

Agricultural Advisory Committee

Report

2nd Meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee
March 21, 2018
Committee Room #3

Attendance PRESENT: S. Franke (Chair), H. Fletcher, A. Lawrence, M. McAlpine, L. McKenna and S. Twynstra and J. Bunn (Secretary)

ALSO PRESENT: L. Mottram

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Call to Order

1.1 Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest

That it BE NOTED that no pecuniary interests were disclosed.

2. Scheduled Items

None.

3. Consent

3.1 1st Report of the Agricultural Advisory Committee

That the 1st Report of the Agricultural Advisory Committee, from its meeting held on January 17, 2018, BE RECEIVED.

3.2 Advisory Committee on the Environment Reports

That the 3rd and 4th Reports of the Advisory Committee on the Environment, from its meetings held on February 7, 2018 and March 7, 2018, respectively, BE RECEIVED.

3.3 Highway 401 and Highway 4 (Colonel Talbot Road) Interchange Improvements and Highway 4 and Glanworth Drive Underpass Replacements – Public Information Centre 3 Display Material Package - Dillon Consulting

That the communication dated February 13, 2018, from J. Matthews, Dillon Consulting Limited, with respect to the Public Information Centre 3 display material package related to the Highway 401 and Highway 4 (Colonel Talbot Road) interchange improvements and Highway 4 and Glanworth Drive underpass replacements, BE RECEIVED.

3.4 Municipal Council Resolution - 1st Report of the Agricultural Advisory Committee

That the Municipal Council resolution from its meeting held on January 30, 2018, with respect to the 1st Report of the Agricultural Advisory Committee, BE RECEIVED.

4. Sub-Committees and Working Groups

None.

5. Items for Discussion

5.1 The Bees Act – Draft Letter

That the revised attached letter to The Honourable Jeff Leal, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, with respect to a request for information related to when Ontarians can expect consultation opportunities related to the Bees Act, as outlined in the Ontario Pollinator Health Action Plan, BE APPROVED by Municipal Council; it being noted that the letter will also be forwarded to the Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE) for a decision on whether the ACE will co-sign the letter.

6. Deferred Matters/Additional Business

None.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 PM.

**To: Hon. Jeff Leal
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
11th Flr, 77 Grenville St
Toronto, ON M7A 1B3**

As representatives of Agricultural Advisory Committee to the City of London, we recommend the London City Council urge the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture to let Ontarians know when they can expect consultation opportunities related to The Bees Act, as outlined in the PHAP, as soon as possible.

Pollinators are in decline across North America (Kerr, 2015; Packer, 2011) and many parts of the world, to an extent that the UN Food and Agriculture organization has identified this as a major threat to global food security (FAO 2016). Bees are the most important pollinators in many parts of the world, and the decline of both domesticated and wild bee populations has begun to have very damaging impacts on agriculture on a world scale, and could lead to potentially catastrophic disruptions in ecosystem function (Steffan-Dewenter and Potts, 2005; Packer 2011), with risks greatly amplified by climate change. Agriculture is one the main economic activities within the municipalities surrounding the city of London. Urban agriculture is also a growing practice within the city. For these reasons, we are very concerned with the plight of both domesticated (honey) and wild bees.

There is growing evidence that urban beekeeping is excellent for bees: cities, often imagined as concrete wastelands, are full of plant diversity that offer ample pollen and nectar for bees (Packer and Willis, 2009; Kaluza et al, 2016; Frankie et al, 2009; Westrich, 2016; Garbuzoy et al; Larson and Kesheimer, 2015). Pesticides, which kill harmful as well as beneficial insects, are used far less in cities than rural areas. A city that buzzes with honeybees from backyard hives will also be an excellent place for wild bees, who are more at risk than their domesticated cousins, because beekeepers tend to plant gardens and create habitats that benefit all bees.

In the province of Ontario most urban beekeepers are violating the Bees Act, because they violate the 30 m rule which states that “No person shall place hives or leave hives containing bees within 30 metres of a property line separating the land on which the hives are placed or left from land occupied as a dwelling or used for a community center, public park or other place of public assembly or recreation” (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture). This rule effectively makes backyard beekeeping in cities almost impossible.

Although we understand that this part of the Bees Act is only enforced on a complaint basis, of which the Ministry receives very few each year, we feel the rule hinders the growth of urban beekeeping in Ontario. People excited to begin beekeeping are discouraged from setting up a backyard hive because they do not want to violate

legislation. The 30 m rule keeps some backyard beekeepers from registering their hives with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, a practice that may be disastrous if a disease such as Foul Brood, strikes a nearby hive. Although the Ministry requires all beekeepers to register their hives, even if they violate the 30 m rule, many beekeepers are afraid of having their hive removed if they do so.

The Government of Ontario's Pollinator Health Action Plan (PHAP), which was released on December 15, 2016 proposed a number of potential actions that the province could take to address honey bee diseases, pests and genetics, including a recommendation that the government release for consultation a discussion paper to modernize the province's legislative framework on beekeeping. Among other components, these modernization proposals could include provisions related to updated requirements for the location of hives.

We would like to know when these expected consultations could occur and would like to provide input on the Bees Act in regards to the above aforementioned issues. We would also like to circulate to the urban and rural stakeholders who would like to provide feedback on the Bees Act.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Advisory Committee

City of London

References - Research provided by Becky Ellis

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Steffan-Dewenter, I. & Potts, S.G. (2005). Pollinator diversity and crop pollination services are at risk. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, 20(12),

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