

Memo



Date: July 15, 2010
File: 0360-20 - Agricultural Advisory Committee
To: City Manager
From: Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)
Subject: 2010 Agricultural Tour - Request for funding

Report Prepared by: Greg Sauer, Land Use Planner

Recommendation:

That Council authorize funding from Council Contingency for a portion of the total cost, to a maximum of \$1,500, to host a fall 2010 Agricultural Tour in the Central Okanagan with the condition that at least one stop will be located within the City of Kelowna.

Purpose:

A multi-jurisdictional group comprised of staff and Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) members from the City of Kelowna, District of Lake Country, Regional District of Central Okanagan and staff representing the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands are proposing to host an Agricultural Tour in October, 2010. At this time the District of West Kelowna has not indicated any interest in participating though the offer has been extended for them to participate.

The date selected for the tour is Thursday, October 7th and has been strategically selected to coincide with the Thanksgiving long weekend, with Monday, October 11th a statutory holiday. It is hoped and anticipated that uptake and the ability to attend will be enhanced with provincial and federal government representatives potentially returning to the Okanagan for the Thanksgiving weekend.

Ideally an agriculture tour would occur near the beginning of a new Council term and would help inform Council's understanding with respect to considerations involving agriculture. Unfortunately it has been a number of years since the last Agricultural Tour was hosted in the Central Okanagan and as a result current municipal Councils have not benefitted from this experience. Past tours have yielded increased awareness and education and suggest that these one-day farm tours are worthwhile and have been well received by past attendees.

The primary objective for the tour is to showcase the importance and diversity of agricultural production in the Central Okanagan. A further goal is to identify limiting factors for agricultural production (e.g. land costs, water availability) in addition to showcasing contemporary realities for producers as a result of provincial and municipal decision-making (e.g. urban-rural interface, agri-tourism, etc.). It is anticipated that the tour would include horticulture, animal husbandry, and processing facilities at a minimum, however the itinerary has yet to be set.

The tour will accommodate a maximum of 97 participants. The target audience identified for the tour includes the following groups:

- Elected officials (municipal, provincial and federal)



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- Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) members
- Planners (municipal and provincial)
- Media
- General public (**empty seats may be sold depending on availability**)

Background:

The importance of agricultural land and agricultural production to Kelowna is significant and is largely responsible for the initial settling and evolution of Kelowna to present day. Despite immense agricultural viability in terms of soil and climate characteristics, the unique geography and climate also make Kelowna a highly desirable location to live, work and play. The impressive annual population growth rates (averaging between 2-4% for the last two decades) that Kelowna has witnessed in recent decades often demand new land to support new growth.

An unfortunate reality is that population growth often comes at the expense of arable land and agricultural productivity. Accommodating any growth and especially high rates of growth within a finite land base presents challenges and at times undesirable effects on agriculture. This is especially true in Kelowna where much of the undeveloped land base is zoned for agriculture purposes and is often contained within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The result is rezoning applications from an agricultural land use to a residential, commercial, or industrial land use and in the case of ALR land, applications for exclusion, subdivision, or non-farm use. When land is removed from agricultural zoning for urban land uses there is little chance that it will ever revert to productive land. Farm land lost should be viewed as a direct loss in production capacity in perpetuity.

The value and importance of agriculture locally is confirmed by farm cash receipts. Agriculture is BC's third largest primary industry, generating \$2.4 billion annually and providing for approximately half of BC's food requirements. In terms of revenue (farm cash receipts) \$2.4 billion averaged over the 4.7 million hectare provincial land base works out to approximately \$5 in farm cash receipts per hectare of land on average. In comparison, the City of Kelowna has a land base of 21,656 hectares and which generated \$53.0 million in cash receipts in 2006. The \$53 million averaged over the land base results in cash receipts averaging \$2,447 per hectare of land within the City's jurisdiction. As a very gross indicator of importance, it is fair to say that the value of agriculture locally far exceeds the provincial average.

In addition, other indicators suggest continually strong growth in the agricultural sector. For example, between 1996 and 2006, Kelowna's total farm capital increased by approximately \$414.5 million¹. A more encouraging trend is total gross farm receipts. Between 1996 and 2006 cash receipts increased from approximately \$34.7 million to nearly \$53.0 million. This increase of \$18.3 million in cash receipts represents a 53% increase in just one decade.

Other important and relevant statistics with respect to farm land include that 555 farms were reported in Kelowna in the 2006 national census with an estimated farm population of 1,665 persons. It is estimated that farm families represent 1.6% of Kelowna's total population.

Statistics such as those presented above are important and help to tell the story about the overall importance of agriculture in the Central Okanagan and Kelowna more specifically. Better than just understanding statistics regarding agriculture is having the opportunity to experience it first-hand. It is expected that by providing the opportunity to physically see/experience

¹ About 94.9% of this increase was accounted for by increases in the value of land and buildings.

constraints faced by agriculture and agriculturists, in addition to the opportunity to interact and hear from some of these individuals, that planners and decision-makers will be better situated to make decisions and recommendations in the interests of agriculture and agricultural land preservation.

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

The Agricultural Tour Subcommittee intends to host the 2010 Agricultural Tour on a “shoestring” budget. The largest anticipated cost to host this single day event relates to transportation costs and which has been quoted at \$1,808.80 inclusive of HST. Based on full capacity of the two coach-style buses, the cost for transportation is \$18.65 per person.

The hope is to identify and collect donations and in-kind support from the agricultural community to offset the cost of lunch and snacks for the tour participants. The BC Fruit Cooperative, BC Tree Fruits, Sun Rype and the British Columbia Wine Institute and independent wine producers/wineries are all potential candidates to assist with achieving this goal. Donations and in-kind support are hoped to be enough to keep the budget limited to transportation costs alone, but food costs may be incurred depending on the support received.

Sources of funding for transportation include a request to participating local governments (City of Kelowna, District of Lake Country, and the Regional District of Central Okanagan) to make an equitable contribution. It is also hoped that funding through the Investment Agriculture Foundation can be secured to partially offset the costs of the Tour.

Personnel Implications:

Mayor, Council, relevant and interested senior management, along with select Land Use Management and Subdivision staff will be asked to participate in this one day event.


The Agricultural Advisory Committee staff liaison along with a subcommittee comprising the District of Lake Country, and Regional District of Central Okanagan, along with their respective Agricultural Advisory Committees, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands will be responsible for organizing and hosting the Tour.

Submitted by:



S. Gambacort, Director, Land Use Management

Approved for inclusion:



Jim Paterson

cc: Signe Bagh, Director, Policy & Planning
Ryan Smith, Subdivision Approving Officer
City of Kelowna, Agricultural Advisory Committee
Carl Withler, Resource Stewardship Agrologist, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Brandy Ridout, Land Use Planner, Agricultural Land Commission
Martin Collins, Regional Planner, Agricultural Land Commission