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## **MINUTES OF A MEETING**

Regional Food and Agriculture Task Force

Tuesday February 28, 2017

1:00 PM –4:00 PM

Room 488 – Capital Regional District 625 Fisgard St., Victoria, BC

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### **ATTENDEES:**

Bernadette Greene

Bob Maxwell

Bruce Greig

Derek Masselink

Director Finall

Fiona Deveraux

Gerard Leblanc

Jane Evans

Linda Geggie

Rob Buchan

Robin Tunnicliffe

Rudi Wallace

Virginie Lavallee-Picard

CRD STAFF: Signe Bagh, Jeff Weightman, Sue Hallatt, Brent Reems, Lyn Coles

REGRETS: Terry Michell

### **PRE-MEETING PREPARATION**

Participants received the following documents in a binder at the meeting:

- Meeting Agenda
- Task Force Terms of Reference
- Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy (RFAS)
- Saanich Land Bank Referral
- Land Use Inventory Grant Application

### **FACILITATION**

The meeting was facilitated by Jeff Weightman, who called it to order at 1:00 pm.

## 1.0 WELCOME

CRD staff Jeff Weightman and Signe Bagh welcomed participants and Director Finall provided some opening comments.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTIONS

All present introduced themselves. Jeff commented that Rudi and Gerard were alternates and cannot vote until they are appointed to the Task Force; Jeff and Signe are staff liaisons and not Committee members and are therefore also not eligible to vote.

## 3.0 ADMINISTRATION

Brent Reems, Senior Manager Legislative & Information Services, provided an explanation of the connection between the Task Force and CRD.

The Task Force is an advisory body which may provide advice, bring forth news and make motions to pass resolutions to recommend to the standing/planning committee to the Board.

Brent also addressed the following areas: FOI, conflict of interest, and communications with the media.

**1:25 pm** - Brent left the meeting.

Jeff reviewed the agenda and meeting objectives:

The agenda was accepted with a revision to move 3 c) Nominations for Task Force Chair, to later in the meeting.

## 4.0 OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE STRATEGY (RFAS)

Using a Power Point presentation, Derek explained the Food and Agriculture Strategy. This was followed with an overview by Jeff, commenting that Food and Climate were the top topics of interest in early RGS discussions and that led to the initiation of a Food and Agriculture Sub-Strategy.

A table-top discussion activity featuring 5 small breakout groups was held. Participants were asked to discuss the recommendations, identify when they thought each should be acted upon, and report back to the group.

Recommendation #1. Support regional cross-sector relationships, including a Food and Agriculture Task Force.

Priority 2017

Recommendation #2. Improve the CRD's capacity to address regional food and agriculture issues.

Priority 2017.

- limited to census data collection now
- start benchmarking; value will be immediate in 2017
- IAF grant for ALUI will be helpful in setting benchmarking base

Priority 2018.

- Additional funding would be needed if an agrologist is to be hired (would need to be approved at annual budget considerations . . . would require building a compelling case). Should include consideration of following:
  - What staff now have roles?
  - What is staff knowledge?
  - What is missing?
  - What can be prioritized? Status, opportunities, actions
  - How can CRD staff be educated as to the impact their roles can have on agriculture?
  - How can the CRD work with allies and other experts?
  - Can CRD hire an experienced agrologist or instead use volunteers, seek funding, etc

Recommendation #3. Support regional organic matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture.

Priority 2018

- Part of broader conversation that is needed
- Invite someone in in 2017 to get more information on how task force can facilitate

Recommendation #4. Address chronic drainage issues across the region.

Priority 2018

- More background information is needed to understand connections between drainage and irrigation

Recommendation #5. Continue to consider approaches to effectively address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues.

Ongoing

- Invite staff to provide information on program details

Recommendation #6. Maintain cost of and improve access to irrigation water for food and agricultural operations.

Priority 2018 (unless raised earlier by Integrated Water Services)

- Indigenous want better water rate; bring rate and access issues to Board all at once
- Surface water, ground water, wells, integration is important
- Concern with delay; what is Island tipping point of water availability? Ben Parfit, a water expert at UVIC could be consulted

Recommendation #7. Encourage a place-based regional food culture by building relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.

