

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING
(Committee Of The Whole)

Thursday, October 26, 2017

PRESENT: Chair Mark Parker

Directors Taylor Bachrach
Chris Beach
Shane Brien
Mark Fisher
Tom Greenaway
Dwayne Lindstrom
Rob MacDougall
Bill Miller
Rob Newell
Jerry Petersen
Darcy Repen
Gerry Thiessen

Directors Absent Eileen Benedict, Electoral Area "E" (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural)
Thomas Liversidge, Village of Granisle

Alternate Directors Linda McGuire, Village of Granisle

Staff Melany de Weerd, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Manager of Administrative Services
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.

AGENDA

Moved by Director Beach
Seconded by Director Lindstrom

AG.2017-6-1

"That the Agriculture Committee Agenda of October 26, 2017 be adopted."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Agriculture Committee
Meeting Minutes
-September 7, 2017

Moved by Director MacDougall
Seconded by Director Brien

AG.2017-6-2

"That the Minutes of the Agriculture Committee Meeting of September 7, 2017 be received."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCUSSION ITEMS

UBCM Update

1. Meeting with Andrew Weaver, BC Green Party Leader

- Positive Meeting;
- Mr. Weaver had spoken in regard to foreign ownership of land in southern B.C.
- Presented the Foreign ownership issues facing the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and north west B.C.;
- Mr. Weaver was very receptive to the information provided;
- He indicated number 1 priority when meeting in the House of Commons would be introducing a bill in regard to limiting foreign ownership;
 - He introduced the Bill October 6, 2017 to ban foreign ownership on Agricultural Land Reserve land over five acres.
 - He is researching further information to strengthen the case.

2. Minister of Agriculture – the Honourable Lana Popham

- Very positive and responsive;
- Requested Chair Parker to sit on a committee in southern B.C. in regard to foreign ownership;
 - Also investigate incentives and solutions for young people to invest in farming;
- Discussed the use of ash for fertilizer from sawmills:
 - West Fraser Sawmill in Fraser Lake is now utilizing ash;
 - Fort St. James is still facing issues.

3. Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy – the Honourable George Heyman

- *Water Licensing Act.*
 - It's in process;
 - Reviewing what has occurred and did not have a lot of information.

Agriculture Coordinator Update

Chair Parker provided an update in regard to the hiring of the Agriculture Coordinator.

- Completed all in person interviews;
- Will bring forward information to the RDBN Executive Committee for consideration;
- Very pleased with the qualifications of the applicants;
 - From a widely diverse background;
 - Fully aware of the progress the RDBN has moved forward in regard to agriculture in the region.

Director Repen suggested finding an opportunity to continue to engage with the qualified candidates that are not selected for the position.

RD Role in Agriculture Stewardship

Chair Parker mentioned that he has been in discussions with NewGold Blackwater and Wayne Salewski, President, Nechako Environment and Water Stewardship Society in regard to funding programs for water stewardship and riparian work on agricultural lands. They have indicated they have received little uptake to their programs and requested feedback in regard to potential ways to engage the agriculture community. Director Fisher spoke of the Economical Stewardship Initiative (ESI) and contacting Megan Darcy in regard to information sharing.

Director Greenaway noted that he has recently completed riparian works on his agriculture land through the Agriculture Coop grant funding program. Director Miller mentioned that he has also completed riparian works on his agriculture land but was unaware of available funding for the work. He spoke of the Agriculture Coordinator potentially facilitating and communicating the program information to the agriculture community.

RD Role in Agriculture Stewardship (Cont'd)

Director Thiessen commented that, along with Director Greenaway he attended a meeting on October 13, 2017 in regard to the cumulative impacts to the watershed and watershed management. He mentioned that health and environmental stewardship in a community in regard to such natural resources as the watershed is very important to have them in the future. Director Thiessen mentioned that when the hiring process is complete for the Agriculture Coordinator it would be beneficial for the Regional Board to have a planning session and determine its direction in regard to the issue of watershed management and agriculture.

Director MacDougall spoke of the Nechako Watershed roundtable being a well-represented group to advocate for the funding and repair of the watershed. Director Thiessen noted that the Nechako Watershed Roundtable has expressed frustration in regard to the lack of involvement to repair the watershed. Director Greenaway noted the Nechako Watershed Roundtable is investigating funding opportunities to move the roundtable forward.

Chair Parker will follow-up with Mr. Salewski and Ms. Darcy.

Chair Parker identified that agriculture stewardship, water management and the funding opportunities can be discussed at a future Agriculture Coordinator planning session.

CORRESPONDENCE

Andrew Weaver Introduces Bill to Ban Foreign Ownership on Agricultural Land Reserve Over Five Acres Moved by Director Miller
Seconded by Director MacDougall

AG.2017-6-3 "That the Agriculture Committee receive the correspondence from Andrew Weaver re: Introduces Bill to Ban Foreign Ownership on Agricultural Land Reserve Over Five Acres."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

NEW BUSINESS

Agriculture Coordinator -SWOT

Director Newell noted that the RDBN SWOT (Strategic Workforce Opportunity Team) has also focused on agriculture as a top priority in the region and spoke to having the Agriculture Coordinator participate in the SWOT.

Director Newell mentioned that Janice Tapp, Copper T Ranch, Fraser Lake attended the SWOT meeting and was a good resource. She also spoke at the RDBN Business Forum Agriculture Panel in regard to farm stewardship and environmental planning.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Beach
Seconded by Director Newell

AG.2017-6-4 "That the meeting be adjourned at 1:55 pm."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY