

Present:

Councillor Bose, Chair
Councillor Bains, Vice Chair
D. Bondar
R. Brar
H. Dhillon
P. Harrison
S. Keulen
S. Rai
M. Schutzbank
R. Sihota
R. Vanderende

Absent:

B. Favaro
W. Kim
R. Tamis

Staff Present:

M. Kischnick, Senior Planner
J. Kew, Planner
S. Meng, Legislative Services Coordinator

A. ADOPTIONS**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

It was

Moved by P. Harrison
Seconded by M. Schutzbank
That the agenda of the Agricultural and Food
Policy Committee meeting of June 11, 2024, be adopted.
Carried

2. Adoption of the Minutes – May 14, 2024

It was

Moved by Councillor Bains
Seconded by R. Brar
That:

1. The minutes of the May 14, 2024 Agricultural and Food Policy Committee meeting be amended in Section E: Integrity of the Agricultural Land from "\$8 million dollars" to "\$80 million dollars".

2. The minutes be adopted as amended.

Carried

R. Vanderende joined the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

B. DELEGATIONS**1. April Stainsby, Program Coordinator, Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust (DFWT)**

The delegation provided a presentation regarding Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust (DFWT) and the stewardship programs offered to farmers. The following information was highlighted:

- DFWT is a non-profit organization established in 1993 by farmers and conservationists who are concerned about increasing pressures on farmland and wildlife habitat. The organization worked with farmers in Delta over 30 years and are now offering their programs in Surrey. Their stewardship programs offer funding to farmers, in the form of cost-share support, to engage in practices that improve soil health and provide wildlife habitat.
- Fraser River Estuary is the largest estuary on the Pacific Coast of Canada and is an internationally significant stop-over and wintering area along the Pacific Flyway for migratory birds.
- Cost-share programs available are Winter Cover Crop, Grassland Set-Asides, Blueberry Rest, Hedgerow and Field Margin. The programs operate on a first come, first served basis and require an application process.
- On September 7, 2024 there will be an annual event called Day at the Farm hosted by DFWT to highlight conservation on farm landscapes.

In response to questions from the Committee, the following information was provided:

- Most common crops planted are spring barley and oats
- DFWT pay a set cost share rate per acre.
- Field margin program provides cluster support for planting on the edge of fields or between the field edge and the crop, perennial grasses or wildflowers.
- Last year's annual event Day at the Farm was a success with a huge attendance.
- Recommend to contact BC Assessment's farm specialist for inquiries regarding farming tax purposes.
- DFWT is building awareness more in Surrey now.
- Recommend members to apply on the DFWT website or through phone to be provided guidance on the application process.
- Blueberry Rest Program does not prevent the blueberry scorch virus.
- Snow geese is more prominent in Delta.

The Committee provided the following comments:

- Chair mentioned there has been a tremendous increase in the number of waterfowl and explains why there was a rampant increase in avian influenza.
- A committee member mentioned resident geese and ducks are more prominent within lower mainland which poses a problem.

Councillor Bains left the meeting at 6:16 p.m.

R. Sihota joined the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Councillor Bains rejoined the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

C. STAFF PRESENTATIONS

1. Development Application 7923-0268-00

Jonathan Kew, Planner

Address: 17857 and 17911 - o Avenue

The Planner summarized the report dated June 3, 2024, regarding Development Application No. 7923-0268-00 which proposes Development Variance Permit (DVP) to increase the height of a free-standing telecommunications tower from 12 metres (40 ft.) to 46 metres (150.9 ft.) and to reduce the side yard setback for a tower compound from 13.5 metres to 3.05 metres. The following information was highlighted:

- The subject property is located at civic addresses 17911 - o Avenue and 17857 - o Avenue. The lot is on the south border of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and located approximately 500m east of the Pacific Highway Port of Entry.
- The property has farm status. Two residences are located on the lot.
- The subject property applied for ALR Exclusion for development of a business park under File No. 7903-0155-00. This application was denied at the Regular Council – Land Use meeting on September 7, 2004. The property also applied for ALR Exclusion under File No. 7920-0270-00. This application did not proceed beyond initial review and has been closed.
- The tower and compound are proposed to be sited on the southwest corner of the lot, approximately 68 metres into the lot, 3 metres behind the single-family dwelling. An access path of approximately 145 metres is proposed from the established driveway and to wind around the right side of the residence.
- The antenna compound is proposed to be sited 3 metres from the west lot line. The TELUS right-of-way around the compound is 9 metres wide, 10.5 metres deep, and 94.5 square metres in area.
- The proposed compound location abuts a row of trees separating the lot from 17779 o Avenue, which is used for parking and storage of truck trailers.
- In accordance with policy No. O-62, the applicant sent out notifications to the neighbouring property owners within a distance of 138 metres (approximately three times the height of the proposed tower). One response was received, requesting more information and ultimately providing opposition based on the tower's height and location.
- The applicant supplied the applications submitted to Nav Canada and Transport Canada confirming that lighting and markings on the tower would not be required.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Planner and Cypress Land Services Ltd. representative provided the following information:

- The application has 2 municipal addresses: 17857 and 17911 – o Avenue.
- The proposed access pathway would not be paved and would be gravel.
- If included in the residential homeplate, the new telecommunications compound and pathway would be approximately 2,200 square metres in area. Under ALC Regulations, the area of an antenna compound is not considered as telecommunications falls under Federal jurisdiction.
- The antenna compound is proposed to be 94.5 square metres in area.
- The proposed tower is not located on the south east corner of the property to reduce visibility impacts on neighbouring properties. The south west corner location is proposed to be closer to commercial/industrial uses and to be buffered from o Avenue by existing vegetation and a residence.
- Historically, antennas have been co-located on BC Hydro transmission towers. The industry does not consider this feasible currently due to the difficulties of accessing and maintaining equipment on BC Hydro towers.
- Adjacent industrial/commercial properties were considered for the proposed tower. Of the appropriate lots, only the subject site expressed interest.

The Committee provided the following comments:

- A committee member expressed concerns on the height of the proposed tower.
- A committee member expressed support for the proposed layout and access pathway as it created a clear boundary between the farm and nonfarm (home plate) areas on the southwest corner of the lot.
- A committee member mentioned the subject site including the access road is approximately less than 2000 square metres of a typical farm home plate and stated if the area is enclosed, the farmland would be preserved.
- Chair and committee members stated that telecommunication towers in other municipalities have designs reflecting the local environment (i.e. towers in Sedona, Arizona, designed to look like palm trees).
- Chair stated the telecommunication towers are federally regulated and the City is limited in the comments it can provide.

It was Moved by H. Dhillon
 Seconded by R. Brar
 That the Agricultural and Food Policy
 Committee recommend that the General Manager of Planning and Development
 support Development Application 7923-0268-00.
Carried
 With S. Keulen and M. Schutzbank opposed.

The following motion was then put forward:

It was Moved by M. Schutzbank
 Seconded by S. Keulen
 That the Agricultural and Food Policy
 Committee recommends that Council advocate BC Hydro in engaging with the
 telecommunication sector to share existing infrastructure to reduce new non-farm
 development of farmland.
Carried

Another motion was then put forward:

It was

Moved by R. Brar

Seconded by P. Harrison

That the Agricultural and Food Policy

Committee recommend that the General Manager of Planning and Development ask the telecommunications sector to propose tower designs that reflect the surrounding landscape.

Carried

D. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Regional Food System Strategy Update

Senior Planner provided a brief overview of the letter regarding Regional Food System Strategy Update written by Metro Vancouver. The following information was highlighted:

- Metro Vancouver is updating their regional food strategy and is entering into their engagement phase. They will be reaching out to the city and this committee for feedback.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Senior Planner provided the following information:

- The last committee meeting there was a motion passed to direct staff to provide a scope of work regarding an update to the Surrey Agricultural Plan and to report back to this committee for discussion.

The Committee provided the following comments:

- Chair mentioned he recently attended the Seeds of Change Symposium at Surrey City Hall.
- Chair mentioned at a past council meeting, the motion to direct staff to organize a workshop including senior staff from the Provincial Ministry of Agriculture, the Agricultural Land Commission, and representatives of farm organizations in Surrey was passed. This will allow honest discussions to be had about removing road blocks and incentivizing food production within the city.

Councillor Bains left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Councillor Bains rejoined the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

E. INTEGRITY OF THE AGRICULTURAL LAND

- A committee member expressed the need for this committee to be informed on traffic changes occurring on farmland and to have an opportunity to provide input on these changes.
- Chair expressed the need for transportation issues to be vetted through this committee to prevent land locking farmland or creating accessibility issues for farmland.
- Chair expressed the need for this committee to be more proactive in bringing up issues they experience within agriculture and recommend members to reach out to him if they want to add items to future meeting agendas.
- Vice Chair expressed similar issues he faced with another committee with regards to addressing a small section of issues and encourage members to provide all their input and feedback.
- Multiple committee members expressed the importance of having more motions come from the committee to direct Council to address agricultural issues.
- Chair expressed again the need for a dedicated staff at City Hall to handle applications received by farmers.
- A committee member expressed the importance to have the committee engage in further dialogue with the Agricultural Land Commission regarding the farm road permit process.
- Chair mentioned the workshop that will be organized by staff will help remove roadblocks within agricultural land.
- Chair mentioned the committee could advocate for a grocery code of conduct to Council.

R. Brar left the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

Councillor Bains left the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

F. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agricultural and Food Policy Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, July 9, 2024 with proposed location in Meeting Room 125 A and B at Surrey Operations Centre.

G. ADJOURNMENT

The Agricultural and Food Policy Committee adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli,
City Clerk and Director Legislative Services

Councillor Bose, Chairperson

**AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD POLICY COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATION INDEX
Tuesday, June 11, 2024**

1. BC Hydro Engagement with Telecommunication Sector

That Council advocate BC Hydro in engaging with the telecommunication sector to share existing infrastructure to reduce new non-farm development of farmland.