# Agricultural Advisory Committees: Recognizing the Value of Agriculture in the Golden Horseshoe

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Possibility grows here.

GOLDEN HORSESHOE FOOD AND FARMING ALLIANCE

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# Introduction

The decisions of local and regional Councils have direct and immediate impacts on the short and long-term viability of agriculture. While farmers make up less than two percent of the provincial population and their political influence may be limited, Agricultural Advisory Committees (AAC)[1] can provide an agricultural lens to local policies, plans, and processes. Generally, an AAC is an advisory Committee formed by Council with a mandate to identify agricultural issues and opportunities to enhance the sector. These Committees can have a broad membership, including farmers, residents, industry groups, farm organizations, and Councillors, with regional staff as ex-officio members fulfilling a liaison role. While all AACs provide important knowledge and expertise, their structure, role, and experiences vary.

This report presents research that was conducted with AACs within the Greenbelt/Golden Horseshoe (Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel, and York Regions and the City of Hamilton). This research was supported by the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation and the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance. The goal of this research is to understand the role of regional AACs, including their value, challenges, and successes.

This report reviews the structure of AACs, their mandates, membership, and general experiences. Throughout the report, lessons will be provided based on the experiences of Committee members, with specific regional examples highlighted. These lessons are applicable to AACs within the Golden Horseshoe; however, the lessons presented here are also applicable across the province and can be utilized by existing AACs, as well as regions/counties interested in establishing an AAC.

[1] It should be noted that across the Golden Horseshoe, the title of each Committee varied. For example, Niagara Region's Committee was called the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee, while in York Region, the Committee was called the Agricultural Advisory and Liaison Group. For consistency, this report refers to all Committees as an Agricultural Advisory Committee or AAC and does not differentiate based on their individual titles.

# Methodology

The data for this report were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with staff, Councillors, farmers, and other AAC members from Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel, and York Regions and the City of Hamilton. Data were also collected from Clarington, a lower-tier municipality in Durham Region that has an AAC. Data collection began in August 2018 and was completed in December 2018. In total, 18 interviews were completed. Interviews were conducted over the phone and lasted an average of 60 minutes.

Document analysis included the review of Committee agendas, meeting minutes, Terms of References, work plans, and other related material. Much of this information was available through regional websites. When unavailable online, requests were made through appropriate regional staff for digital copies of these documents.

It should be noted that information in this report is current as of Fall 2018.

# Findings

## Terms of Reference

Every AAC in this study had a Terms of Reference (TOR) as a foundational guiding document. The TOR provided members with a clear understanding of their Committee's structure, relationship to staff, and their roles and responsibilities. While the TORs varied in detail and length, at a minimum each included the following components:

- Mandate
- Membership
- Meeting schedule
- Staff support
- Reporting structure

Every AAC's TOR was adopted by Council. For most AACs, the TOR was reviewed/revised annually or every four years following municipal elections.

A TOR provides essential structure and guidance for Council, staff, and Committee members. In some Regions, TORs are quite detailed, providing additional information regarding the history of the AAC, its goals or objectives, and guidance on work plans. Information related to subcommittees, resources, absenteeism, work plans, and annual reports was also noted. This level of detail provides valuable information and a framework for new and returning Committee members. The TORs from Niagara and Halton Regions are included in Appendices 1 and 2 to demonstrate the differences in level of detail between regional AACs.

Given the important function of a TOR, it should go beyond the minimum components listed above. A more detailed TOR can be invaluable to new Committee members, as well as those interested in the AAC but unsure of the Committee's purpose, structure, and operation. Interested members of the public that have never participated on a regional Committee will benefit from clear information regarding expectations, staff responsibilities, and proper conduct of Committee members.

**LESSON LEARNED**

A detailed Terms of Reference is necessary and, at a minimum, should include a mandate, membership, meeting frequency, and reporting structure.

## Committee Mandate

Every AAC within this study included a mandate or purpose in their TORs. Typically, these specified that the AAC was a volunteer Committee with the primary responsibility of advising the Region on matters related to agriculture and, in some instances, food and rural affairs. The main role of the AAC was usually discussed, with details regarding areas of concern, responsibilities, and designation of work. For example, within Hamilton's and Peel's mandates, it was noted that the Committee would be responsible for educating the public and improving

public awareness of agricultural and rural issues. In general, most mandates noted a broad range of activities, goals, and purpose statements outlining how the AAC would fulfill their mandate. Figure 1 provides the mandate for York Region's Agricultural Advisory Liaison Group.

Figure 1: Mandate for York Region's Agricultural Advisory Liaison Group

The mandate of the Agricultural Advisory Liaison Group is to provide advice and expertise to Council and staff regarding agriculture, food, and rural issues in York Region.

This mandate will be fulfilled by:

a) Soliciting issues and concerns of York Region's farming industry, agricultural organizations, community groups and rural citizenry and making recommendations to Regional Council as necessary
b) Providing input on how agricultural and rural issues can be incorporated into goals, objectives, and policies in the review of Official Plans
c) Advising or assisting Regional Council on implementation of Regional and local municipal Official Plan policies and programs
d) Providing a forum for the exchange of information on agricultural and rural issues and initiatives and advising Regional Council and staff on potential concerns
e) Encouraging public awareness and education regarding agricultural and rural issues, including urban agricultural practices
f) Providing recommendations for tools to ensure agricultural land is available for growing and producing local food and other agricultural products that are accessible to York Region residents and neighbouring communities
g) Reviewing studies, plans and proposals referred by Regional Council or staff and providing comments on agricultural and rural impacts
h) Providing comments and recommendations on legislation, programs and funding from Provincial departments and other agencies that affect agricultural and rural issues in York Region

A clear understanding of the AAC's function, including activities and assignment of responsibility, is imperative for an effective AAC. For some Committees, especially those with a long history in their Region, their scope has narrowed over time to become more effective and efficient. Halton Region's AAC, for example, has existed for approximately 40 years and, over time, its function and purpose have been simplified to better utilize the expertise of the Committee. Niagara Region has experienced similar transformations in form and function, as the Agricultural Task Force, a separate Committee with a similar focus, was combined with the existing AAC. The merging of these two Committees eliminated the redundancy of two

agricultural Committees that required similar staff resources and agricultural representatives. In both regions, the mandates of the AACs were formalized and their focus narrowed to reviewing the impacts of policy and other regional initiatives on the agricultural industry. The Committee's ability to be impactful is attributed to the narrow mandate, as the Committee can focus their efforts and accomplish their goals. A broader mandate may result in too much work or confusion for an AAC and result in a Committee that is unable to accomplish their mandate.

