



Hamilton

Agriculture and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee

REPORT 17-001

Monday, February 27, 2017

7:00 p.m.

Ancaster Fairgrounds

630 Trinity Church Road South, Ancaster

- Present:** Councillor B. Johnson
A. Spoelstra (Chair), D. Smith (Vice Chair),
C. McMaster, R. Shuker, A. Sinclair, K. Smith and G. Smuk
- Absent
with Regrets:** Councillor R. Pasuta – Sick Leave
Councillors L. Ferguson and J. Partridge - Personal
W. Galloway, J. Mantel, J. Medeiros, N. Mills and M. Switzer
- Absent:** P. Krakar and R. Saccomano
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**THE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRESENTS
REPORT 17-001 AND RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:**

1. Building Permit Final Inspection Letters (Added Item 8.3)

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton no longer issues letters upon a successful final inspection for fulfilling the conditions of a building permit; and,

WHEREAS, the applicant must request the letter and pay a \$150 fee; and,

WHEREAS, such letters are important for business records, insurance documentation, applying for tax/government rebates as well as other purposes; and,

WHEREAS, generating a final inspection letter should be a routine task that is easily done with the advent of electronic records,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the issue of the costs incurred when requesting a copy of a final letter of inspection (upon the successful completion of the requirements of a building permit), be referred to the Open for Business Sub-Committee for discussion and action.

Planning Committee – March 21, 2017

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE:

(a) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (Item 1)

The Committee Clerk advised of the following changes to the agenda.

1. ADDED DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.2 Surplus Dwelling Severances

8.3 Building Permit Final Inspection Letters

The agenda for the February 27, 2017 meeting of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee was approved, as amended.

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

(c) APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 3)

(i) December 12, 2016 (Item 3.1)

The Committee Clerk advised that there was an error in the December 12, 2016 minutes respecting Item (e)(i). It was not a "Level 3" drought that was declared in Hamilton but a "Level 2". Therefore this does not allow for access to certain government programs. The Committee Clerk will correct the minutes to rectify this error.

The minutes of the December 12, 2016 meeting of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee were approved, as amended.

(d) DISCUSSION ITEMS (Item 8)

(i) Farm Tax Rates and Farm Assessments (Item 8.1)

(i) Representative from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (Item 8.1(a))

Mr. Garth Rickwood, Manager of Valuation and Customer Relations, Municipal Property Assessment Corporate (MPAC) addressed the Committee respecting Farm Tax Rates and Farm Assessments. Mr. Rickwood was joined in his presentation by Ann Lehman-Allison, Stakeholder Relations with MPAC.

Planning Committee – March 21, 2017

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is available through the City Clerk's Office, Mr. Rickwood spoke about the following issues:

- Ontario's Assessment Cycle
- Assessing Farm Properties
- Farmland Sales Investigation
- Establishing Farm Values
 - Farmland
 - Farm Outbuildings
 - Residence
 - Residence Land
 - Other Buildings
- Farm Property Classification
- Overview of the 2016 Assessment Notice
- Farm Outreach Activities
- Farm Market Trends
- Third Party Analysis of Farmland Values in Ontario
- Annual Changes in Farm Values
- Hamilton Farmland Class Breakdown and Local Market Trends

The presentation from MPAC respecting Farm Tax Rates and Farm Assessments, was received.

(ii) Tom Hewitson, Current Budgets and Fiscal Planning, Finance and Corporate Services Department, City of Hamilton (Item 8.1(b))

Mr. Tom Hewitson, Manager, Current Budgets and Fiscal Planning, with the Finance and Corporate Services Department, City of Hamilton and Mr. Mike Zegarac, General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services, addressed the Committee respecting Farm Tax Rates and Farm Assessments.

With the aid of a handout (a copy of which is available through the City Clerk's office), Mr. Hewitson and Mr. Zegarac spoke about the following issues.

- Table listing the break-down of the various tax classes from 2013 and the percentage they have changed since that time
- Municipal Tax Rates by Class
- Preliminary Tax Impact by Farm Property Class

The presentation from Mr. Hewitson and Mr. Zegarac respecting Farm Tax Rates and Farm Assessments, was received.

(iii) Representative from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (Item 8.1(c))

Mr. Ben LeFort, Senior Policy Analyst, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), addressed the Committee respecting Farm Tax Rates and Farm Assessments.

Mr. LeFort provided an overview of assessment issues in the Hamilton-area as well as in Ontario overall. He stated that the OFA considers Hamilton's farm tax rate as progressive and he encourages the City to keep on this track.

The presentation from Mr. Ben LeFort respecting Farm Tax Rates and Farm Assessments, was received.

(ii) Surplus Dwelling Severances (Added Item 8.2)

Chair Spoelstra referred to a motion passed by the Committee at the June 21, 2016 meeting. The motion read as follows:

That staff be directed to explore what options are available to address concerns about the cost, length of time and general process used for the approval of Surplus Farm Residence Severances in the City of Hamilton and report back to the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee.

Chair Spoelstra asked the Committee Clerk to check with Planning and Economic Development staff about that status of this request and to add the item to a future agenda.

(iii) Building Permit Final Inspection Letters (Added Item 8.3)

Vice Chair D. Smith raised with the Committee an issue he recently encountered with a final inspection letter for a building permit. Mr. Smith stated that the building he constructed passed a final inspection and he requested a final inspection letter from the City as proof of this. He was told that there was a \$150 fee for this letter.

The Committee discussed this matter and passed a motion, as shown as Item 1, above.

(e) ADJOURNMENT (Item 12)

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Spoelstra, Chair,
Agriculture and Rural Affairs
Advisory Committee

Lauri Leduc
Legislative Coordinator
Office of the City Clerk