

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING
(Committee Of The Whole)

Thursday, January 11, 2018

PRESENT: Chair Mark Parker

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

Directors Thomas Liversidge, Village of Granisle
Absent Gerry Thiessen, District of Vanderhoof

Alternate Director Linda McGuire, Village of Granisle

Staff Melany de Weerd, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Manager of Administrative Services
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer
Debbie Evans, Agriculture Coordinator
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning – left at 11:40 a.m.,
returned at 11:50 a.m., left at 12:00 p.m.
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 11:24 a.m.

AGENDA

Moved by Director Bachrach
Seconded by Director Miller

AG.2018-1-1

“That the Agriculture Committee Agenda of January 11, 2018 be adopted.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Agriculture Committee
Meeting Minutes
-November 9, 2017

Moved by Director Benedict
Seconded by Director Brien

AG.2018-1-2

“That the Minutes of the Agriculture Committee Meeting of November 9, 2017 be received.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Debbie Evans, Agriculture Coordinator provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

Seeds Planted in 2 Months – 2017!

- Nov 1 - started a brand new role in the region as the Agriculture Coordinator
- Have been establishing resources and starting to “plant the seeds”
- This is a review of the first 7 weeks prior to the holiday break
- During this time have “planted many seeds” and wanted to share the progress

Building Relationships

- Creating and strengthening relationships with Agriculture Stakeholders, producers and all levels of government
- Recognize Northern Development Initiative Trust’s (NDIT) funding partnership
 - very informative meeting with NDIT
 - gained a greater insight into NDIT and where regional agriculture projects might fit into NDIT funding opportunities
- Working with, and appreciate RDBN Grant Writer to leverage funding
- Met with Ministry of Agriculture staff
 - Smithers
 - Prince George
- As a past Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) employee very conscious of Ministry role and working together
- Met with local Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) Range Officers in Burns Lake and Vanderhoof
- FLNRORD has also added Rural Development and has formed an exciting working relationship with staff in Vanderhoof
- Re-establishing working relationships with individuals at the Investment Ag Foundation
- A former Ministry associate First Nations Agrologist currently the Agri-First Canada Project Manager who is working on a province wide project “First Nations Food Systems” funded through FN Health Authority and has 73 communities participating in the project and some within the RDBN

Meetings on Emergency Preparedness

- Working with RDBN Protective Services staff in emergency services planning
- Met with FLNRORD Range staff and MoA staff to discuss 2017 and what “learning tools” might be brought forward from the wildfire events
- Registered in Emergency Management Justice Institute courses
- Agriculture Coordinator Workplan
 - Livestock brochures
 - emergency mock situation round table session
 - RDBN Agriculture Emergency Plan
- Investigating raising the awareness of small mixed farms in their preparation for emergency events
- Utilizing guides that BC Ministry of Agriculture has produced for:
 - BC Beef Producers
 - BC Dairy Producers
 - BC Small Mixed Farms
- While travelling within the region, it has been like picking out puzzle pieces and making connections
- Meeting with producers and agriculture organizations
 - goal to learn about agriculture strengths and issues
 - Issues - sort to fit within workplan
 - logistically can not address all issues

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (CONT'D)

- Once an issue has a “fit in the work plan”
 - task to research resources
 - where can partnerships be formed
 - what/is funding available
 - what other pieces of the issue need to be tracked down to find solutions and make them actionable items.
- The view of agriculture summarized in: “It All Starts Here, Inside, Outside and Underground!”
- A view of BC Agriculture Fresh to Me, Fresh To You
 - represents how the Farmers of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako supply Fresh From BC’s Farmers.
- Agriculture Awareness and Promotion is an activity practiced wherever travelled to deliver the message of “Buying local preserves My Agriculture, My Community, My Health & My Future”

Regional Sustainable Food System Focuses on:

- Local seasonal foods
- Health of the population
- Building communities
- Local economic development
- Supporting local producers, processors, distributors & retailers
- As the Agriculture Coordinator - role is built on Regional Agriculture Sustainability
 - Environmental Health
 - Economic Vitality
 - Social Equity & Human Health
- The overlaps of these 3 themes have:
 - Food processing, distribution and marketing
 - Food production
 - Food consumption
- Regional Sustainable Food Systems focuses on:
 - Local seasonable food
 - how could the seasons be extended
 - climate change opportunities
- Health of the population
 - includes working with schools and First Nations communities
- Building Communities
 - large region
 - goal is to work with every community
- Local economic development
 - new opportunities
 - building agriculture businesses
 - agricultural support for businesses
- Supporting local producers, processors, distributors & retailers
 - strengthening agriculture
 - more local produce in retail outlets
 - Going back to: “Buying local preserves My Agriculture, My Community, My Health & My Future.”

