



Burlington Agricultural & Rural Affairs Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes

Date: February 17, 2021
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Virtual

1. Members Present:

Glenn Portch (Chair), Norm Richardson, Vanessa Warren, Jamie Fisher, Maura Romanelli and Sarah Pralet

2. Others Present:

Councillor Angelo Bentivegna, Kelly Cook (Planner), Wilma Jacobs (Rural Halton Citizens for Broadband) and Jo-Anne Rudy (Clerk)

3. Regrets:

John Timmis

4. Declarations of Interest:

None

5. Approval of Minutes:

5.1 Approve minutes from meeting held January 20, 2021

On motion, the minutes from the meeting held January 20, 2021 were approved as presented.

6. Delegation(s):

6.1 Broadband in the rural area

- Wilma Jacobs advised that she is one of five volunteer citizens from Burlington's Ward 6 Rural Advisory Group who are working to improve internet in the rural area. A survey was conducted in September 2020 of 800 rural households in Burlington's rural wards 1, 3 and 6 where residents were asked to do a speed test, provide the name of their internet service provider (ISP) and their contact information. The

responses from 160 households showed that 80% did not have the government approved minimum 50 Mbps download speed and 73% did not have the minimum 10 Mbps upload speed. In addition, they had conversations with all the major Internet Service Providers in the area and learned that fibre-optic was the gold standard for reliable internet service that was scalable and durable. After lengthy analysis, Standard Broadband of Acton, Ontario won the confidence of the Task Force, for it had already been successful in bringing highspeed internet to communities to the north and west of rural Halton and had a good customer-service record. A letter of support was written to the Universal Broadband Fund, showing that there was a strong need and strong grass-roots support for Standard Broadband's application. A meeting was held with Mayor Meed Ward to ask for a Letter of Support to Standard Broadband's application, which she supported.

- Members had several questions and asked about it being moved further west. Councillor Bentivegna noted that the responsibility lies with the Region who have made applications to several organizations and are confident that funding will come through.
- It was suggested that further discussion be deferred to the next meeting to allow Tom Williams from Standard Broadband to attend.

7. Regular Items:

7.1 Burlington Official Plan

- Kelly advised that the new Official Plan page on the City's website will be updated to show all of the appeals that were received. There were three appeals that were related to rural and agricultural policies in Chapter 9 (appeal numbers 1, 16 and 40).

7.2 Regional Official Plan review

- Kelly advised that the Region is expanding the engagement for the Official Plan but it will not affect the overall timeline for the Plan moving forward. The Region has established an Agricultural Working Group to assist staff in generating information to be used in reports that can provide greater detail from an agricultural perspective, on the range of policy and mapping options and implications for the Regional Official Plan, and have asked for a representative from BARAAC to participate. **Motion** - Support Vanessa representing BARAAC on this working group. **CARRIED**

7.3 Nelson Quarry extension

- Kelly advised that the Region has provided an update on Nelson Quarry identifying the registered letters of objection. Nelson has two years to respond.

7.4 2021 budget process

- Councillor Bentivegna shared that he taped a segment on Cogeco on February 12 regarding the 2021 Budget where he had the City Manager, Chief Financial Officer and service providers answer questions about the budget. He noted that the City has proposed a 4.99% increase. The Budget meetings will be held on February 23 and 25.

7.5 2021 BARAAC work plan

- Jo-Anne facilitated a roundtable discussion for members to provide their ideas on matters that should be on BARAAC's 2021 work plan. The following ideas were suggested:
 - rural internet access
 - Regional OP review
 - soil management and its importance in reducing the carbon footprint
 - development of a community-driven stewardship program
 - gather and explore rural and agricultural business creation/expansion case studies to better understand economic development
 - farm related businesses and examples of what works in other municipalities
 - meeting with Burlington Economic Development

8. Other Business:

- Jo-Anne advised that the recommended appointments to BARAAC were approved at the February 16 Council meeting and new members will be at the March meeting.

9. Adjournment: 8:51 p.m.