Priority 2017

- As per initiatives undertaken by CRD Aboriginal Initiatives Division

Recommendation #8. Support Aboriginal food and agriculture-related activities, projects and events.

Priority 2017

- Foster greater cross-pollination between FAS and CRD Aboriginal Initiatives Division
- Prepare for any 2018 budget submissions (First Nations operated abattoir?)

Recommendation #9. Support the establishment of a regional food and farmland trust.

Priority 2017

- Build on the energy and leadership that has emerged
- North Saanich and Central Saanich have prioritized this

Recommendation #10. Support regional economic development strategies for food and agriculture.

Priority 2018

- Need to first build relationships

With respect to prioritization of all ten recommendations, it was suggested that the Task Force also take into consideration level of passion/capacity of the group, how the items connect to each other and the level of impact. Task Force members indicated a desire to achieve a lot and that an approach might be to start on as many projects as possible so that if any run into roadblocks, progress will still be made. The possibility of setting up subgroups to work on individual recommendations was discussed.

**ACTION 1:**

**Task Force members to identify to Jeff (by marking up their worksheets) if there are particular recommendations that they have a burning desire to work on. This can be indicated by placing names next to the identified actions. Jeff to report back at the next meeting on the results of this invitation.**

**2:30 pm** - Rob Buchan left the meeting.

**3:15 pm** - Director Finall left the meeting.

**5.0 DISCUSSION re: RECOMMENDATIONS TO PLANNING AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

a) RFAS Implementation

- Virginie shared information on a contractor's donation to the City of Victoria of 150 fruit trees for Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Victoria anticipates that there will be more trees than can be planted in the public realm within Victoria. Participants discussed distribution: community gardens, schools, neighborhood communities.
- Contractor would like to know plans by end of April
- Jeff suggested that Task Force members speak to their contacts and let Virginie know if they are aware of opportunities for planting trees in public spaces.
- Sue suggested this is an opportunity to raise the Task Force profile:
  - send the information out to our networks
  - Corporate Communications can do thank you's
  - further discussion/planning to take place

**Action 2:**

**Task Force members to speak to their contacts and advise Virginie of interest in donated Canada 150 trees**

**Action 3:**

**Jeff to coordinate with Virginie and CRD Corporate Communications re: profiling of donation and involvement of FAS Task Force**

b) Regional ALUI/AWDM

Jeff reported that the CRD in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture has an opportunity to apply for an Investment Agriculture Foundation grant to collect regional

food and agriculture data consistent with the recommendations of the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy.

Jeff suggested wording for a motion from the Task Force to support the grant application.

Sue Hallatt made a motion to appoint Bob Maxwell as interim Chair to facilitate a vote on the motion. Motion approved.

The following motion was passed with all in favour: “ That Bob Maxwell be appointed as the interim chair of the task force until a new chair is appointed “

**Action 4:**

**Jeff to advance report to the Planning and Protective Services Committee recommending support of the IAF grant and to apply for the grant if approved by the Board.**

c) Land Bank

Jeff advised there was a Board motion directing correspondence referral received from the District of Saanich be referred to the Regional Food and Agricultural Task Force requesting a progress report from the Planning and Protective Services Committee by April 2017.

Bob Maxwell made a motion that there is a role for the CRD role in regional land bank or farmland trust process and that the task force would like more time to provide recommendations on specific details.

The motion was passed with all in favour.

The Task Force indicated a desire to continue to be involved in discussions relating to this topic.

**Action 5:**

**Jeff to prepare a report to the Planning and Protective Services Committee to advise of the Task Force motion.**

**6. 0 SELECTION OF TASK FORCE CHAIR**

Sue Hallatt made a motion to nominate Virginie Lavallee-Picard to Task Force Chair for a three month position. She accepted nomination and was acclaimed.

**Action 6:**

**Virginie and Jeff to coordinate on the agenda for the April meeting and to include on that agenda the election of a Task Force Vice Chair.**

#### **NEXT STEPS**

Jeff and Signe thanked all attendees for their participation and input.

Next meeting to be scheduled for the first week of April after canvassing members through a doodle poll.

#### **4:00 PM ADJOURNMENT**