

Minutes
Agricultural Advisory Select Committee Meeting
April 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.
Metchosin Council Chamber
Council Chamber
Metchosin Municipal Hall

Present: Robin Tunnicliffe (Chair), Matt Ashton (Minutes Recorder), Shelly Donaldson (C. Liaison), Andrew Penn, Alex Fletcher, Brent Donaldson, Peter Chettleburgh, Sasha Tunnicliffe

Regrets: Candice LeCompte

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda

- **Addition:** Robin will forward to AASC members a plan submitted by a member of the public regarding concerns and feedback on the Agricultural Plan.
- **Motion to Approve Agenda:** Moved by Matt, seconded by Andrew. **Carried.**

3. Presentations

None.

4. Public Participation

None.

5. Adoption of Minutes

a) February 26, 2025, AASC Meeting:

- **Motion to Approve Minutes:** Moved by Brent, seconded by Peter. **Carried.**

6. Receipt of Minutes

b) March 10, 2025 Committee of the Whole Meeting:

The March 10, 2025 minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting were received for information.

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

a) Farm Solidarity Fund Update

Alex Fletcher reported no significant developments since the last meeting and has not received updates from Heather Ramsay (of Umi Nami Farm). Sea Bluff Farm has yet to receive compensation through this program. Robin emphasized the value of the initiative and suggested writing to the Minister of Agriculture to highlight existing barriers, particularly regarding the Nutrition Coupon Program's limitations, which currently require distribution through farmers' markets. Brent proposed that the upcoming Metchosin Community Garden and its gardening programs could serve as a collaborative avenue to provide local produce and mentorship to local communities in need.

b) Metchosin Grown – Matt Ashton Report

Matt clarified the distinction between the Metchosin Grown brand and the Metchosin Grown Society. The Society was established to formalize the organization with insurance coverage, financial records,

and a municipal lease agreement for property use. Its mandate is to encourage residents to learn about and grow food, and to encourage future farmers, in accordance with its constitution. A discussion followed on managing the Metchosin Grown brand, with consensus that these responsibilities would be best overseen by a Coordinator under the District's Agricultural Plan. Appointing such a position would support all growers as outlined in the Plan. The Society's latest update included tours of two community gardens.

c) Destination Victoria – Engaging Metchosin Farmers

Destination Victoria is exploring the inclusion of Metchosin in the "Flavour Trail" brand. Although organizers have not yet engaged with Metchosin farmers, collaboration is essential to ensure mutual benefit and respect for the copyrighted brand. Andrew cited Ireland's "Wild Atlantic Way" as an example of successful agritourism branding. An upcoming agritourism collective roundtable will provide farmers with information on opportunities to add value through agritourism ventures, aligning with the interests of both the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Tourism.

d) Firearms and Farming

Matt shared his experience using firearms in farming and expressed concerns about the evolution of firearms regulations over the past eight years. He provided examples illustrating how current regulations can be complex and challenging for those with practical firearms knowledge. Matt extended an invitation to the AASC for an educational session at the Victoria Fish & Game Protective Association. The session aims to familiarize directors with various firearm types, their practical uses, and the current regulatory landscape. The purpose is to inform and educate, not to influence personal opinions on firearms regulations, but to foster well-informed, fact-based perspectives that could contribute to more effective and reasonable future policies.

8. Reports

a) Councillor Liaison Update – AVICC Update

Councillor Shelly Donaldson reported that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) recently held its annual convention in Nanaimo. The "goose resolution" presented by Shelly was endorsed and will be forwarded to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), marking a significant achievement for the AASC. A proposal concerning feral rabbit management was also endorsed. However, a province-wide fireworks ban proposal did not pass; nonetheless, local politicians are continuing to bring the issue forward to the UBCM.

9. Correspondence

None.

10. Other Business

a) Metchosin Biodiversity and Natural Assets Plan

Councillor Steve Gray shared the draft plan with the AASC. Members are to review the document and compile feedback and recommendations by the next meeting. Feedback should be sent to Robin, who will consolidate the responses for discussion before submission to MEASC.

b) Metchosin Agricultural Area Plan

i. 2025 Priorities and Implementation

Refer to pages 21-23 for ongoing and short-term actions (1-2 years).

ii. Agricultural Plan Coordinator

Recommendation to Council:

- Moved and Seconded by Brent and Peter that the AASC recommends the \$5,000 in funding from the Metchosin Foundation be allocated toward hiring a contract coordinator to support the implementation of the Metchosin Agricultural Area Plan;
And That Council allocates additional funding from the 2025 Financial Plan toward hiring a contract coordinator.

Carried

Alex will attend the upcoming Council meeting to address the motion.

iii. Grant Opportunities

No discussion.

11. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: Moved by Alex, seconded by Sasha. **Carried.**

Meeting Adjourned at 9:20 PM.