

Model AAC Terms of Reference

Municipality/Regional District Agricultural Advisory Committee

Purpose: (add or subtract from this section to make it as detailed or simple as wanted)

The purpose of the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) is to establish and maintain constructive communication between the agricultural community and the Municipality/Regional District on agricultural issues. The AAC will be responsible for making recommendations to the Council/Board and providing feedback and advice when land use issues, economic development matters, and other initiatives are directly related to agriculture. The AAC may engage in activities to support the agricultural sector and collaborate with agencies and other organizations to promote agriculture, protect farmland, and enhance local food security.

Duties:

The AAC will (add or subtract bullets from this section as required):

- Review and make recommendations to the Council/Board regarding land use applications on lands within, and adjacent to, the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), and on properties zoned for agriculture within the Municipality/Regional District.
- Review and make recommendations to the Council/Board on applications initiated under the *Agricultural Land Commissions Act* (ALCA).
- Assist with the comprehensive review of policies and plans related to agricultural matters, as referred by the Council/Board, such as:
 - ◇ Zoning Bylaws
 - ◇ Official Community Plans
 - ◇ Neighbourhood and Comprehensive Development Plans
 - ◇ Agriculture Area Plans
 - ◇ Cultural and Heritage Plans
 - ◇ Parks and Recreation Plans

- ◇ Transportation Plans
- ◇ Policies impacting the agricultural 'edge' between farming and urban areas.
- Advise the Council/Board on issues and opportunities within the region/community, such as:
 - ◇ Irrigation, drainage, and water management
 - ◇ Climate adaptation (i.e., fire risk and drought)
 - ◇ Agricultural impacts on natural areas
 - ◇ Noxious insects, pests, and weed control
 - ◇ Opportunities for agri-tourism and associated value-added agriculture
 - ◇ Opportunities to promote rural and urban food projects
 - ◇ Policies and regulations regarding food processing and food security
 - ◇ Addressing competing land uses for the agricultural land base
 - ◇ The importance of agriculture and food processing in the local economy
 - ◇ Agricultural awareness and education initiatives
 - ◇ Major development proposals with the potential to impact agriculture
 - ◇ Other issues of importance to the local farming community and the viability of agriculture in the region/community.
- Make recommendations regarding other governmental or agency initiatives or policies that affect agricultural lands, activity, or productivity.
- Identify legislative or policy improvements that may support agriculture and seek funding and partnerships to build on local agricultural initiatives.
- Work with staff and the Council/Board, and upon request, with other levels of government on issues related to agriculture.
- Assist with other matters as referred by the Council/Board.

When reviewing documents impacting agriculture, the AAC may include, but are not limited to, comments on the following:

- The effect of the proposal on the agricultural potential of the subject property.
- The effect of the proposal on adjacent ALR properties and surrounding agriculture.
- The effect of the proposal on water resources and transportation issues.
- Where appropriate, possible alternatives to the proposal.
- Identification of issues relating to protection of the ALR lands specific to the application.

- The use of appropriate buffering techniques aimed at enhancing land use compatibility.

Membership:

Composition (use this subsection to describe the expected composition of the Committee members)

- Elected official representatives (i.e., a Chair and Vice Chair from the Council/Board).
- A staff liaison member (usually from the Planning department).
- Any non-voting members (i.e., representatives from the ALC, farmers from surrounding Regional District/s, local Health Authority, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, local producer associations, etc.).
- Breakdown specific representation desired from the farming or ranching community, if desired (for example):
 - ◇ (#) member/s from each commodity group (berries, poultry, dairy, etc., or other sectors important in the region)
 - ◇ (#) member/s from agricultural food processing and/or distribution including farm retail sales
 - ◇ (#) member/s from the agricultural community at large
 - ◇ (#) member/s associated with agri-tourism
 - ◇ (#) representative from an agricultural educational or research institution.

Appointment and Term (use this subsection to describe how the Committee forms)

- Members shall be appointed by the Council/Board to a term of (specific number) years.
- All terms will expire (on a chosen date **or**, after a specific number of months/years); appointments made partway through a year will be in effect until the end of the term.
- Members may re-apply to serve more than one term, up to a maximum of (specify) terms.
- The Chair and Vice Chair shall be (appointed by the Council/Board **or**, elected from the Committee membership at the first meeting each year).
- Committee members who are absent from (specify) consecutive meetings shall forfeit their appointment, unless such absence is authorized by resolution of the Committee (i.e., due to illness or other unavoidable absence).
- The Council/Board may, at any time, remove any member of the Committee by resolution and any member of the Committee may resign therefrom at any time upon providing written notice to (the Corporate Officer **or**, the Chair **or**, the Council/Board).