The mandate for each AAC consistently included the review of policies and their impact on agriculture and rural areas. For most regions, these policies included updates to Official Plans and Zoning By-laws, as well as provincial policies related to source water protection, the agricultural system, and agricultural diversification strategies, among others. These policies have the potential to significantly impact agricultural areas and the insights provided by AACs were viewed as invaluable. It is important to note that the ability to comment on such policies before their implementation empowered many Committee members and strengthened the role and importance of the AAC within each region. Appendix 4 depicts the reporting structure for Halton's AAC, including who brings review requests to the committee and how the committee's comments are relayed to Council.

**LESSON LEARNED**

Committee members should feel empowered and supported in their advisory roles.

Many of the regional AACs were also mandated to expressly include economic development. In Niagara Region, for example, the AAC connects agriculture and the agri-food industry with economic development and health agendas. As part of their mandate, the Committee updates a variety of regional studies, including the Agricultural and Economic Impact Study, Agricultural Action Plan, and Local Food Action Plan. This reflects the recognition of the significant economic contributions of agriculture within the region and a clear expectation that consideration for economic development be undertaken by the Committee. It is interesting to note that economic development has been deliberately excluded from Peel Region's AAC

mandate, as it is considered a lower-tier area of responsibility. At the upper-tier, economic development is supported through complementary policies and programs, such as through the delivery of the *Grown in Peel* local farm guide. While Peel Region's TOR enables the AAC to comment on economic development matters brought before the Committee, the development, resourcing and implementation of an economic strategy is beyond the Committee's scope. Considering the linkages between agriculture and economic development, aspects of economic development should be included within an AAC's mandate and must be considered when reviewing policies and other mandated topics.

Finally, some AACs also included education and outreach as part of their mandate. Halton and Durham both host annual farm tours for regional staff, Councillors, and other stakeholders. The goal of these tours was to engage an audience with limited exposure to agriculture. In both regions, Committee members noted that these tours were well attended and that participants appreciated learning about agricultural challenges and opportunities at the farm level. While the work and time required to plan these tours was significant, they were viewed as imperative for educating regional Council and staff, given their limited exposure to the realities of farming. Regions that did not include education or outreach as part of their AAC's mandate noted the value of such endeavours and the possibility of exploring these opportunities in the future.

### Success Story

Traffic circles are becoming a common feature in road design within southern Ontario. Their impact on agriculture is not, however, often considered. In Halton Region and Durham Region, engineering staff consulted with the AAC in order to understand the impact of traffic circles on the farming community. The AAC explained the difficulty for large pieces of farm equipment to manoeuvre a traffic circle with traditional curbs. Based on this input, traffic circles that could accommodate large pieces of farm equipment were designed and installed. Without this consultation, the traffic circles may not have accommodated farm equipment, thus significantly impeding agricultural activities.

## Membership

The size of AACs varied across the Golden Horseshoe, ranging from 13 to 17 people with the exception of York Region, which had a Committee consisting of 7 people. Typically, membership consisted of farmers/farm organizations, Councillors, residents, and, in some cases, youth. For each AAC, staff were assigned to provide support to Committees as ex-officio, non-voting representatives. Membership by Committee is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Membership by Agricultural Advisory Committee in the Golden Horseshoe, as specified in the Terms of Reference

| | **Farmers/ Farm Organizations** | **Councillors** | **Residents** | **Youth** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Durham** | 13 | 1 | 3 | - | 17 |
| **Halton** | 10 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 17 |
| **Hamilton** | 8 | 2 | 4 | - | 14 |
| **Niagara** | 9 | 6 | - | - | 15 |
| **Peel** | 6 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 13 |
| **York** | 5 | 1 | 1 | - | 7 |

Most of the AACs did not differentiate between farmers and farm organizations. Therefore, these members have been combined into a single column in the table above. With most Committees, representatives from a variety of farm organizations and agricultural sectors were listed within the TOR. In every region, at least one member from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture regional chapter was listed as a member. The remaining farm-related positions were industry specific and varied by region. For example, in Halton, the equine industry was a member, while Hamilton and Peel included membership for the local Soil and Crop Improvement Association. In Niagara, membership was more diverse, and included a variety of industry groups including the grape, greenhouse, cash crop, and poultry sectors, as well as non-farmers including researchers, food processors, and land preservationists. While Durham Region did not list specific sectors, the TOR stated that 13 members must be farmers.

### Success Story

A critical component to success for an AAC is Committee membership. Durham Region's AAC has been successful due to the commitment from Committee members that are well-respected within the industry. The knowledge and expertise of these members enables them to effectively review agricultural issues/topics and provide comments to staff and Council that are viewed as credible. Without this level of expertise, the value of the AAC may be diminished and integrity of their work questioned.

In general, each of the AAC's memberships closely aligned with the composition stated in their TOR. Committee demographics were similar across the Golden Horseshoe, as the farming membership was generally older and consistent with or, in some situations, above provincial averages. The farming population continues to age, and younger representation is not always available or possible. Engagement with younger members of the agricultural industry is necessary for the long-term viability of AACs. Only two committees, Halton and Peel, included youth membership in their TOR, but neither currently had a youth member. Both Committees had sought youth participants but were unable to maintain a youth member. Historically, Durham Region has included a youth member in their TOR but due to an inability to fill this position, it was ultimately removed from the current TOR. This lack of participation was attributed to many aspects, including the timing of meetings and travel distance to meetings. Depending on the age of the participant, they may be in school during meeting times or unable to find appropriate transportation to the meeting. These logistical details were deemed to be significant barriers to youth participation, however, no solutions were proposed. There was an interest amongst the other regions to engage with youth farmers, but no formal actions are planned. Given the aging farming community, engagement with younger farmers should be encouraged across the Golden Horseshoe. Young farmers offer new and diverse insights into the future of agriculture and greater effort to recruit this demographic is needed.

**LESSON LEARNED**

It is important that young farmers be part of the Committee and explicitly incorporated into the Terms of Reference.

Challenges regarding agricultural representation were apparent in some regions. It was noted that members who were appointed as farm organization representatives, including industry groups, often acted in self-interest and reviewed agricultural issues only through the lens of their industry. Such members were criticized for failing to consider the entire agricultural sector and were challenged to broaden their analysis during meetings. When industry and organization representatives acted in self-interest, the value and function of the Committee was eroded. Similar challenges were also noted with members of Council, given their elected position and need to please their constituents. In such instances, the role of the chair was imperative as they encouraged neutrality and professionalism. The chair also limited the influence of personal and industry bias in any decisions the Committee made. While the opinions of Council members and industry are important, as members of an AAC, personal and political bias should not be allowed to influence decision making.

**LESSON LEARNED**

Personal and industry bias should not influence decision making.

Appropriate Council representation was considered imperative to the success of an AAC. Within each region, the Councillor(s) assigned to the AAC were generally from rural communities and had an understanding of the agricultural sector and rural areas. Many Councillors were long-standing members of the AAC and had substantial knowledge on both agriculture and the mandate of the Committee. For some Committee members, these

Councillors were viewed as the champion for the AAC and, more generally, agriculture, as they were able to educate other Councillors as well as the general public on issues related to agriculture.

### Success Story

Given Peel Region's proximity to Toronto and limited rural lands, the prominence of the AAC was surprisingly high when compared to Regions with larger agricultural areas. The AAC in Peel has received strong support by Councillors from the urban communities of Brampton and Mississauga, in addition to the considerably more rural community of Caledon. Both urban and rural Councillors in Peel understand the importance of the AAC and agriculture within the region. This broad support from Council has strengthened the AAC by empowering Committee members and the work they do to support the agricultural sector across the region.

As agricultural and rural areas continue to decrease in size and urban populations continue to increase, political representation of the farming community is becoming increasingly important. The understanding of agricultural issues and the role of agriculture within each region is strengthened by Council representation on the AAC. These Councillors were often viewed as vital to the long-term viability of the Committee.

### Lesson Learned

Councillors assigned to the Committee should be champions of rural and agricultural issues and be prepared to educate Council.

While not formally noted in each TOR as a member of the Committee, staff liaisons are imperative for a successful AAC. Each Committee had at least one staff member that assisted with logistical details, such as setting agendas, taking minutes, and disseminating information. Most Committees had a representative from the planning department, which was useful given the Committees' review of planning policies and practices. Some Committees also had staff

representation from economic development departments reflecting a recognition of agriculture's economic contributions, which was viewed positively by Committee members. Depending on issues or topics, other staff members, such as engineering staff, building department staff, and roads department staff, were invited to meetings to provide information on new policies, solicit advice from Committee members on new developments, or simply to gain a broader understanding of agriculture within the region. While such participation varied by region and these additional staff representatives did not attend meetings regularly, their participation was viewed favourably, as it provided opportunities to educate other regional departments and AAC members.

**LESSON LEARNED**

Dedicated and supportive staff are imperative to the success of the Committee.

While the size and composition of each AAC varied, dedicated Committee members were viewed as essential to the success of each Committee. For some regions, Committee members have served on the AAC for consecutive Council terms. These Committee members assisted in the transition between Council terms and often held educational roles, informing new members of the formalities and nuances of the Committee. It is important to note, however, that new members should also receive formal training, which includes an overview of how policies are created and the process for Council approval. Regardless of how long a Committee member has participated, all members were appreciated for their knowledge, passion, and commitment to the success of the agricultural sector. The commitment of each Committee member was considered foundational to the success of the AAC and agricultural industry.

**LESSON LEARNED**

Agriculture makes significant contributions to local economies and economic development staff need to be part of the AAC.

**SUCCESS STORY**

Documents such as the Official Plan and Zoning By-law guide the long-term development of a community. When Hamilton was creating a Rural Official Plan and Zoning By-law, it was recognized that input from the agricultural sector was critical. Hamilton's AAC provided significant feedback regarding the impacts of the draft policies, and recommended revisions that would be more appropriate and supportive of the farming sector. While this review sparked debate within the AAC, the final Rural Official Plan and Zoning By-law were amended to reflect the recommendations of the AAC, a demonstration of the value of this Committee in understanding the unique challenges related to planning within rural and agricultural communities.

## Reporting Structure

Within each TOR, the reporting structure for the AACs was clearly defined. Some AACs were considered a subcommittee of other regional Committees (typically planning or economic development Committees), while others reported directly to staff or Council. The reporting structure provided Committee members a clear understanding of the process for advising the Council and/or staff.

Some participants noted frustrations regarding the reporting structure, believing that the AAC was simply a Subcommittee that lacked influence and authority. They felt that a hierarchical reporting structure diminished the AAC's power and their sense of importance. The mandate for every region clearly laid out the reporting structure and noted if the AAC was a subcommittee; however, some Committee members felt that a hierarchical reporting structure diminished the AAC's power and their sense of importance. AACs that were considered Subcommittees, or those that reported directly to planning staff, were viewed as less impactful

and limited in their ability to initiate change. As was noted by one Committee member, an AAC that reports only to the planning department and never to Council lacks power and influence.

**LESSON LEARNED**

The work of the AAC is given greater profile and importance when reporting directly to Council.

While most of the AACs report to planning staff or other Committees, some are also asked to report directly to Council or present updates, report on action items, or provide general information on new initiatives. Committee members that have interacted directly with Council felt empowered in their role. These individuals also believed that the work of the AAC was given greater profile and importance when reporting to directly to Council. While empowerment of individual members is important, permitting the AAC to present reports, work plans, or action items directly to Council may increase the prominence of the AAC and increase awareness among Councillors. Considering that most Councillors are removed from rural communities and the agricultural sector, increasing the profile of the AAC can educate Council and promote the value of agriculture within the region.

## Meetings: Agendas, Minutes and Outcomes

The greatest diversity amongst the Committees was the organization, frequency, and duration of meetings. All meetings and agendas were arranged by regional staff. Typically, agendas followed a consistent format. As an example, the agenda and minutes from Durham's AAC meeting in January 2018 are included in Appendices 3 and 4. Requests to add items to a meeting agenda were made through staff and arose due to topical issues or areas of interest. For most AACs, both agendas and meeting minutes were available online, which allowed non-Committee members access. As these meetings are open to the public, all agendas and minutes should be available online for transparency and to educate and inform non-Committee members on regional issues related to agriculture.

**LESSON LEARNED**

Meeting times should accommodate the agricultural sector's unique work schedule.

As outlined in Table 2, meeting frequency varied by region, with some Committees meeting monthly and others meeting quarterly. Some Committees, such as Niagara, met during the day, while others, such as Halton, met in the evening. In all cases, meetings were scheduled based on the availability of the farmer members. In Durham and Hamilton, meetings in July and August were not scheduled due to farming schedules. In Halton, evening meetings were scheduled later during the spring and summer to accommodate farmers. This flexibility in scheduling was beneficial to farmer members, as it allowed them to participate during busy seasons; however, flexibility in meeting schedules did not encourage youth participation on any Committee. Based on current membership, attendance issues were not noted by any Committee and the accommodations with scheduling of meetings may explain high levels of participation.

Table 2*: Meeting Frequency by R*egion

| **Region** | **Meeting Frequency** |
|---|---|
| Durham | Monthly (no meeting in July or August) |
| Halton | Monthly |
| Hamilton | Monthly (no meeting in July, August and December) |
| Niagara | Quarterly |
| Peel | Quarterly |
| York | Quarterly and at the call of the Chair |

In reviewing Committee agendas and minutes, it is clear that a variety of topics were discussed at each meeting, including the review of regional and provincial policies, such as agricultural systems mapping and Official Plan policies. A range of topics specific to each region were discussed, such as surplus farm dwellings, cannabis production, irrigation systems, climate change, road design, road safety, and work with local conservation authorities, among others.

Committee members noted that some topics have been controversial, resulting in debates between Committee members; however, in each instance, the chair was able to encourage the Committee to focus on the issue and provide unbiased feedback. For many AACs, discussions related to the cannabis industry have been contentious given personal beliefs, but Chairs were able to refocus discussions to policy development and away from personal convictions by reminding Committee members of their role. In such instances, the success of the Committee is dependent on a chair that has the skills to effectively guide and manage the Committee. With more non-traditional approaches and as urban growth pressures increase, sensitive or controversial topics are likely to come up more often. AACs must work through these issues and provide advice to staff and Council that is not influenced by narrow industry-specific perspectives.

**LESSON LEARNED**

The success of the Committee is dependent on a Chair that has the skills to effectively guide and manage the Committee.

Regardless of meeting frequency, it is important for meetings to have a purpose and clear direction. For Committees that meet monthly, there is a risk that meetings do not have sufficient content and/or become repetitive. Committees that meet less frequently, on the other hand, are at risk of stagnation and an inability to keep issues moving forward. In both instances, an engaged staff and a proactive Committee can ensure that action items move forward and meetings are meaningful. Imperative to this is the creation of a work plan.

**LESSON LEARNED**

Effective meetings require a clear agenda with substantive content.

The majority of AACs in the Golden Horseshoe use a work plan to guide the work of the Committee with areas of priority and action items for completion during the year. These work

plans helped focus each Committee and provided tangible projects to undertake. Work plans were approved by Council and a report on progress was presented at the end of the year. Committees that did not use a work plan still provided yearly reports on their progress. Work plans were seen as a guiding document that contributed to an AAC's success. When developing a work plan, consideration must be given to availability of staff and budget. York Region's AAC, for example, recommended the hiring of a new staff member with a primary focus on agriculture based on a consultant's report. The report, including that recommendation, was brought before Council who approved the creation of a new position. In Niagara Region, while the items in the action plan were completed, many items required budget approval, which delayed progress.

### Lesson Learned

Work plans are a guiding document that contribute to an AAC's success.

### Success Story

For the Niagara Region AAC, having a clear work plan with achievable action items was important. In 2006, an agricultural action plan with key actions for encouraging long-term economic viability in agriculture was created. By 2013, every action item in the plan had been addressed by the Committee, either conceptually through feasibility studies or on the ground, such as re-establishing the Vineland Research Station. The action plan provided a clear guide for the Committee, with achievable outcomes. Given the success of this approach, an updated action plan was developed in 2016 to guide the present Committee.

Work plans helped establish the value of each AAC. Committees shared their progress as well as project completion, further demonstrating their importance. Providing updates to Council on the progress of the Committee, outcomes of major projects, and an overview of future initiatives is important. These updates can highlight Committee successes, unique projects, and areas of concern. In doing so, AACs educate Council on the work they conduct and the

importance of agriculture, which is necessary given that the agricultural sector has limited representation on regional Councils across the Golden Horseshoe. If possible, year-end reports should be presented directly to Council by the chair of the AAC or their designate and not through staff. This will empower Committee members, improve engagement with Council, and increase the profile of the AAC beyond the staff level.

**LESSON LEARNED**

Annual reports should be presented to Council to demonstrate the work the AAC has completed, reinforcing the value of the Committee.

## Conclusion

Across the Golden Horseshoe, the agriculture and the agri-food industry provides significant economic benefits. Challenges associated with a rapidly urbanizing population, development of agricultural land, and decline in the political representation of farmers has resulted in a lack of understanding of rural and agricultural issues. At the regional level, AACs provide an opportunity to review municipal policies and processes through an agricultural and rural lens. Few Councillors understand or fully appreciate the challenges facing agriculture and the impacts of municipal policies on this industry. As such, AACs fulfill an important role that must be respected and supported. These Committees offer immense insight and should be valued and supported by residents, staff, and Council.

This study sought to understand how AACs function across the Golden Horseshoe and provide lessons from the experiences of staff, Councillors, farmers, and other AAC members. These insights can be summarized into the following lessons:

1. A detailed Terms of Reference is necessary and, at a minimum, should include a mandate, membership, meeting frequency, and reporting structure.
2. Committee members should feel empowered and supported in their advisory roles

3. It is important that young farmers be part of the Committee and explicitly incorporated into the Terms of Reference.
4. Personal and industry bias cannot influence decision making.
5. Councillors assigned to the Committee should be champions of rural and agricultural issues and be prepared to educate Council.
6. Dedicated and supportive staff are imperative to the success of the Committee
7. Agriculture makes significant contributions to local economies and economic development staff need to be part of the AAC.
8. The work of the AAC is given greater profile and importance when reporting directly to council.
9. Meeting times should accommodate the agricultural sector's unique work schedule.
10. The success of the Committee is dependent on a Chair that has the skills to effectively guide and manage the Committee .
11. Effective meetings require a clear agenda with substantive content.
12. Work plans are a guiding document that contribute to an AAC's success.
13. Annual reports should be presented to Council to demonstrate the work the AAC has completed, reinforcing the value of the Committee.

## Appendix 1: Niagara Region Agricultural Policy and Action Committee Terms of Reference

# Agricultural Policy and Action Committee Terms Of Reference

Overview · Past Agenda/Minutes · Terms of Reference

## Preamble

The Agricultural Policy & Action Committee (APAC) was formed in 2013 as a result of a direction from Regional Council to amalgamate the Agricultural Sub-Committee and the Regional Chair's Agricultural Task Force. The Agricultural Sub-Committee was established in 1972 for the purposes of creating support programs through the two federations of agriculture to promote the agricultural industry in the Niagara Region and to provide input into planning issues that could have an impact on the agricultural industry. The Regional Chair's Agricultural Task Force was formed in 2002 to identify and take action on major blockades to the long-term viability of agriculture and to influence positive changes in agriculture-related policy at all levels of government. The amalgamation of the two committees into the Agricultural Policy & Action Committee provides the opportunity to recognize and align the work of both committees, and to recognize the critical primacy of agriculture in the Niagara Region in terms of both public policy and demonstrable actions.

## Mandate

The Agricultural Policy & Action Committee (APAC) is an advisory body established by the Niagara Region in accordance with the following Terms of Reference. The Committee has been established to advise Regional Council on issues that impact the agricultural industry and support Regional Council, reporting through the Integrated Community Planning Committee, by initiating, developing, implementing and participating in actions and strategies needed to advance the agricultural industry and preserve the agricultural land base throughout the Niagara Region.

## Goals/Purpose

- Initiate, develop, implement and participate in strategies to advance the agricultural industry and preserve the Agricultural land base in the Niagara Region
- Update, as necessary, and carry out the tasks contained within the Agricultural Action Plan
- Act as a continuing liaison committee to further the interests of and promote the agricultural industry of

the Niagara Region
- Provide input on planning-related matters that could have an impact on the agricultural industry
- Provide a link between the agricultural industry, the Agri-Food industry, and the economic development and health agendas
- Examples of specific work projects include, but are not limited to, the following: updating the agricultural & economic impact study, overseeing and updating the Agricultural Action Plan and the Local Food Action Plan, raw water for irrigation, tax policy, etc.

## Reporting Structure

The APAC will report to Regional Council through the Integrated Community Planning Committee.

## Work Plan

The APAC will provide guidance to staff in the development of an annual work plan identifying the specific initiatives and activities to be undertaken within each of the areas of focus, inclusive of budget needs, to further guide decision-making and resource management.

## Membership

Membership for the APAC shall not exceed a maximum of 15 members with the majority of members being from the agricultural sector (primary producers).

Membership for the APAC shall include:

- At least one (1) Representative as appointed by the Niagara North Federation of Agriculture
- At least one (1) Representative as appointed by the Niagara South Federation of Agriculture
- Up to **six (6)** Regional Council Representatives as appointed by Regional Council

Depending on the priority issues outlined in the APAC's work plan, the remainder of the membership should target membership from across the Niagara Region, throughout the value chain, from a range of commodities and sectors related to the agricultural industry. Membership or participation with either the Niagara North or Niagara South Federation of Agriculture is considered an asset.

The remainder of the membership may target but is not limited to the following commodity/interest groups:

- Tender Fruit Industry

- Research Sector
- Dealer/Shipper Industry
- Grape Industry
- Meat/Food Processing Industry
- Greenhouse Industry
- Land Preservation and Environmental Protection Sector
- Nursery & Landscape Industry
- Cash Crop Industry
- Poultry Industry
- Livestock Industry

The term of membership shall be four years, concurrent with Regional Council's elected term of office, and the membership shall be approved by Council in accordance with membership requirements in the Terms of Reference.Â  Current Committee members shall indicate their desire to be reappointed to the Committee no later than the December meeting prior to the change in Council.

All attempts will be made to stay within the guideline composition; however, if the applications received or the qualifications of applicants do not fully address the guideline composition criteria, the most capable and qualified applicants will be recommended for appointment to fulfill the membership composition.

The call for membership shall be made by invitation circulated to local agricultural stakeholders

## Chair & Vice Chair

A Chair and Vice Chair will be elected from Committee members on a biannual basis at the first meeting of the New Year to preside over meetings and Committee business. The Chair of the Committee shall be a Regional Councillor. The Vice Chair of the Committee shall be a stakeholder member.

## Working Groups

To fulfill its mandate and accomplish its goals, the APAC will establish working groups to deal with specific issues or projects. The working groups will meet, as needed, to review specific issues referred to them by the APAC and otherwise complete their assigned tasks.

Working groups are considered to be time-limited, project specific sub-committees of the APAC in that they are convened to accomplish a specific task (or tasks) in a narrowly defined time period.

Working groups must be comprised of at least two members of the APAC and may include community

members and other individuals with relevant knowledge and expertise. Local municipal participation should be sought depending on the nature of the work being undertaken.

Working groups shall be chaired where possible by a voting member of the APAC and shall provide regular updates to the APAC regarding recommendations on assigned projects. Minutes of the meetings of the working group shall be recorded and submitted to the APAC for proper directing through the approval process. Working groups may meet at a time and place as decided by the members of the working group.

Some examples of projects to be undertaken by the APAC Working Group(s) include: raw water for irrigation, review of the Province's Greenbelt Plan, conduct an in-depth review of provincial policy, guide the creation of a Rural Community Improvement Plan, and guide technological studies.

## Resources

The Integrated Community Planning Department is the designated lead department regarding resource support for the APAC; however, the Committee also has access to the technical expertise of staff from other Regional departments as may be required. It is recognized that staff time and the level of participation will be dependent on other departmental priorities as determined by senior management and/or Regional Council. As required, additional resources may be sought. Additional resourcing may be required for projects with senior levels of government.

The Committee shall receive administrative support from the Office of the Regional Clerk for meeting and agenda management.

## Meetings

A meeting schedule following a quarterly cycle shall be set for the APAC. The schedule will be circulated to the members for approval each year. Â Should a time sensitive matter arise, the APAC may meet at the call of the Chair.

The APAC meetings will be held at Regional Headquarters at a time as determined by the members. Subject to requirements under the Procedural By-law, a meeting may be held in alternate location.All meetings will be open to the public.

Meetings shall be governed by the Region's Procedural By-law, being a by-law to govern the calling, place and proceedings of the meetings of Council and its Committees, as may be amended from time-to-time. This includes rules surrounding quorum.

A schedule setting the due dates for materials to be included on the agenda will be circulated to each member pending adoption of a meeting schedule or the scheduling of a meeting date.

## Absenteeism

**Members, who miss three unauthorized consecutive meetings, shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and will be notified of this in writing by the Committee Chair.**

Amendments To The Terms Of Reference:

The Terms of Reference should be reviewed and refined at a minimum of every four years to ensure that they remain current and meaningful.

Proposals to amend the Terms of Reference shall require the approval of a majority of the members present. Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference shall be submitted to Regional Council for approval through the Integrated Community Planning Committee and shall take effect only upon the approval of Council.

## Appendix 2: Halton Agricultural Advisory (HAAC) Terms of Reference

The Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee advises and assists the Region in its effort to develop and maintain a permanently secure, economically viable agricultural industry as an important component of Halton's economic base.

Specific activities include:

- Advising Regional Council, through the Planning and Public Works Standing Committee, on matters affecting agriculture in Halton.
- Representing Halton's agricultural industry, its farmers, farm organizations and agricultural farm support industries.
- Soliciting and co-ordinating the interests and concerns of Halton's agricultural industry, its farmers, farm organizations and agricultural farm support industries and communicate those interests and concerns to Halton Regional Council.
- Informing individuals, groups and businesses of Regional agricultural goals, objectives and policies.
- Recommending studies necessary to help resolve agricultural problems and/or improve agricultural conditions.
- Reviewing studies, plans, and proposals as may be referred to the Committee and commenting on their agricultural impact.
- Recommending alternative solutions, approaches and plans for the development and maintenance of agriculture in Halton, within the scope of the mandate, responsibilities and financial capabilities of the Region.
- Advising and assisting the Region in the implementation of Halton's agricultural goals, objectives and policies.

**Composition**

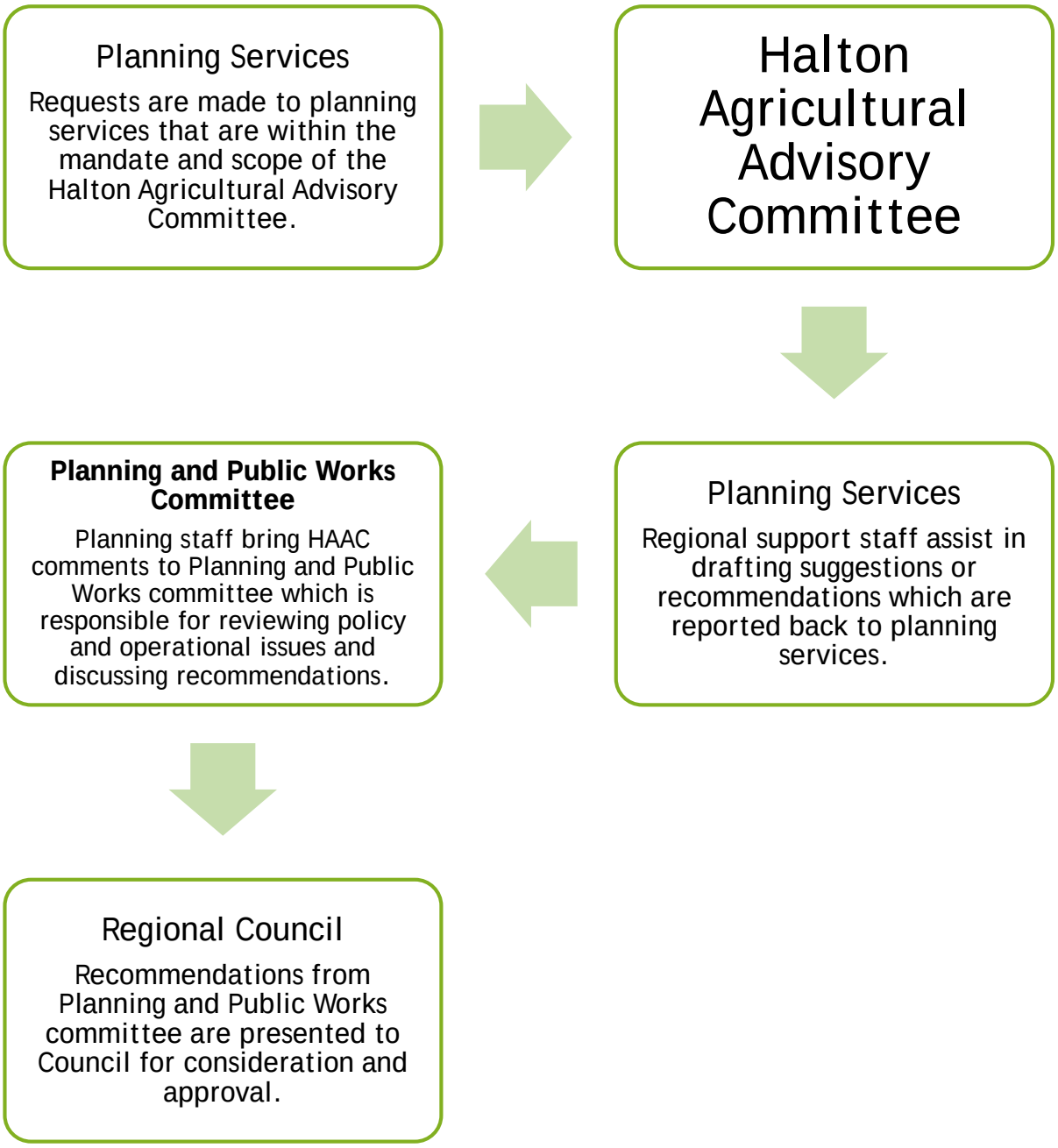
The Committee includes:

- 2 Regional Councillors, at least one of whom is from the Planning and Public Works Committee
- A maximum of 4 representatives from the Halton Federation of Agriculture
- 1 representative each from the following agricultural organizations:
    - Halton Soil and Crop Improvement Association
    - Halton Wentworth Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association
    - Halton Peel Cattlemen's Association
    - Halton Junior Farmers
    - Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association
- 2 citizen members selected from the equine section in Halton
- Between 2 - 4 citizen members of the agricultural community at large

**Frequency of Meetings**

- First Tuesday of each month

## Appendix 3: Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee (HAAC) Reporting Structure



## Appendix 4: Durham Agricultural Advistory Committee (AAC) January 2018 Meeting Agenda and Minutes

**The Regional Municipality of Durham**

**Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Agenda**

Tuesday, January 16, 2018

7:30 PM

Meeting Room 1-B
Regional Municipality of Durham Headquarters
605 Rossland Road East, Whitby

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Notice to Individuals Regarding the Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Information:

Written correspondence submitted in paper copy or electronically to Regional Council or Committees, including personal information such as home address, telephone number and email address, will become part of the public record. It will be collected and maintained for the purposes of creating a record and may be available to the general public pursuant to the Municipal Act, 2001 and any other relevant Acts. References in oral submissions made by delegations will also become part of the public record. Questions about this collection of information should be addressed to the Regional Clerk - Director of Legislative Services, Corporate Services Department.

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**1. Election of Officers for 2018**

**2. Adoption of Minutes**

A) Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting held on December 5, 2017 **(Attachment 1)**

**3. Declarations of Interest**

**4. Presentation**

Heather McMillan, Durham Workforce Authority, Local Employment Planning Council (LEPC) Update

**5. Discussion Items**

A) Scan of Municipal Sign By-laws – Provisions for Agricultural Operations

B) Climate Change Agricultural Task Force Update

C) Joint Workshop with DEAC Update – Z. Cohoon

D) 2018 DAAC Farm Tour

E) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update – N. Rutherford

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2548.

**6. Information Items**

A) Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2017 Annual Report and 2018 Workplan (2018-COW-7) **(Attachment 2)**

B) Solid Waste Management Servicing and Financing Study, Re: Bale Wrap (2018-COW-11) **(Attachment 3)**

**7. Other Business**

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

February 13, 2018

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2097.

**The Regional Municipality of Durham**

**MINUTES**

**DURHAM AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**January 16, 2018**

A regular meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, January 16, 2018 in Boardroom 1-B, Regional Municipality of Durham Headquarters, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 7:30 PM

Present: E. Bowman, Clarington
Z. Cohoon, Federation of Agriculture, Chair
J. Henderson, Oshawa
B. Howsam, Member at Large
K. Kemp, Scugog, attended the meeting at 7:32 PM
K. Kennedy, Member at Large
G. O'Connor, Regional Councillor
F. Puterbough, Member at Large, Vice-Chair
D. Risebrough, Member at Large
H. Schillings, Whitby
B. Smith, Uxbridge
G. Taylor, Pickering, attended the meeting at 8:20 PM
T. Watpool, Brock, Vice-Chair

Absent: I. Bacon, Member at Large
D. Bath, Member at Large
B. Winter, Ajax

Staff Present: K. Kilbourne, Project Planner, Department of Planning and Economic Development
N. Prasad, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

**1. Election of Officers for 2018**

K. Kilbourne called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Moved by Councillor O'Connor, Seconded by E. Bowman,
That Z. Cohoon be nominated for the position of Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Moved by E. Bowman, Seconded by F. Puterbough,
That nominations be closed.
CARRIED

K. Kilbourne asked if Z. Cohoon wished to stand. Z. Cohoon indicated he would stand.

Z. Cohoon was acclaimed as the Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

K. Kilbourne called for nominations for the two Vice-Chair positions of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Moved by Councillor O'Connor, Seconded by H. Schillings,
That F. Puterbough and T. Watpool be nominated for the positions of first and second Vice-Chairs, respectively, of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by K. Kemp,
That nominations be closed.
CARRIED

K. Kilbourne asked if F. Puterbough and T. Watpool wished to stand. F. Puterbough and T. Watpool indicated they would stand.

F. Puterbough and T. Watpool were acclaimed as the first and second Vice-Chairs, respectively, of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Z. Cohoon, Chair, assumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

**2. Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by F. Puterbough, Seconded by K. Kennedy,
That the minutes of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting held on December 5, 2017 be adopted.
CARRIED

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Presentation**

A) Heather McMillan, Durham Workforce Authority, Local Employment Planning Council (LEPC) Update

H. McMillan provided a PowerPoint Presentation regarding the Durham Workforce Authority.

K. Kilbourne asked if Z. Cohoon wished to stand. Z. Cohoon indicated he would stand.

Z. Cohoon was acclaimed as the Chair of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

K. Kilbourne called for nominations for the two Vice-Chair positions of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Moved by Councillor O'Connor, Seconded by H. Schillings,
That F. Puterbough and T. Watpool be nominated for the positions of first and second Vice-Chairs, respectively, of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by K. Kemp,
That nominations be closed.
CARRIED

K. Kilbourne asked if F. Puterbough and T. Watpool wished to stand. F. Puterbough and T. Watpool indicated they would stand.

F. Puterbough and T. Watpool were acclaimed as the first and second Vice-Chairs, respectively, of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Z. Cohoon, Chair, assumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

**2. Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by F. Puterbough, Seconded by K. Kennedy,
That the minutes of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting held on December 5, 2017 be adopted.
CARRIED

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Presentation**

A) Heather McMillan, Durham Workforce Authority, Local Employment Planning Council (LEPC) Update

H. McMillan provided a PowerPoint Presentation regarding the Durham Workforce Authority.

C) Joint Workshop with DEAC Update

Z. Cohoon advised that a subcommittee meeting was held on January 16, 2018. He advised that invitations and agendas for the Agriculture-Environment Climate Change Symposium have been sent out and that the meeting is being held at the Scugog Community Recreation Centre in Port Perry, on February 9, 2018.

D) 2018 DAAC Farm Tour

It was the consensus of the committee that Z. Cohoon, D. Risebrough, K. Kemp, F. Puterbough, and B. Smith form a subcommittee to discuss further details regarding the Tour. Discussion ensued with regards to the 2018 DAAC Farm Tour and possible locations, themes, and inclusion of all aspects of the agricultural service and supporting industries. Possible dates were discussed and it was the consensus of the committee that September 13, 2018 should be tentatively booked as the date for the Farm Tour.

E) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update

K. Kilbourne provided the following update on behalf of N. Rutherford, Manager, Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Department of Planning and Economic Development:

- The official media release announcing the Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Project was released on January 15, 2018. Volunteers are needed to conduct business interviews which are scheduled to start the week of February 26, 2018 as well as participants.
- Farms at Work is hosting a Farmland: Using it, Losing it & Protecting it workshop on February 1, 2018 in Millbrook. Speakers include: W. Caldwell, University of Guelph; P. Learmonth, Farms at Work; K. Enders, Ontario Farmland Trust; and OMAFRA representatives.
- There are two Ontario Soil and Crop Workshops being held at Region of Durham headquarters as follows: Growing Your Farm Profits (January 31, February 8 and 14, 2018) and Food Safety (February 21 and 28, 2018). K. Kilbourne will provide the registration link.
- The City of Kawartha Lakes is hosting an Unraveling the Red Tape: Food Regulations and On-Farm Building/Planning By-laws Workshop on January 26, 2018 in Little Britain. K. Kilbourne will provide the registration link.

- The Agri-Food Management Institute's Bon Appetite – Food Business Conference is scheduled for February 8 to 10, 2018 at the Best Western Plus Cobourg Inn and Convention Centre. K. Kilbourne will provide the registration link.

**6. Information Items**

A) Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2017 Annual Report and 2018 Workplan (2018-COW-7)

A copy of Report #2018-COW-7 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development regarding Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2017 Annual Report and 2018 Workplan was provided as Attachment #2 to the Agenda. Councillor O'Connor thanked Z. Cohoon for his knowledge and expertise as demonstrated at his annual update at the January 10, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting.

B) Solid Waste Management Servicing and Financing Study, Re: Bale Wrap (2018-COW-11)

A copy of Report #2018-COW-11 of the Commissioners of Finance and Works regarding the 2018 Solid Waste Management Servicing and Financing Study was provided as Attachment #3 to the Agenda. K. Kilbourne stated that Report #2018-COW-11 speaks to changes related to the collection of bale wrap at municipal waste disposal facilities. She advised that there will be a staff member from the Works Department at the next meeting to provide further information.

**7. Other Business**

A) Declarations of Interest Forms

Councillor O'Connor advised that there is a new Declarations of Interest Form that was approved at the December 13, 2018 Regional Council meeting. It was discussed that the form has to be submitted when a declaration of interest is made at a meeting.

B) DEAC Environmental Achievement Awards

K. Kilbourne advised that nominations for the DEAC Environmental Achievement Awards are due by March 2, 2018 and that copies of the nomination form will be provided by email.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next regular meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2018 starting at 7:30 PM in Boardroom 1-B, Level 1, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

**9. Adjournment**

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by G. Taylor,
That the meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM

_____
Z. Cohoon, Chair, Durham
Agricultural Advisory Committee

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N. Prasad, Committee Clerk