Central Saanich Fire Hall
1512 Keating Cross Road, Saanichton
Minutes of the Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission
Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT:	Chair	R. Tunnicliffe
		L. Geggie
		J. Michell
		T. Michell
		L. Sluggett (Zoom)
		K. Underwood
		D. Williamson
ABSENT:		
ATTENDING:	CRD Representative	N. Brotman
	Council Liaison, District of Saanich	Z. de Vries (Zoom)
	Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, District of North Saanich	R. Dumas

1 CALL TO ORDER

a) The Chair, R. Tunnicliffe called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

2 FIRST NATIONS TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

a) The chair acknowledged with respect the indigenous lands on which we do our work.

3 INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

a) The following late items were presented to the Commission:
Add as:

- **Item No. 6(a) – REPORTS**
  - Chair's Report - Verbal Update, R. Tunnicliffe
- **Item No. 6(b) – REPORTS**
  - Treasurer's Report – Verbal Update, J. Michell
- **Item No. 6(c) – REPORTS**
  - Council Liaison Report – Verbal Update, Z. de Vries
- **Item No. 6(i) – REPORTS**
  - Geese – Verbal Update, R. Tunnicliffe
- **Item No. 7(d) –MOTIONS AND NEW BUSINESS**
  - ALR Exclusion

4 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

a) The February 13, 2025 Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission agenda was approved with the inclusion of 5 late items and renumbered accordingly.

5 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

a) Draft minutes of the Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission meeting held Thursday January 9, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

The draft minutes of the Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission meeting held Thursday, January 9, 2025, were adopted as circulated.
The Commission noted that the November minutes still need to be adopted. It was also noted that section Agricultural Issues (b) shall be amended by striking "$800" and put on the March agenda for adoption.

6 REPORTS

a) Chair's Report

The Chair, R. Tunnicliffe gave an update that addressed the following:

- Transition from District of Saanich to District of North Saanich has gone smoothly
- Buy Canadian fervour being fueled by our USA neighbours. People seem to be misled regarding what Canadian products are and it could be a great window for education and promotion of our grown in the CRD products
- California Organic Growers conference was a success. Received the following information:
    - Shift in institutionalizing the health and social justice services from farmers
    - 5 programs similar to our Low Income Nutrition Coupons that were being distributed at markets such as WIC, SNAP, Beet Bucks and Veggie RX
    - Traditional Food Stamps can be redeemed at the market by electronic transfer
    - Attended a meeting for herbal medicine growers which is a huge emerging market for CRD farmers. Farmers are being asked to grow more herbs as there is a decline due to over harvesting, climate change and no interest in the younger generation to take over. Huge opportunity for growers in a Mediterranean climate like ours to grow more in demand herbs such as Mint, Chamomile, Calendula, Angelica, Valerian and Hyssop.

b) Treasurer's Report

The treasurer reported that the accounts are in good standing and funds will be transferred from District of Saanich to District of North Saanich in the near future.

c) Council Liaison Report

Z. de Vries updated the Commission that the CRD passed the Foodland Access Service by a significant majority vote and work will be going ahead on that service rolling out.

d) Toxic Compost

- Verbal Update - R. Tunnicliffe

R. Tunnicliffe gave a brief update regarding toxic compost stating that A. Shaw, acting representative from the Ministry of Agriculture says there are more than one category of compost and some "soil conditioners" are not held to any standard. Growers must be aware, build their networks with other growers and share experiences and best practices.

e) Lifetime Tax Exemption for Farmers

- Verbal discussion - R. Tunnicliffe

R. Tunnicliffe spoke about the Lifetime Tax Exemption for Farmers stating that a family member of hers who is a CPA and high level tax advisor made the argument that this could be an effective instrument for promoting decisive farm succession and that the tax can be completely avoided if the farmer gets their succession plan finalized. Farm families can be motivated by getting their plans in place before the farmer passes away or retires.

f) South Island Farmers Institute

- Verbal Update - K. Underwood

S. Macdonald provided an update regarding the South Island Farmers Institute including the following:

- Brief overview of the current membership
- Met with Minister Popham and BCMAF on January 14, 2025 to discuss:
  - Challenges and solutions to the antiquated Farmers and Womens' Institute Act and operating in a modern regulatory world
  - Access to land and competing land use
  - Regional bylaw
  - Barriers to labour
  - Unsupportive grant funding cycles
  - ALC constraints for homes for tenant farmers (not farm workers)
  - Raising the Farm Status sales threshold to $10,000
  - constraints of lifetime capital gains policies for retiring farmers wanting to lease to farmers
  - Supporting the CRD goose program
- During discussions of provincial and island concern, we learned that regionally, we have very different contexts and that District A cannot speak with one message on most issues
- Sustainer Series meetings occur during the first Wednesday of the shoulder season and winter months, 7:00 p.m. at the Saanich Fairgrounds, Poplar Room. The Sustainer Series features and celebrates long term farmers on the South Island. This event series showcases the history, successes and challenges of sustaining farms and farmers in the South Vancouver Island region and addresses topics of regional concern
- Farmer to Farmer Week was a huge success
- The AGM was held on January 23, 2025

g) Terms of Reference review for the Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission for membership input