Qualifications (use this subsection to provide more details on who may become a Committee member)

The following are considered the minimum qualifications to serve on the Committee:

- Resident of the Municipality/Regional District.
- At least 19 years of age.
- Available to attend AAC meetings.
- Commitment to the AAC's duties.
- Ability to objectively review complex applications and planning considerations.
- Understand the agricultural planning framework and planning instruments including, but not limited to, Official Community Plans (OCPs), Agricultural Area Plans (if there is one in place), Zoning Bylaws, the *Local Government Act* and the ALCA.
- Have access to a computer and an e-mail address to receive and respond to communications and information including meeting packages.

Operations of the Committee: (use the following subsections to describe operations of the Committee in as much detail as desired)

Meetings

The Committee will function by way of regularly scheduled meetings, as follows:

- The Committee shall meet (insert frequency).
- Additional meetings may be held as determined by (the Chair **or**, the Council/Board), with (number) days notice and included in the notice will be the purpose for the additional meeting.
- The meetings will be held in open session and shall be open to the public (except for matters that would be dealt with in the closed portion of a meeting as defined in Division 3 of the *Community Charter*).
- The meetings shall normally be hosted at (place).
- An agenda for the Committee will be prepared by (specify) and sent to the Committee members (number) days in advance of the meeting.
- The quorum of the AAC is (greater than 50% of members **or**, specify other).
- Meeting minutes will be prepared by (staff liaison **or**, specify other), signed by the Chair and forwarded to the Council/Board.

Reports

Communication between the Committee and the Council/Board will be as outlined:

- Recommendations and other reports to the Council/ Board will be forwarded after being adopted by a motion of the Committee.

- The (staff liaison **or**, specify someone else) will forward communication to the Council/Board.
- An annual report to the Council/Board is expected by (specify month) each year to highlight and outline the achievements and activities of the Committee.

Delegations

From time-to-time individuals, organizations, subject matter experts, or other relevant guests may participate in a meeting:

- The Committee may invite speakers or accept delegation requests.
- The Committee may hear and consider representations by any individual, organization, or delegation of citizens on matters pertaining to the Committee's purpose, subject to approval of the Chair.
- The delegation must be identified in advance as an item on the agenda.

Resources

Staff assistance and resources will be provided to the Committee as necessary:

- Routine operational costs (and/or specify other costs) will be funded by the Municipality/Regional District.
- AAC members shall serve without remuneration but may, from time to time, and on a resolution of the Council/Board, be reimbursed for expenses they incur while performing their functions.
- The (specify department) will provide (specify staff position) as an appointed staff liaison to provide support with Committee matters and reporting.
- Secretarial support for the Committee will be provided by the (clerk's office **or**, specify other).

General Terms: (use these subsections to describe any final terms in as much detail as desired)

Rules of Procedure

- The AAC will not have authority to implement change or alter current policies, procedures and practices. However, the Committee may make recommendations to the Council/Board as it sees fit.
- In their recommendations to the Council/Board, the AAC may request that staff be directed to investigate certain matters with respect to policies, procedures, and practices.

All Committee members will act in a professional manner as representatives of the Municipality/Regional District and will:

- ◇ Devote necessary time to prepare for the items on the agenda
- ◇ Be prepared to provide feedback and engage in discussion

- ◇ Be respectful of all others' thoughts and opinions
- ◇ Respect and uphold any confidentiality requirements outlined in their general orientation.

External Communications

- All official representation of the AAC is through the Chair or their designate. All other members of the Committee are not permitted to speak to the media as representatives of the Committee.
- Committee members will not represent themselves as having any authority beyond the Terms of Reference.

Conflict of Interest

AAC members must abide by the "conflict of interest" provision outlined in the *Community Charter* as amended or replaced from time to time. If a conflict of interest arises between an AAC member attending a meeting and the matter being discussed, the member must declare a conflict of interest and state the general nature of the conflict. After making such declaration, the member must not take part in any discussions on the matter, must immediately leave the meeting, and must not attempt to influence any member at any time in relation to the matter.

Notes:

Depending on the category of Committee established by the local government (Select, Standing, or Advisory Planning Commission), the intent and wording written within a specific local government's AAC Terms of Reference must be consistent with the provincial *Local Government Act* and *Community Charter*.

This model Terms of Reference was adapted from the Agricultural Land Commission document: [Planning for Agriculture – Resource Materials \(1998\)](#) (chapter 9, page 67) which developed the Model Terms of Reference from a review of past Terms of Reference of several Agricultural Advisory Committees, as well as a review of current Terms of References from operating AACs within the province.



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