

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING
(Committee of the Whole)

Thursday, March 2, 2017

PRESENT:	Chair	Mark Parker
	Directors	Taylor Bachrach Eileen Benedict Shane Brienen Tom Greenaway John Illes Dwayne Lindstrom – left at 2:10 p.m. Thomas Liversidge Bill Miller Rob Newell Jerry Petersen Darcy Repen Gerry Thiessen
	Directors Absent	Mark Fisher, Electoral Area “A” (Smithers Rural) Rob MacDougall, District of Fort St. James
	Alternate Director	Stoney Stoltenberg, Electoral Area “A” (Smithers Rural)
	Staff	Melany de Weerd, Chief Administrative Officer Cheryl Anderson, Manager of Administrative Services Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning – arrived at 1:46 p.m. Roxanne Shepherd, Chief Financial Officer Corrine Swenson, Manager of Regional Economic Development Deneve Vanderwolf, Regional Economic Development Assistant – left at 2:10 p.m. Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 1:38 p.m.

AGENDA

Moved by Director Miller
Seconded by Alternate Director Stoltenberg

AG.2017-2-1

“That the Agriculture Committee Meeting Agenda of March 2, 2017 be adopted.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Agriculture Committee
Meeting Minutes
-January 26, 2017

Moved by Alternate Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Miller

AG.2017-2-2

“That the minutes of the Agriculture Committee meeting of January 26, 2017 be received.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORT

Agriculture Forum -November 9, 2016

Director Miller thanked Chair Parker, Director Fisher and RDBN staff for the work completed in regard to the Agriculture Forum on November 9, 2016 in Burns Lake.

Discussion took place regarding the work being completed from the Agriculture Forum:

- Northwest Invasive Plant Council is scheduled to be a delegation at the March 9, 2017 RDBN Committee of the Whole meeting;
- Chair Parker has been invited by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry of the Senate of Canada to attend a meeting via video conference on March 7, 2017 to provide a presentation in regard to foreign ownership of agriculture lands;
- Workshops have been conducted in the region in regard to the new *Water Sustainability Act*.
 - o Some uncertainty remains in regard to the new regulations;
 - o Workshops are required in the Burns Lake area;
 - o Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) has indicated they are willing to have workshops where needed;
 - o Beyond the Market has also assisted in facilitating workshops;
 - o Without completed water licensing for farm lands there could potentially be impacts to the property values;

Chair Parker noted the dialogue that took place at the Agriculture Forum and the connections that were made with individuals has assisted in addressing agriculture issues in the region.

Director Repen spoke to the future of agriculture in the region and the potential for growth and the ability to move forward in building agriculture in North West BC.

VERBAL REPORTS

Presentation for Senate on the Acquisition of Farmland – March 7, 2017

Chair Parker noted that the video conference presentation for the Senate on the Acquisition of Farmland scheduled for March 7, 2017 will take place in Prince George.

Three key areas the presentation will focus on:

1. National Policy to protect Agriculture Land;
2. Need a solution to make it competitive for local and young farmers to acquire farmland on the same level as big industry;
 - a. assist farmers to get into the market and be sustainable;
3. Needs to be long term:
 - a. food production in and for Canada and food export by Canada for Canada;

Chair Parker noted that the Ministry of Agriculture has indicated that 2% of agriculture land in BC is owned by foreign entities. In Electoral Area "F" (Vanderhoof), 4% of agriculture land is owned by foreign companies.

Chair Parker has had discussions with the RDBN Planning department and Gary Blattner, Facilitator, Agriculture Forum in regard to the presentation. The presentation time allowance is 5-7 minutes with an opportunity for the Senate to question Chair Parker afterward.

VERBAL REPORTS (CONT'D)

Presentation for Senate on the Acquisition of Farmland – March 7, 2017 (Cont'd)

Director Thiessen identified the need for Farm Credit Canada (FCC) to be more progressive and more available to young farmers. Director Repen noted that FCC is available to support the growing of products but not for processing and there is a need to upgrade and update the use of FCC. Discussion took place regarding the long length of time it takes to complete an application process through FCC being a deterrent and not user friendly. FCC is an option already in place that has great potential but requires some updating to address the needs of current farming.

Carrots to Cattle Conference-March 17-18, 2017 -Smithers, B.C.