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (CONT'D)

Farmers' Market

- Attended the Bulkley Valley Farmers' Winter Market and met some of the individuals associated with the market
- Met some of the participants of the Burns Lake Farmers' Market
- Heard successes and issues at both markets
- Would like to bring all of the region's Farmers' Markets together for a strategic planning workshop where ideas can be shared and each individual market could work as small groups to address local market strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Farmers' Markets are a great resource for communities as fresh local produce promotes healthy eating.
- Need to support and grow the regions Farmers' Markets.

Garlic Festival???

- Lots of garlic is being grown and some producers have added some value-added garlic products to their garlic marketing
- Climate change may allow soft neck garlic growing, which adds more value-added market potential
- While visiting garlic producers asked about organizing a local garlic festival
- Garlic festivals are happening throughout BC. Why not in the RDBN?
- Would like to establish a non-profit society
 - Choose a high-visibility site
 - invite regional garlic producers
 - local entertainment
 - encourage some "garlic cooking" and have a fun one-day event
 - First year would have to source funding
 - Second year Garlic Festival could be eligible for NDI's "Fabulous Festivals and Event" funding opportunity

Honey Production

- Honey production is a producer group which works on quite an individual basis
- One issue commonly expressed by producers was the sourcing of queen bees
 - One solution - importing queen bees from other countries
- By Law in BC, Beekeeping is regulated under the Animal Health Act
- Role of RDBN Agriculture Coordinator:
 - Apprised a few non-registered apiarists who to contact to complete registration
 - Not policing
 - Concerned about the health of the bee industry and protection of the bee colonies within the region.

Haskap Berries

- An emerging agriculture product - Haskap Berries
- At least 3 growers in the region and a potential distillery to make such products as Haskap Liqueurs
- To sustain a distillery will mean more berry production
- One issue is the supply of root stock
- The industry is growing in BC and the region is part of the growth
- Working with FLNRORD currently planning a Distillery and Brewing Workshop
 - When date established will promote within the region.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (CONT'D)

Craft Brewery Expansion

- Definite interest in craft brewery expansion, distillery and possibly a grain malting plant
- One of the speakers at Distillery & Brewing Workshop will be from the Gambrinus Malting Plant in Armstrong
- Have the potential to increase grain production and malt a variety, for example Honey Malt for local brewery industry or possible exportation
- With a malting plant, they do have grain beds that do not always meet quality standards and this grain is accessible for livestock feed

Ideas

- Have received calls and ideas to research
 - Current idea is Laying Hens and establishing an egg grader to support “Local produce”
 - These hens are pasture fed but potential flock would be housed birds
 - BC Egg Marketing Board and quota allocation are one of the issues being researched
 - How to achieve quota allocation in the RDBN and permission to run an egg grading facility
- This is an actionable item - working on finding some solutions and growing an industry

Exciting News for March!

- The Beef Industry within the Regional District is the largest producer group
 - Building relationships with Regional Cattlemen and BC Cattlemen’s Association
 - Attending Cattlemen’s AGM in Jan & Feb, 2018
- Have been in contact with the General Manager of the BC Cattlemen’s Association
- Spoke in regard to two issues:
 - 1) BC Livestock Premise ID’s
 - a) How it assisted in the 2017 Wildfires
 - b) How there is a need to promote them in the region
 - 2) Proposed Prince George Beef Cattle processing plant
- Proposed Beef Strategy Workshop
 - General Manager of BC Cattlemen’s Association plans to be in attendance to announce exciting news for the BC Beef Industry
 - RDBN cattle producers will get an early preview and strategize how they can take advantage of the opportunity
- A past presentation from the Shavings Committee to the RDBN Agriculture Committee identified the issue of a lack of shavings provincially and is a growing issue in the livestock industries
 - Insufficient bedding, wet and muddy conditions not only affect animal health and feed efficiency but the excess tag, (manure and dirt clinging to the hide) can be an issue at the slaughter plants
 - The Nechako Valley Cattlemen’s Association has a 3-year contract with PAC-BIO, which will be ending in August 2018
 - Bio-generator plants & wood pellet mills are reducing shavings available, increasing the cost and producers are running with a minimal amount
 - An option to address the lack of shavings has been to shift calving times to later in the spring
 - Having kiln-dried shavings is not only important for beef in corral bedding packs and calving areas but also for dairy, swine, horse, poultry and other livestock
- This is an issue identified in the job application process
- Recognize and familiar with the issue, now finding the resources to find a solution!

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (CONT'D)

Potential New Business!

