



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

MINUTES OF THE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2024, 9:30 AM

Via Zoom

MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Heather Shobe, Chairperson, Eden Tree Farm
Ann Siddall, Alberni District Fall Fair Association
Fred Boyko, Director, Electoral Area "B" (Beaufort)
Helen Zanette, SD70 Trustee
Anna Lewis, Alberni Valley Food Security Society
Lisa Aylard, Alberni Farmers' Institute, Stonehaven Farm
Patty Radcliffe, 4H

REGRETS:

Tanya Shannon, Shannon Farms
Pat Deakin, City of Port Alberni
Kaley Ruel, Island Health
Cecilia Addy, Port Alberni Port Authority
Jen Cody, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
Thom O'Dell, Ministry of Agriculture & Food
Erika Goldt, Coastal Food Roundtable, Eat West Coast
Bob Collins, Arrowvale Farm
Victoria Lake, Effingham Oyster
Alex Taylor, Shelter Farm
Claire Boudreau, 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/18-6-2024/>

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 9:34 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.

Introductions - Committee Members and Staff via Zoom.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED: A. Lewis
SECONDED: H. Zanette

THAT the agenda be approved with the addition of item 7(a) request to send condolences from the Agricultural Development Committee to Bill Thomson on the recent loss of his wife, Dezi Thomson.

CARRIED

3. DECLARATIONS

4. MINUTES

a. Agricultural Development Committee Minutes – May 14, 2024

MOVED: A. Siddall
SECONDED: H. Zanette

THAT the minutes of the Agricultural Development Committee meeting held on May 14, 2024 be adopted.

CARRIED

5. CORRESPONDENCE

a. AGRISERVICE BC June 2024 Bulletin

b. LOWER MAINLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION 2024 Resolutions Disposition, Pitt Meadows proposed tax changes on pages: R46-Unfarmed Land Tax R47-School Tax Exemption R54-Minimum Income Requirements for Farm Classification

Committee discussion on the Pitt Meadows proposed tax change resolutions, how the farm-tax breakdown works, what qualifies on Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) land as farm-use, and the idea of having separated ALR Zones to be able to have separate policies based on the needs of the individual zones.

The committee does not support the resolutions as they are currently written and put forward a motion based on the following reasons:

- Unfarmed Land Tax and the removal of the School Tax Exemption would force property owners to farm all their ALR land. In the Alberni Valley this would require forested land to be logged to create arable land, having negative environmental and public impacts.

- Increase to the Minimum Income Requirements for Farm Classification on properties between two and ten acres would have a significant negative impact in a sector where the farming income is already at a narrow margin and fewer people are farming each year.
- Tax increases/changes aimed at Lower Mainland ALR property speculation issues should not negatively affect the rest of the producers on ALR lands in BC. Blanket restrictions and taxes on farmland will not encourage people to farm, it will make economically viable farming even harder to attain.

P. Radcliffe joined the meeting at 9:45 am.

MOVED: L. Aylard

SECONDED: F. Boyko

THAT the Agricultural Development Committee recommend that the ACRD Board of Directors not support the resolutions, R46-Unfarmed Land Tax, R47-School Tax Exemption, and R54-Minimum Income Requirements for Farm Classification, proposed by Pitt Meadows, at the 2024 Union of BC Municipalities Convention.

CARRIED

MOVED: A. Lewis

SECONDED: H. Zanette

THAT the Agricultural Development Committee receive items a-b for information.

CARRIED

6. REPORTS

- a. Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District – A. Needham
 - Greenhouse Grower Course – Amy met with North Island College (NIC) to discuss a fall grant application and course intake. NIC is responsible for developing the curriculum and confirming the teacher. Amy will be assisting with making the connections for where the program could be held. Also discussing options with NIC for evening/weekend course offerings open to the public, and an Indigenous-focused course.
 - The Request for Proposal for the Food Security Emergency Planning Project was awarded to Upland Agricultural Consulting. They have extensive background in agricultural and livestock emergency planning and have both an agricultural emergency expert on their team, as well as accessing local knowledge through Anna Lewis. The ACRD is planning to meet with them to launch the project soon and will be in touch with committees and agricultural groups as the schedule unfolds to begin engagement. Amy is planning to engage in person with the agricultural committees if possible. This will not be tied to any committee meetings; Amy will reach out individually to set up engagement. Amy recognized

that summer is an especially busy time for producers and that engagement might be better scheduled for the Fall or later.

- Amy has applied for the additional 25% of the Agricultural Water Infrastructure funding through the Watershed Security Fund. Should be informed by September 2024 if the application was approved. If not, then the stacking grant money will come from the Local Government Climate Action Program funds, which are distributed to local governments to help fund climate mitigation and adaptation projects such as this one.
- The Request for Proposals for the Agricultural Water Infrastructure project is out and closes on July 5, 2024.
- There will be an opportunity for discussion on the zoning bylaw agricultural resolution from the last ADC meeting at the June 19 Electoral Area Directors meeting.
- There was a request from the ADC last meeting to contact the BC Centre for Agritech Innovation to ask if they could attend the Fall Fair. Amy met with them on May 31 and has a follow-up meeting booked on June 26 with their team plus the City of Port Alberni and North Island College to discuss options for engagement. If they end up being unavailable for the Fall Fair there may be the option to invite them as a delegation to a future ADC meeting to showcase their projects and initiatives.

Comment from the Chair – there is one farmer in the valley who is very interested in developing Agritech to support harvesting on small blueberry farms, current technology is only available for large scale farms. Please share the information on this as it comes up.

- Previous discussion with the ADC has identified a desire for at least one in-person meeting per year. Committee members selected to have an in-person meeting in November instead.

b. ACRD System Change Project – H. Shobe

- Last meeting was held on June 12. View the [Final Presentation here](#). Discussion focused on networks and the importance of being strategic when developing to reduce redundancy and competition for resources, supporting high-level tables where members have explicit permission to make decisions for those they represent which is important for policy making, and that networks have a very clear mandate and stick to it.
- There is a lot of excitement that the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction now has a mandate to support food security and will give the opportunity to engage more with producers and will potentially give producers more voice and avenues to get support for what they need.
- Support engagement with producers by having meetings on the farms as this is the best way to educate.
- Regarding Farmers' Institutes, aiming to develop leadership and organizational capacity from within the farming community is important

to support the organizations themselves instead of having others speak for them.

- c. School District # 70 – H. Zanette
- Last Public SD70 Directors meeting before summer will be held June 25th at Wickaninnish School in Tofino
 - Annual budget was passed at their last meeting.
 - Staff Wellness Committee being set up, idea is to brand it and get staff engaged.
 - New Board and Committee meeting schedule has been committed to for 2025
 - Have adopted the Acceptable Use of Cell Phones, Smart Watches, and Electronic Device Use in Schools Policy, this is a Provincial requirement, the procedure will be posted on the SD70 website soon.
 - Tree Protection Policy is being drafted.
 - Kirsten Nesbitt is new Healthy Schools Manager.

Request from the Chairperson that we invite the SD70 Healthy Schools Manager to an ADC meeting. A. Needham is in contact with her through the Farm to School BC group and will invite her to an ADC meeting when she has settled into her new position.

- d. Alberni Farmers' Institute – L. Aylard
- Participated in the Homestead Market held by Beaver Creek Community Club on June 15, was well attended and many tables from the Alberni Valley and surrounding areas.
 - Represented the BC Cattlemen's Association at an event at Save-On-Foods supporting BC raised beef. Public engagement was great and had many interesting conversations regarding how and where to purchase meats directly from farmers.
- e. Alberni District Fall Fair – A. Siddall
- Currently do not have a convener for Agriculture Education, so that job is falling on Ann's shoulders.
 - Would be very interested to have the Agritech component at the Fall Fair, requested suggestions from the committee.
- Committee suggestions of potential tables for the Agriculture Building:
- New Fiber Guild to participate in the Agriculture Building, could have the whole production from sheep to the multiple products that can come from fleece harvest.
 - Wayne Smith, from Vancouver Island Grain and Milling, with his table-top combine display.
 - Matilda Atleo's traditional foods display would also be an interesting add to the Ag Building.
 - Nitanis Desjarlais also has an interesting Indigenous Food Gathering presentation/display.
 - Farmers' Institute will discuss their involvement in the 2024 Fall Fair Agriculture Building at their next meeting.
- f. Alberni Valley Food Security Society – A. Lewis

- Helped to get Haahuupayak School garden irrigation up and running.
- Helping Joanne get the Hupacasath garden set back up.

L. Aylard left the meeting at 10:46 am

- Summer student has been hired for 2024. Will be updating the [Community Food Offering Guide](#). They will be starting inventory of the meat from the meat cutter's course to be able to distribute to the SD70 Backpack program.
 - Final Grow Local Workshop will be on July 7th, focused on winter gardens.
 - [2024 Grower's Guide](#) is out, has been distributed, and is available digitally as well.
 - Starting to think about Family Farm Day and if anyone in the committee has any ideas of new farms or urban sites that would be interested, please reach out to Anna directly. Potential to have one of the school gardens participate.
- g. 4-H – P. Radcliffe
- Registration is now closed, kids are working hard on their projects now.
 - Provided a petting farm last weekend for the Pediatric Stroke Association Fundraiser and Walk. Part of the 4-H program involves community service and giving back to the community.
 - The Cloverbuds have gone out to the Cox Lake Blueberry Farm and learned from the beekeepers about the importance of pollination.

L. Aylard rejoined the meeting at 10:54 am

- 4-H Club will attend the Coombs Fair in August and the Fall Fair in September
- h. Primary Agricultural Producers
- A. Needham for T. Shannon
 - Shannon Farm - the weather has cooperated this spring for a great silage harvest and grass growth for feed, much better than last year.
 - The Cabin - the Gather & Graze event is well underway with planning, Saturday, July 27 is sold out, and spots are filling up for Friday, July 26. [Menu and poster available here](#). Contact Tanya at thecabin@shannonfarms.ca for more information.
 - L. Aylard – Stonehaven Farm
 - Grass and silage harvest has been very productive this year, not able to do hay yet, but a lot being able to be put away for winter feed.
 - Support for local beef and lamb has been very good, selling out very quickly, with little to no advertising.
- i. Directors Update - F. Boyko

- Advised the committee that a Log Train Trail meeting is being held on Tuesday June 18th at McLeans Mill.
 - Committee discussed that many agricultural producers have property that is adjacent to the trail and utilize the trail to access their water sources and neighbouring properties. Would appreciate better access point signage as are starting to have people parking on private property, potentially blocking equipment from being accessed. Signage regarding respectful use of the trail would also be appreciated, starting to see more garbage. Important that agricultural producers, especially those located on the trail, are included in these decisions.

MOVED: A. Lewis
SECONDED: A. Siddall

THAT the verbal reports a-i be received.

CARRIED

7. LATE BUSINESS

- a. Request from Pat Deakin to consider sending condolences to Bill Thomson on the recent death of his wife.**

MOVED: L. Aylard
SECONDED: A. Siddall

THAT the Agriculture Development Committee send their condolences, in the form of a gift and/or card, to Bill Thomson on the recent loss of his wife.

CARRIED

8. 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.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:08 am.

Certified Correct:

Heather Shobe

Heather Shobe,
Chairperson

Kristin Kerr-Donohue

Kristin Kerr-Donohue,
Administrative Assistant