

To: Mayor and Council
From: Paul Gipps, CAO

Meeting Date: May 20, 2025
Meeting Type: Regular Council Meeting

Prepared by: Reyna Seabrook, Director of Corporate Services
Department: Corporate Services

Title: Council Committee Update – Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)
Description: To consider adopting updated Terms of Reference for the AAC

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference dated 2012 be repealed;
AND THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference attached to the Report to Council dated May 20, 2025 be adopted.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Committees are appointed by Council to assist Council in dealing with a variety of topics. These groups are typically made up of community members or subject matter experts in a particular area. Committees provide recommendations and input from a perspective Council may not have considered. It is Council's role to determine how a committee will best serve Council and the community. Council is responsible for assigning tasks to committees that are aligned with guiding documents and strategic priorities.

Committee reviews have been undertaken in 2012, 2015, 2019 and 2023. During the 2023 review it was noted the AAC only had 3 members and was not meeting quorum or membership requirements. One of the outcomes of the 2023 review was an attempt to secure additional AAC members and a resolution (February 21, 2023) to forward a review of the AAC Terms of Reference (TOR) to a future strategy session.

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider updated TOR for the AAC.

Due to the lack of membership, Council passed resolutions in 2018 and 2019 waving the requirement for the AAC to meet quorum. In early 2023 the AAC membership consisted of only three people and in July 2023 three new members were appointed, which brought the committee in line with the minimum number of members required. Even with the additional new members, attendance from 2023 to 2025 averaged 3 committee members per meeting and 4 District staff to present applications, answer questions, and record minutes.

Despite efforts, recruiting members for the AAC has been a struggle for many years. Feedback from previous recruitment attempts indicated farmers do not have the time to participate in a committee that only reviews individual applications and they were more interested in providing input on high-level impactful changes that would assist the agricultural community holistically.

In order for the AAC to provide the best use of volunteer time, provide value to the agriculture community and provide valuable recommendations for Council, it is recommended the AAC's role be adjusted to:

1. consider the agricultural community on a more holistic scale; and
2. establish a list of specific application types to be referred to the group.

The TOR have been amended to include additional, high-level topics within the Mandate, including agricultural promotion, awareness, education and a review of policies, strategies, bylaws and strategic documents related to agriculture. The additional topics support the committee's holistic consideration of agriculture and ensure agricultural input on policy documents.

The current TOR requires all land applications affecting agriculture and agri-business to be referred to the AAC. This can result in inefficient use of committee and staff time considering applications that don't require review. To ensure the type of applications and the details being considered are focused and appropriate, a list of specific application types to be referred and associated criteria to be considered has been set out and authority has been delegated to the Director of Development Approvals to determine which files are to be referred. This determination will be based on a list of established criteria. These amendments provide clear direction for both committee members and staff.

In consideration of the amount of volunteer and staff time required for in-person meetings, the TOR establish procedures for circulating applications via email. Where determined by the Director, applications will be circulated via email and each member will be required to respond with a pre-determined response, including: support, non-support, support subject to comments. A majority of members may request an in-person meeting to discuss the application. This process reduces the need for staff and volunteer time to meet as frequently.

The 2012 AAC TOR currently in effect, require 6 to 8 members with at least 4 actively farming and at least 2 with an interest in agricultural, economic development, sustainability or water service delivery or conservation. Quorum is identified as 4 members in the TOR. Quorum is an important governance tool used to ensure acceptable levels of members who have a stake in a group are present to ensure procedural fairness at the committee level, especially where recommendations to Council are provided. The membership requirements in the proposed TOR have been increased to 7 to 11 with at least 5 actively farming in Lake Country and 2 representatives that live in Lake Country with experience in agriculture, economic development, or agriculture, water service delivery or conservation. The increased number of members would result in a quorum of 4.

ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference dated 2012 be repealed;
AND THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee Terms for Reference the attached to the Report to Council dated May 20, 2205 be amended as follows:
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 AND THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference be adopted as amended.
2. THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee Terms for Reference for the attached to the Report to Council dated May 20, 2205 be referred back to staff for additional information as identified by Council.

Respectfully Submitted.

Reyna Seabrook, Director of Corporate Services

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Council Committee Update - Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)-RCM.docx
Attachments:	- AAC Terms of Reference-2025-Draft-V01.docx
Final Approval Date:	May 15, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Carie Liefke, Manager of Current Planning - May 14, 2025 - 10:27 AM

Jeremy Frick, Director of Development Approvals - May 14, 2025 - 11:14 AM

Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer - May 15, 2025 - 9:48 AM

Makayla Ablitt, Legislative & FOI Coordinator - May 15, 2025 - 9:58 AM