- Verbal update - R. Dumas, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, District of North Saanich

R. Dumas, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer at the District of North Saanich gave a brief overview regarding the Terms of Reference update and all attached documents. She noted the document that was done by all four Corporate Officers is in alignment with other Committees and Commissions and the format is the same as other North Saanich Committees for consistency. R. Dumas went through each section of the Terms of Reference, answered any questions that arose and noted any changes. An updated copy of the Terms of Reference will be put on the next agenda for review and finalization.

The commission tabled this item.

R. Dumas recommended the Commission members take some time to review certain sections of the draft Terms of Reference for the next meeting.

h) CRD Foodland Access Program

N. Brotman, CRD representative, provided an update regarding the CRD Foodland Access Program which included the following:

- Celebration of the motion being passed to go ahead with the program
- Gave background to the service which will initially focus on:
  - Reactivating an underused portion of Bear Hill Regional Park for a five-year agriculture pilot project that will host farmers to start or expand their farming operations
  - Providing grant funding to support farmers who participate in the B.C. Land Matching Program, pairing private landowners with aspiring farmers for long-term land leases

- What his next tasks are over coming months to get the program going such as work planning for the hill site and receiving feedback from the farming and food communities
- How the Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission will have a great impact on providing advice to the municipalities on matters of agriculture and what programs foodlands should run next

The Commission resumed discussion on item 6(g) Terms of Reference review for the Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission for membership input.

i) Geese

- Verbal Update - R. Tunnicliffe

R. Tunnicliffe read a letter from S. Hammond???, Goose Management Coordinator at the Capital Regional District on an update regarding the Goose Management Service which stated:

- They have been able to secure enough funds to complete two harvests in the summer of 2025. They are now waiting for a final budget from GOOSE so that they can proceed with negotiating a contract with them to perform the First Nations led harvests this year. They should have a full update on the status of this for the next PAAC meeting
- As Spring approaches, they are now in the process of collecting land authorization forms for the upcoming egg addling season. They will be hiring a full-time auxiliary staff member to assist with the addling program from March to May
- The Goose Watch survey tool is now live. The data is being used to track the seasonal movements and patterns of Canada geese to better plan their management decisions

7 MOTIONS AND NEW BUSINESS

a) Resolution from District of Metchosin Council to AVICC regarding non-migratory resident Canada Geese

- Verbal discussion - R. Tunnicliffe

January 20, 2025, the District of Metchosin Council resolved to send the following resolution to the 2025 AVICC Annual General Meeting:

"Whereas the current population of non-migratory, resident Canada geese (branta canadensis moffitti) are not native to this area and are increasing in numbers each year to an estimated 9,000 to 11,000 according to recent bird counts;

And Whereas non-migratory, resident Canada geese are an ongoing destructive element to agriculture through the disruption of growing fields, the consumption of crops, and the risks posed by avian influenza and E. coli contamination, presenting risks to food security and the broader environment;

Therefore, be it resolved that AVICC and UBCM work with provincial agencies such as the Ministry of Environment in concert with Canada Wildlife Services to undertake effective action to protect agriculture and the environment including establishing a goose cull program to deal with non-migratory resident Canada geese populations."

The Commission read over the resolution from District of Metchosin Council to AVICC regarding non-migratory resident Canada Geese for information.

b) UBCM Farm Tours

R. Tunnicliffe stated that there has been no response from UBCM regarding the farm tours at this time.

c) Farmer's Market Nutrition Coupon Project

The Commission members noted that at this time there is no update on the Farmer's Market Nutrition Coupon Project and that they would like to draft a letter of support.

d) ALR Exclusion

The Commission discussed the approval the Agricultural Land Commission made regarding the subdivision of 1 acre from a 20 acre ALR parcel at 7210 Wallace Drive for the purpose of a walking trail. The Commission decided to defer the item to the March agenda and request that a Central Saanich planner attend to speak on the item and on why it was not originally referred to the PAAC Commission for comment before approval.

e) Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission Schedule for 2025

R. Dumas noted that the recording secretary E. Warner will draft a schedule for 2025 based on the Terms of Reference and circulate it to the members after the meeting.

8 ADJOURNMENT

a) The meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

CERTIFIED CORRECT

Rachel Dumas
Corporate Officer

APPROVED AND CONFIRMED

R. Tunnicliffe
Chair