- Livestock Wood Shaving Mill
 - Source a drying Kiln
 - Requires storage for dried shavings
 - Loading and trucking facility
- FLNRORD, NDIT and RDBN Agriculture Coordinator piecing together the resources to find a solution
 - Couple of potential business owners in discussion with NDIT.
- Current Nechako Valley Cattlemen's Association shaving contract is 1,000 loads per year at 7.6 tonnes per load
- New opportunities in beef industry could mean beef backgrounding and increasing feedlots which could push the beef shaving usage in the region to potentially over 150,000 tonnes per year
- Short-term solution is getting a Livestock Shaving Business running at this minimal capacity
- Long-term is sourcing the fibre and possibly increasing agro-forestry agriculture

Freight Farms

- Lots of enthusiasm for the role of Agriculture Coordinator and have discovered a huge potential for the Region
- Introducing Freight Farms!
 - Farming in a shipping container
 - 365 days/year
 - Over 1 acre of growth achieved in one container
 - Growing leafy greens, lettuces, kale, swiss chard, etc. or herbs and many other unit tested products in a vertical, hydroponic system
 - The containers originate in Boston, Massachusetts, United States
 - Ready to arrive on site, hook up water and electricity
 - Unit takes 5-10 gallons of water per day
 - Uses 125 kWh of electricity per day
 - Single-phase power
 - Many units have been converted to run on solar energy
 - Freight Farms has units throughout the United States, Caribbean, Europe, Vietnam, the United Arab Emirates and Canada
 - Units have run successfully in temperatures from -51 °C to +54 °C
 - Unit is heated with LED lights and are divided into two zones
 - Planting and seeding zone
 - Vertical Growing zone.
 - Each unit can house 4,000 plants and can be harvested 52 weeks/year
 - Unit is computer controlled and with their computer program "FarmHand" you are in contact with your unit wherever you go
 - Freight Farm offers a 2-day farming course and work closely with Freight Farmers for the success of their Freight Farm business
 - Each Freight Farm is 40' x 9' x 8'. The unit cost and delivery to RDBN with Freight Farm computer and training is approximately \$100,000 US
 - Business models show a unit could potentially pay for itself in 2 years
 - WHAT COULD BE THE POTENTIALS HERE?
- This is where partnerships are starting to see results.
- FLNRORD has developed a non-profit funding model and are presenting to NDIT
- One non-profit group looking at this currently
- Have started a promotions list that included First Nations Communities, and School Districts. (For example, SD #91 Nechako Lakes is working on a marketing project and FLNRORD and RDBN Ag Coordinator are planning a meeting to show a Freight Farm Business model)
- Stated to CAO "Challenged to work on having at least 10 units in the RDBN within 6 months"

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (CONT'D)

Seeds are Growing! Where will they grow in 2018?

- Many other puzzle pieces to find and make the connections
- This position has so far been a fantastic opportunity searching for puzzle pieces, creating the connections with resources and working on the successful completion of actionable items
- Over the past two months “Seeds are starting to grow”
- “Puzzle pieces” are connecting and “seeds are planted” and those still to “plant” just leave the question
 - *Where will they grow in 2018!*

Director Fisher mentioned the importance of identifying and being aware of the needs and drivers of regional agriculture communities and the RDBN responding to support community needs.

Director Beach spoke of connecting with the Burns Lake Community Garden in regard to the possibility of a Freight Farm. Alternate Director McGuire also noted that the Village of Granisle may be interested. Discussion took place in regard to small scale container farming products currently available. Ms. Evans spoke of opportunities in connecting with the Farmers’ Market in Burns Lake.

Director Fisher commented that developing emergency management workshops throughout the region and combining them in conjunction with fire smart initiatives. Ms. Evans noted that staff are developing a plan for moving forward within the communities and noted that she will be working with commercial and small mixed farms to prepare for emergency events. Chair Miller mentioned that there are potential funding opportunities identified by the Union of B.C. Municipalities for education in regard to emergency management.

Discussion took place in regard to establishing an egg grader to support local producers. Director Fisher spoke of Day Break Farms an established egg producer in Terrace. Ms. Evans noted that the intent is to support smaller operations in getting their eggs to local markets. She has had a request from a local producer requesting information in regard to moving forward with egg production.

PowerPoint Presentation
-Agriculture Coordinator
Update

Moved by Alternate Director McGuire
Seconded by Director Greenaway

AG.2018-1-3

“That the Agriculture Committee receive the Agriculture Coordinator’s PowerPoint Presentation.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS

Canada’s Agriculture Day

Discussion took place in regard to the following ideas for promoting Canada’s Agriculture Day in the region:

- Utilizing the RDBN website for local regional agriculture initiatives
- Encourage supporting/eating local produce
- Education in regard to “where our food comes from”
 - Did you know “what buying local” means and the impact to the community
- Focus on agriculture and connection to the land and peoples food that is consumed

REPORTS (CONT'D)

- Be proactive and host community lunches with local produce
 - Alternate Director McGuire encouraged the 3 E's
 - Educate, Encourage, Engage
 - Supporting an additional agriculture day in the region in early May when local communities are planting their gardens to promote the growing season in the region

Director Repen spoke of grow agriculture capacity in the Regional District. Chair Parker identified the importance and need to support local production and then look at investigating and moving forward with expanding production beyond local markets. Director Miller spoke of developing the ability to store and process food in the region. He noted the need to educate people in regard to the land base supporting the food supply chain for the populace in the region, province, national and internationally.