Chair Parker expressed the value in attending the Carrots to Cattle Conference March 17-18, 2017 in Smithers and the positive feedback he has received in regard to the RDBN including agriculture as a priority. He spoke to building trust and the role of the RDBN in the agriculture sector. Chair Parker has been contacted by other Regional Districts and communities requesting information and providing support in regard to the RDBN's Agriculture Committee and initiatives. He thanked the RDBN Board for its support and recognition of value in regard to agriculture in the region.

Carrots to Cattle Tradeshow Booth - Deneve Vanderwolf, Regional Economic Development Assistant

Ms. Vanderwolf noted the importance of having a tradeshow booth at the Carrots to Cattle Conference. She spoke of the RDBN's initiative in regard to the agriculture sector and having a booth at the conference provided an opportunity for education, relationship building and an opportunity for attendees to ask questions.

- Tradeshow component consisted of 6 booths:
 - Beyond the Market;
 - Ministry of Agriculture;
 - Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako;
 - Kubota Tractor;
 - Copper T Ranch;
 - Smithers Feed Store.

Friday, February 17, 2017

- Set up and booth was open from 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.;
- Attendance during the 2 hours the booth was open prior to dinner was minimal;
- Staff networked with a number of individuals during dinner and during the Tradeshow the following day.
 - Local producers;
 - Community leaders;
 - Government employees;
 - Other attendees.

Saturday, February 18, 2017

- Booth was open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 - Was available to attendees during coffee breaks and lunch;
 - Attendees at event - 70;
 - Total conversations with booth attendees – 35;
 - Many took handouts that passed by the booth that did not speak directly with staff;
 - Conversations held in regard to:
 - RDBN Agriculture webpage;
 - Ease of use of website;
 - Connecting Consumers to Producers;
 - Possible funding fit for some agriculture training for producers in the Smithers area;

VERBAL REPORTS (CONT'D)

Carrots to Cattle Tradeshow Booth - Deneve Vanderwolf, Regional Economic Development Assistant (Cont'd)

- Two producers would like to be promoted in the Connecting Consumers to Producers but are just outside the RDBN Boundaries;
- RDBN Agriculture Plan and Land Use Inventories
 - What is it?
 - Why do it?
 - Where can they find it?
- SWOT (Skills Workforce Opportunities Team)
 - Promoted SWOT;
 - Explored potential agriculture representatives for the SWOT.

Chair Parker congratulated Director Fisher for his initiative to utilize grant in aid funds to assist the Carrots to Cattle Conference in sponsoring youth registrations. He also thanked staff and noted that it was well worth having staff in attendance.

Receipt of Verbal Reports

Moved by Director Miller
Seconded by Director Petersen

AG.2017-2-3

“That the Agriculture Committee receive the verbal reports as presented.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

INVITATIONS

New Exporter Mission 2017 -March 6-7, 2017 – Seattle, WA

Moved by Director Illes
Seconded by Director Benedict

AG.2017-2-4

“That the Agriculture Committee receive the invitation titled “New Exporter Mission 2017 – March 6-7, 2017 – Seattle, WA.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Director Miller spoke of visiting the Pacific Northwest recently and noted the potential growth for BC Agriculture to export to the area. He noted the growth of urban areas into agriculture lands has put restrictions on growing areas and will open opportunities for BC to export food.

Expanding Your Presence in in China – February 22, 2017 -Richmond, B.C.

Moved by Director Benedict
Seconded by Director Petersen

AG.2017-2-5

“That the Agriculture Committee receive the invitation titled “Expanding Your Presence in China – February 22, 2017 – Richmond, B.C.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

INVITATIONS (CONT'D)

Chair Parker noted that the "Expanding Your Presence in China" is a Growing Forward 2 initiative. He commented that Growing Forward 3 is being developed and is currently interested in comments and recommendations. He mentioned that while extending BC's agriculture presence in China is good he also would like reassurance that local growing and production is a priority. Director Repen spoke to the benefits of export markets and utilizing both export and local markets.

NEW BUSINESS

Logging Truck Irresponsible
Driving Behavior

Discussion took place regarding erratic logging truck driver behavior and the contractors being accountable for their drivers.

SPECIAL IN-CAMERA MEETING

Moved by Director Miller
Seconded by Director Thiessen

AG.2017-2-6

"In accordance with Section 90 (1)(c) of the *Community Charter*, it is the opinion of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors that matters pertaining to labour relations or other employee relations be held in confidence, and therefore exercise their option of excluding the public for this meeting."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Brien
Seconded by Director Miller

A.G.2017-2-7

"That the meeting be adjourned at 2:20 p.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Mark Parker, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant