f) Environmental goals as they relate to farmland;
 - (g) Park and Recreational Plans; and
 - (h) Transportation Plans.
5. Advising and assisting Council and COC staff in implementing the "City of Chilliwack Agricultural Area Plan" with assistance from the ALC and Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant agencies.
6. Working with COC staff and Council, and at Council's request, with other levels of governments on development proposal submissions that have potential impact on agricultural land.
7. Promoting awareness and education on agriculture in COC in partnership with the Chilliwack Agricultural Commission.
8. Other matters as referred by Council.

The committee will report its findings and opinions to Council.

CRITERIA:

In reviewing proposals, plans, ALR applications or issues related to the above, and in addition to what is outlined in the Agricultural Area Plan, the ARAC will consider the following:

1. Existing applicable policies and regulations pertaining to agriculture (i.e. OCP, Ag Area Plan, ALC Act and Regulations). The *Environmental Management Act, Water Act, Fisheries Act, Fish Protection Act, Pesticide Control Act, Trespass Act, Farm Practices Protection Act, Land Title Act, and Local Government Act* are some of the laws with which farmers and ranchers must comply.
2. The effect of the proposal on the agricultural potential of the subject property.
3. The effect of the proposal on adjacent ALR properties and surrounding agricultural production.
4. The effect of the proposal on water resources and transportation issues.
5. A rating of the priority or impact of the application on the maintenance of the ALR.
6. Where appropriate, possible alternatives to the proposal.
7. The identification of issues relating to the protection of ALR lands specific to the application, including the use of appropriate buffering techniques, aimed at enhancing land use compatibility.

COMPOSITION:

The Chair, with assistance from a COC staff liaison and the Vice Chair, and in consultation with the Mayor, will coordinate the membership selection process. The Mayor will coordinate the selection for all of the Select Committees and make final appointment recommendations to Council.

The membership of the ARAC shall consist of two (2) elected officials representing Council as Chair and Vice Chair, a COC liaison staff member from Planning, and up to ten (10) voting members appointed by Council as follows:

1. one (1) member from each (berry, poultry, dairy, greenhouse/nursery);
2. one (1) member from agricultural food processing and/or distribution including farm retail sales;
3. four (4) members from the community;
4. one (1) member associated with agri-tourism;
5. one (1) representative from the Chilliwack Agricultural Commission;
6. one (1) representative from an agricultural educational or research institution;

ARAC may also consist of non-voting members, including:

7. Liaison COC staff members;
8. a representative from the Agricultural Land Commission;
9. a representative from the Fraser Valley Regional District;

10. a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture; and
11. Others, as necessary.

Membership selection should attempt to provide representation from the rural neighbourhoods of Chilliwack including Ryder Lake, Greendale, Yarrow and Rosedale.

All members shall be appointed for a two (2) year period, or until such time a Council re-election takes place and, in this case, Council shall re-appoint ARAC. Members are expected to attend at least 75% of the meetings.

The members of ARAC shall serve without remuneration but may, from time to time, and on a resolution of Council, be reimbursed for expenses they incur while performing their functions as a member of ARAC.

Council may, at any time, remove any member of ARAC and any member of ARAC may resign at any time upon sending written notice to the Chair of ARAC. In the event of a vacancy occurring during a regular term on ARAC, the vacancy may be filled for the remainder of that term in the same way the initial appointments were made.

PROCEDURES:

1. The meetings shall be held as determined by the Chair on an 'as needed' basis.
2. In the event that the Chair is not present, the Vice Chair will act as Chair for that meeting. In the event that the Chair and Vice Chair are not present, the meeting shall stand adjourned until the next meeting or the next meeting called by the Chair.
3. The quorum of ARAC will be greater than 50% of its members. If a quorum is not present the Chair, at his/her discretion, may carry on with discussion of items on the Agenda and a summary of the discussion will be included in the staff report presented to Council on the matter.
4. The meetings shall be open to the public, with the exception of matters that would be dealt with in the closed portion of a Council meeting as defined in Division 3 of the *Community Charter*, and shall be held at City Hall.
5. A minimum of five (5) days' notice must be given, and included in the notice will be the purpose for the meeting.
6. An Agenda package shall be provided to ARAC members at least three (3) days in advance of the meeting date.
7. Responsibility for the items appearing on the Agenda will rest with the Chair in communication with the staff liaison assigned to support ARAC. ARAC members are encouraged to submit items for inclusion on the Agenda.
8. ARAC will only concern itself with the items on the Agenda and, with respect to any new business that may be presented, the Chair may entertain a general discussion and where appropriate, the item will be referred to the next regular ARAC meeting for full discussion and recommendation.

9. In addition to items raised by the Chair and ARAC members, ARAC will also address matters referred by Council.
10. Minutes of the meeting shall be prepared by COC staff, subsequently signed by the Chair, and forwarded to Council. ARAC will report to Council through its minutes and by making recommendations for Council's consideration.
11. ARAC will not have any administrative authority or jurisdiction to implement change or give direction to alter current policies, procedures, and practices. However, the committee may, and is encouraged to make recommendations to Council if it wishes to request staff to investigate certain matters or wishes to make recommendations with respect to Council's policies, procedures, and practices.
12. ARAC may hold public meetings in agricultural neighbourhoods to obtain feedback from the community and to relay information to the community.
13. ARAC may appoint sub-committees of its members to review and provide recommendations on specific issues to ARAC, and recommend to Council the appointment of members from the general public to serve on the sub-committee(s).
14. ARAC may invite or entertain delegations that are either directly related to, or have a peripheral interest in, agricultural or rural matters to receive their comments and recommendations with respect to specific issues.
15. ARAC will act as a clearing house and a forum for ideas and policy issues relating to its purpose.
16. ARAC will consider, as appropriate, Council's objectives and strategies as contained within the COC Annual Report when making recommendations to Council.
17. If an industry committee member is unavailable to attend a meeting, an alternative may be sent if the alternative member has been approved by the Chair.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

ARAC members must abide by the conflict of interest provision outlined in the *Community Charter* as amended or replaced from time to time. If a conflict of interest arises between an ARAC member attending a meeting and the matter being discussed, the member must declare a conflict of interest and state the general nature of the conflict. After making such declaration, the member must not take part in any discussions on the matter, must immediately leave the meeting, and must not attempt to influence any member at any time in relation to the matter.