Director Bachrach questioned if there has been research conducted in regard to how large the local market currently is, how large the local food production to the local market is and where there is room to grow to outstretch demand. Ms. Evans noted that the local seasonal product is well supported but without local storage facilities, residents rely on imported produce during non-growing months. She commented that the large beef industry in the region does have a substantial amount being exported. Ms. Evans spoke noted that depending on the product there are different levels locally consumed and exported.

Canada's Agriculture Day
Tuesday, February 13, 2018

Moved by Director Beach
Seconded by Director Greenaway

AG.2018-1-4

"That the Agriculture Committee receive the Agriculture Coordinator's January 2, 2018 memo titled "Canada's Agriculture Day, Tuesday, February 13, 2018."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Fraser Lake Biomass Ash
Project

Moved by Director Miller
Seconded by Director Lindstrom

AG.2018-1-5

"That the Agriculture Committee recommend that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors write a letter of support for the Fraser Lake Biomass Ash Project's application to the Rural Dividend Application."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Director Miller spoke of the opportunity provided to the region from the Fraser Lake Biomass Ash Project.

REPORTS (CONT'D)

Invitation to FPInnovations
to Attend a Future RDBN
Board Meeting

Moved by Director Fisher
Seconded by Miller

AG.2018-1-6

“That the Agriculture Committee recommend that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors write a letter to FPInnovations BC Provincial Leader inviting them to attend a future Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board meeting to provide an update in regard to the Fraser Lake Biomass Ash Project.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Regional Beef Producers
Strategic Planning Workshop
-March 2, 2018

Moved by Alternate Director McGuire
Seconded by Director Newell

AG.2018-1-7

“That the Agriculture Committee recommend that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors direct staff to proceed with planning the Regional Beef Producers Strategic Planning Workshop March 2, 2018; and further, that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors authorize applying for grant opportunities to contribute funding toward the cost of this event.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Agriculture More Than Ever

Moved by Director Miller
Seconded by Director MacDougall

AG.2018-1-8

“That the Agriculture Committee recommend that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors direct staff to proceed with registering the RDBN as a Partner with Agriculture More Than Ever.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Climate Change Regional
Adaptation Program

Moved by Alternate Director McGuire
Seconded by Director Beach

AG.2018-1-9

“That the Agriculture Committee recommend that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors direct staff to prepare an RDBN Expression of Interest for the Climate Change Regional Adaptation Program for the April 1, 2018 funding intake for Canadian Agricultural Partnership program funding.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Chair Miller spoke of a report that the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC) received in the past in regard to Climate Change Regional Adaptation which contained a good analysis and good modeling for the region. Chair Miller also identified the impact of weeds to the agriculture community.

Ms. Evans commented that if the RDBN is successful with its application the time line for forming a committee will be fall/winter 2018.

REPORTS (CONT'D)

**BC Ministry of Agriculture
-Agricultural Advisory
Committee Workshops**

Moved by Director Fisher
Seconded by Director Miller

AG.2018-1-10

“That the Agriculture Committee recommend that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors authorize registering for the BC Ministry of Agriculture Agricultural Advisory Committee Kelowna Workshop; and further, that, staff proceed with booking flights and hotels for the Chair and Agriculture Coordinator.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**Agriculture Report &
Correspondence**

Moved by Director MacDougall
Seconded by Director Beach

AG.2018-1-11

“That the Agriculture Committee receive the following:
-Agriculture Coordinator’s January 2, 2018 memo titled
“Columbia Basin Agriculture Forum;”

CORRESPONDENCE

-the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development re: Zero-Energy Hydraulic Ram Pump for Off-Grid Irrigation;
-Northern Development Initiative Trust – 2017 Q4 Newsletter.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place in regard to the very interesting research from FLNRORD in regard to Zero-Energy Hydraulic Ram Pump for Off-Grid Irrigation.

**SPECIAL IN CAMERA
MEETING MOTION**

Moved by Director McGuire
Seconded by Director Miller

AG.2018-1-12

“In accordance with Section 90 of the *Community Charter*, it is the opinion of the Board of Directors that matters pertaining to Section 90 (1)(a), personal information about an identifiable individual who is being considered for a position as an officer, employee or agent of the municipality or another position appointed by the municipality (Solid Waste Management Plan Advisory Committee), may be closed to the public therefore exercise their option of excluding the public for this meeting.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director MacDougall
Seconded by Director Petersen

AG.2018-1-13

“That the meeting be adjourned at 12:18 pm.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY