



# Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

## MINUTES OF THE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024, 9:30 AM

Via Zoom

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**MEMBERS** Heather Shobe, Eden Tree Farm, Chairperson  
**PRESENT:** Fred Boyko, Director, Electoral Area “B” (Beaufort)  
Helen Zanette, SD70 Trustee  
Jen Cody, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council  
Thom O’Dell, Ministry of Agriculture & Food  
Anna Lewis, Alberni Valley Food Security Society  
Bob Collins, Arrowvale Farm  
Tanya Shannon, Shannon Farms  
Patty Radcliffe, 4-H

**REGRETS:** Ann Siddall, Alberni District Fall Fair Association  
Pat Deakin, City of Port Alberni  
Cecilia Addy, Port Alberni Port Authority  
Erika Goldt, Coastal Agricultural Roundtable, Eat West Coast  
Lisa Aylard, Alberni Farmers’ Institute, Stonehaven Farm  
Victoria Lake, Effingham Oyster  
Alex Taylor, Shelter Farm  
Teresa O’Neil, Spirit Square Farmers Market

**STAFF PRESENT:** Amy Needham, Sustainability Planner  
Kristin Kerr-Donohue, Administrative Assistant

The meeting can be viewed on the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District website at:  
<https://www.acrd.bc.ca/events/20-2-2024/>

### 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 9:31 am.

The Chairperson recognized this meeting is being held throughout the Nuu-chah-nulth territories.

The Chairperson reported this meeting is being recorded and livestreamed to YouTube on the Regional District website.

The Chairperson provided instructions on how to communicate questions and/or comments during the meeting.

### 2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*MOVED:* A. Lewis  
*SECONDED:* T. Shannon

*THAT the agenda be approved as circulated.*

**CARRIED**

### **3. MINUTES**

H. Zanette joined 9:34 am

#### **a. Agricultural Development Committee Minutes – January 23, 2024**

*MOVED:* B. Collins  
*SECONDED:* A. Lewis

*THAT the minutes of the Agricultural Development Committee meeting held on January 23, 2024 be adopted.*

**CARRIED**

### **4. PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS & PRESENTATIONS**

#### **a. Paolo Eichelberger, Solid Waste Manager, ACRD Organics Diversion/Compost Presented by A. Needham**

- When it started:
  - Organics material has been collected by Earth Land and Sea (ELS) - in partnership with the ACRD since 2021. Organics have been processed for the last 2 years while fish waste was recently added at the end of 2022.
- What's the process:
  - Approximately 9,200 tonnes of organics have been collected since 2021 (roughly 2/3 from the city curbside program [food scraps, yard waste, etc.] and 1/3 from private hauling to ELS [food scraps, yard waste and fish waste]). All material is processed into Class A Compost, though ELS maintains two compost streams for sale: organics compost and fish waste compost. All organic material is processed through a coarse screener (5/8") in wet months, a fine screener (3/8") in dry months. This is done to break down the large pieces, speed up the composting process and generate a finer particle material which can be used by customers to amend their existing soil to boost nutrient growth. The finer material is typically windrowed under cover and aerated to provide consistent temperatures between 55 and 75 Celsius to ensure no pathogens remain. The process takes 6-8 weeks to turn around and generate the final product, though this can be affected by weather.

- A quick note on compost – never use it as a soil replacement. Because it is so rich in nutrients, planting something directly in compost (no soil) can kill your plants. Depending on your application, compost is added to potting soil, worked into crops or mixed into garden beds.
- Compost quality testing is done by ELS at an accredited lab. Typically, the quality is tested to ensure no heavy metals, organic pollutants or pathogens (such as fecal coliforms or salmonella) are present.
- How much is annually generated and what’s our waste footprint:
  - Annual organics has increased since 2021 from 1,850 tonnes to approximately 4,100 tonnes. We’ve increased landfill waste diversion 8% adding 5-7 years of life to the landfill footprint which is a major achievement. There is still a large percentage of organics entering the landfill based on a recent waste composition study, which shows a great opportunity to increase waste diversion, especially the commercial sector (more to come). This is one of the focuses on our Solid Waste Management Plan update, which is currently underway.
- Where to buy:
  - Class A Compost can be purchased at the Earth Land & Sea Compost Yard and Gravel Mart for \$67/yard (located at 4716 Tebo Ave in Port Alberni (250-724-6430)).

Committee discussion followed regarding fees to dump yard waste/organics at the AV Landfill, active locations to drop off yard waste/organics, signage and other options to get the information out to the public.

A. Needham will connect with the Community Services Department to get confirmation on fees and locations to drop off and report back to the Committee. She will also reach out to Randy Thoen for further clarification on the Fire Smart yard waste pickup program requirements.

H. Shobe question regarding timing of West Coast Landfill compost distribution program. A. Needham confirmed that Paolo will be presenting at the April 3 Coastal Agricultural Roundtable Meeting and will provide an update on the compost program then. H. Shobe wondering if a compost distribution program, like on the West Coast, will be coming to the Alberni Valley. A. Needham suggested, if for community garden, or other local project, to reach out to the City of Port Alberni to utilize a portion of the 10% allocated for City initiatives.

## **5. CORRESPONDENCE**

- a. **ALBERNI VALLEY FOOD SECURITY SOCIETY**  
2023 Impact Report

A. Lewis provided update on recent Seedy Saturday event. Attendance was up 34%, 688 attendees. Vendors and attendees were very happy with how the event went.

Prune Along Program has begun, instructor led, onsite pruning training. Pruning workshop scheduled for March 10.

The ACRD Committee of the Whole recommended to the ACRD Board of Directors that the Alberni Valley Food Security Society Grant in Aid be approved.

Working on overhauling gleaning program for this season. Hoping for two summer students this year.

**b. CTV News**

Sooty Bark Disease on Vancouver Island

Affecting trees in urban forest, studying to see if it can infect native maples, potential to affect local agriculture.

**c. CBC News**

Whirling disease in BC

*MOVED: H. Zanette*

*SECONDED: B. Collins*

*THAT correspondence items a-c be received.*

**CARRIED**

**7. REPORTS**

J. Cody left 9:55 am

**a. Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District – A. Needham**

• Procedural Update on Minute Adoption

Review of adoption procedure: Board of Directors receive the minutes, the Committee itself adopts the minutes at their next meeting, any necessary amendments are made at this time, once adopted it is posted to the website with electronic signatures.

• North Island College (NIC) Meat Processing Fundamentals Course

Course begins today, February 20, at NIC, 8 students, full class, with a wait list. Demand has not slowed for the industry.

The program received two grants this year, so the program is run in Port Alberni and at a second NIC campus.

• Islands Agriculture Show

Held on Feb 2 & 3 in Duncan. A. Needham attended and promoted agriculture in the Alberni Valley. Was able to meet the organizers this year and discussed hosting and organizing such a large event. Many good connections made with multiple organizations. Staff from other Regional Districts were impressed that ACRD has specific staff for Sustainability,

questions on how to support adding this position to their staff. Vendors who do multiple shows prefer the island one, over Abbotsford, as it is less overwhelming and busy, connections are better and able to speak with attendees more.

- On-Farm Water Workshop  
Held on Friday Feb 16 at Beaver Creek Community Hall. 16 producers attended, it was well run and received. Ted Van Der Gulik's presentation on irrigation systems was well tailored to producers' questions around water storage and licensing.  
Digital copy of the workbook coming, can distribute copies to those who would like one.  
2 Decoding Drought workshops coming up. Registration link: [Decoding Drought Management Engagement Sessions Info](#)
- Grant application updates
  - Food Security Emergency Planning Preparedness Grant application through IAF (Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC), decision expected in March
  - REFBC (Real Estate Federation of BC) Agricultural Water Infrastructure Top-Up expected in April
- KPU (Kwantlen Polytechnic University) Bioregional Food System Resiliency Study  
Participating in island-wide study with Kwantlen Polytechnic over the next 3 years. Seeking to model a region's food system resiliency. Will be a useful metric to see how far we have come on our Agricultural Plan mission of having 40% of food produced here to be consumed locally. Will be beneficial to have this completed prior to beginning updates on the Agricultural Plan in 2028. Two previous studies have been completed for the Lower Mainland and Okanagan; these can be found on the [Kwantlen Polytechnic - Institute for Sustainable Food Systems](#).
- Extreme Weather Preparedness Grant  
Application is open through Investment Agriculture Foundation, for properties with farm status only. FireSmart program is available to those without farm status. Contact Randy Thoen, [firesmart@acrd.bc.ca](mailto:firesmart@acrd.bc.ca) or 250-720-2700 to book an assessment.
- H.Shobe – Systems Change Project update call scheduled for Feb 28 at 1:00 pm. A. Needham will discuss staff positions and how ACRD got an Agriculture/Sustainability person on staff. Colin Dring attending to discuss BC Food Systems Network. Resource database and website updates coming for ACRD, list of resources and links to Agrifood organizations in the region.

c. School District # 70 – H. Zanette

SD70 have included Black Excellence Day in SD calendar. Indigenous focused Non-Instructional Day was held in January, all district staff were invited to attend. In the process of passing the amended budget, will be presented at next public meeting, Feb 27<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 pm at Wood School. Policy for public

consultation, Jordan's Principle and Environmental Stewardship Policy are being reviewed and adopted.

Question from T. Shannon regarding if the SD has any policies regarding bringing in food made at home, or if food brought into the classroom has to be made in a VIHA approved kitchen, as this is the current policy at her children's school. Looking for clarification on opportunities to bring in homemade treats/things from a farmers' market.

J. Cody joined 10:21

Discussion followed regarding other schools in the district and their rules surrounding foods in the classroom and whether this could set a negative precedent, wouldn't want this to become a blanket rule for the whole district. H. Zanette to look into any district policy surrounding this and will report back to the committee.

J. Cody – Haida Gwaii has done a lot of work on food safety guidelines and policies. Recommend looking into the work they have done to have local and Indigenous foods being in schools in a way that everyone feels safe: [Traditional Knowledge Leads the Way in Haida Gwaii's Food Systems | BC Healthy Communities](#)

d. Ministry of Agriculture & Food - T. O'Dell

Decoding Drought Workshops coming up in Cobble Hill and Courtenay, [Decoding Drought Management Engagement Sessions Info](#), jointly offered with Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship. Procedures around permits, channeling licensing during drought, and other topics to prepare farmers for what looks like another severe drought season. Knowledge Transfer applications are being accepted now, until the end of February, for spring intake, if there is interest in bringing in a speaker or holding an educational event there is funding available. Agristability funding for people affected by last year's drought event is still open, some support available for those affected by drought. Looks like more funding coming for farmers to purchase water storage and infrastructure, not open yet, but coming soon.

B. Collins – Farmland Advantage group looking at working on erosion on riverbank on his property. There were five other applications in Port Alberni. Encourages farmers to reach out if they have remediation issues on a water course.

A. Lewis – is the contact for this program, has reached out to majority of farmers who live on a body of water. Need to have farm status, with a business license, to be eligible.

e. Alberni Farmers' Institute – A. Needham reported for L. Aylard Farm Succession Workshop held on Saturday, Feb 17. Was a great event and will update further at the next meeting.

F. Boyko left 10:38 am

f. Alberni Valley Food Security Society – A. Lewis

Majority of update provided above, in section 5.a.

Tessa from Farm to School BC, A. Needham, & A. Lewis are organizing a learning circle around school gardens, seven different teachers enrolled.

B. Collins left 10:40 am

- g. Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council – Jen Cody  
Indigenous Foods Gathering coming up March 21 & 22 at Maht Mahs Gym and other grounds nearby. Attendees coming from many areas. Will be many workshops and key-note speakers. Focusing on Indigenous people actively engaged with food sovereignty.
- h. Primary Agricultural Producers
  - a. T. Shannon – Have wrapped up their maple syrup season. Was a very slow season this year, drastically less production than previous years, assuming combination of the drought summer and mild winter had negative effect on sap flow. Meeting with chef for next Gather and Graze dinner today, will be reviewing costs and setting ticket prices. Maple Market upcoming on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.
  - b. T. O’Dell – getting ready to install additional 25,000gal of storage for rainwater capture accessing the IAF Environmental Farm Plan Program. Will allow 50% peak production if all other water sources removed.
- i. Local Farmer’s Markets
  - a. H. Shobe – Second Annual Homesteading Market at Beaver Creek Community Hall on June 15<sup>th</sup>. They are looking for vendors, skill sharing and all things homesteading.
- j. 4-H – Patty Radcliffe  
Registration is underway, all has to be done through the provincial 4-H website. Planned to have meetings in February but had to cancel and not everyone was registered. Eight leaders and 14 kids registered, still waiting on at least one leader and six children. Hoping to have events and meetings soon and planning to hold manure sale fundraisers at both of the farmer’s markets in April/May. Have a new public Facebook page with more information.

*MOVED: H. Zanette*

*SECONDED: T. Shannon*

*THAT the verbal reports a-j be received.*

**CARRIED**

## **9. QUESTION PERIOD**

Questions/Comments from the public. The Administrative Assistant advised there were no questions or comments respecting an agenda topic from public:

- Participating in the Zoom webinar

- Submissions received by email at [responses@acrd.bc.ca](mailto:responses@acrd.bc.ca).

**10. ADJOURN**

*The meeting was adjourned at 10:52.*

The chairperson confirmed the next meeting will be held March 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am, via Zoom.

Certified Correct:

*Heather Shobe*

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Heather Shobe,  
Chairperson

*Kristin Kerr-Donohue*

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Kristin Kerr-Donohue,  
Administrative Assistant