

Appendix A

City of Kingston Official Plan Review Summary Feedback Report

Input received on the Agricultural Study

March 2007

Report from Public Open House and Workshops held on November 30 and December 6, 2006



This report has been prepared by the independent facilitator. It is not intended as a verbatim account and is provided here as a record of the input. Direct Comments on the report to: Sue Cumming, MCIP RPP, Cumming + Company, Tel: 416 406-6607 cumming@total.net

Agricultural Study

1. The Agricultural Study

The Agricultural Study is an important building component for the development of the new Official Plan. The first round of public input to the Official Plan was held on November 30 and December 6, 2006. One public open house was held on December 6 in the morning and three workshops were held - one in each of the afternoons on November 30 and December 6 and one in the evening on December 6. The public sessions were advertised through notices in Kingston This Week, the Whig-Standard, and the City's web site and through letters to an extensive list of community and business stakeholders. Over 140 people attended. The Official Plan consultation sessions were intended to identify issues and to learn of ideas for consideration as part of the development of a draft Official Plan document. It was also designed to present recently completed or ongoing background reports including the Regional Commercial Study Update, the Agricultural Study and initial findings of the Downtown and Harbour Architectural Guidelines Study. The emphasis of these sessions was to engage and listen to the public. The scheduling of these events was planned to optimize participation by ensuring that the public had the opportunity to attend during the day and in the evening. At the workshop held on November 30th and at the Open House and Workshops on December 6, 2006, Clark Consulting Services overviewed their key findings on the Agricultural Study. The workshop on November 30 was focused on rural issues and in addition to receiving general comments, there were a number of specific discussion questions where input was sought. These same questions were utilized for the sessions on December 6 through the opportunity to review the Clark Consulting presentation and to have informal discussions with Bob Clark. Comment forms were also available. The following summary of public includes the workshop discussion on November 30 where over 30 people attended and the written comments received at the December 6 sessions from six individuals.

2. Suggestions to address the changing nature of farming.

The public was asked based on what you they heard from the presentation, for suggestions to address the changing nature of farming. The following comments were noted:

2.1. Policies suggested

A discussion took place on what policies people would like to see considered in the Official Plan that would address the changing nature of farming.

2.1.1. Comments notes which appear to be widely held by many participants

The following opinions were frequently noted and which appear to be widely held by many participants that should be considered.

Frequently noted comments raised by the public

- Ensure the long-term protection of agricultural land while moving forward with policies and incentives that would support the viability of farming.
- Large areas and rural land should be designated and protected for agricultural use.
- Good farmland should be protected from development.
- Development should be restricted where it will interfere with farm operation and present increased costs to taxpayers in future or where farm operations might cause excessive exposure of residents to farm chemicals and pesticides.
- Protect natural heritage features with setbacks when "development" occurs on farms.

2.1.2. Comments noted by a number of individuals

The following points are other comments that were noted for consideration by those attending the workshop sessions. These points highlight issues and concerns raised by a number of individuals.

- Integration of health and welfare of community with all aspects of farming should be a goal of the Official Plan policies.
- Nutrient management /source water protection / Clean Water Act results in loss of community.
- Need to consider policies supporting establishment of Agricultural Land Trust.
- Make it easier to be successful in small farming activities by reducing restrictions.
- More flexibility is needed for allowing family members (grown kids) to have housing on farms through long-term leases instead of requiring severances which then divides the land.
- We must preserve, enhance, compatible land uses. The municipality should promote farming practices.

2.2. Role of the City in promoting farming

The role of the City in promoting farming was a key issues raised at November 30th workshop. Those from the rural community noted that there needs to be an increased awareness of the importance of agriculture within the City. Many expressed concerns that they feel underrepresented on Council and feel that there need to be more focus and action on working with the rural community. The following are specific ideas and comments were put forward:

2.2.1. Comments notes which appear to be widely held by many participants

The following opinions were frequently noted and which appear to be widely held by many participants as important messages.

Frequently noted comments raised by the public

- Rural /urban disconnect noted.
- Need for a champion at City Hall to advocate on behalf of the farming community.
- Lack of strong representation at Council with only one Councillor representing the rural area.
- Focus at City Hall is on urban issues.
- More support needed on promoting farming practices.
- Create a liaison role with the farming community to sort out farming problems – an ombudsmen type of function – municipal road liaison.
- Need to strike a task force to develop ideas and bring the agricultural community together with urban representative.
- City encouragement of local food purchasing.

2.2.2. Comments noted by a number of individuals

The following points are other comments that were noted for consideration by those attending the workshop sessions. These points highlight issues and concerns raised by a number of individuals.

The following points were noted:

- There needs to be more support from the City in promoting farming practices.
- It was suggested that the municipal ward boundaries be restructured for the 2010 election to have at a minimum two councilor representing the rural area.

- The City should encourage and assist farmers in providing local food to local people.
- Buy local! A small farmer's market in the west end would be desirable. If the City supports other development, why not support farmers market in the west end of Kingston!
- To make available information to rural residents and farm operations – items such as the OMAFRA fact sheets and other information in hard copies.
- The city should develop an incentive program to support pilot initiatives and incubators for rural economic development to encourage new uses and to support small scale home industries and operations, farm industries, etc.

2.3 Improvements required for municipal services in the rural area:

The following improvements were noted:

2.3.1. Comments notes which appear to be widely held by many participants

The following opinions were frequently noted and which appear to be widely held by many participants as important messages.

Frequently noted comments raised by the public

- Protect water supply
- Drainage is a number 1 issue for all farms.
- Drainage remediation is an issue.
- Roads and hydro would be required for marketing way of a co-op.
- Good roads.
- Transportation and communication infrastructure should be enhanced.
- Places for rural people to congregate to inside and outside.

2.3.2. Comments noted by a number of individuals

The following points are other comments that were noted for consideration by those attending the workshop sessions. These points highlight issues and concerns raised by a number of individuals.

- Alternate energy
- No encroachment on farms
- Busing in the rural area.
- Snow ploughing and road maintenance not as good post amalgamation.
- Look at old rights of way not developed in rural areas for increased access.

3. Ideas and policies to encourage uses which support farming operations

3.1. Comments notes which appear to be widely held by many participants

The following opinions were frequently noted and which appear to be widely held by many participants as important messages.

Frequently noted comments raised by the public

- Support local production and markets.
- Identify needs and support for small family farms.

- Create places to sell products; not just a farmers but owners of small pieces of property. Need more indoor farmers markets. Suggestion to create farmers markets in an outlying area (i.e. MacAdoo Raceway).
- Improve access to urban market (infrastructure and marketing).
- Explore ideas for increasing the ability to supplement the farm income on property (i.e. using existing facilities – small industry).

3.2. Comments noted by a number of individuals

The following points are other comments that were noted for consideration by those attending the workshop sessions. These points highlight issues and concerns raised by a number of individuals.

The following points were noted:

- Pay attention to food security - availability of land, access to markets.
- Combine uses of small farms and leased land to make a larger farm operation especially if landowners are required to uses A1 to A3 for agricultural uses because they get tax incentives.
- Put farm land to use even if it is for tree farming.
- Recognize flexible farm lot size based on type of agriculture.
- Look at potential for distribution co-ops (trucking for several farms).
- Urbanites need to recognize that there are dust and odours.
- More education of the public – doesn't get to the right people; elementary school kids are being taught but very few kids connected to farming.
- Only large farms pay, second jobs are needed - not economical for full-time farming.
- Indoor markets, niche growers were highlighted in a KEDCO Pamphlet – not sure of impact.
- Promote organic feast of fields.

4. Ways to encourage new small scale farming practices

There was a discussion on ideas and policies that people that people would like to see in the Official Plan that would encourage new small scale farming practices with direction to consider and support partnerships through farmer's markets, cooperative processing and distribution of locally grown food.

4.1. Comments notes which appear to be widely held by many participants

The following opinions were frequently noted and which appear to be widely held by many participants as important messages.

Frequently noted comments raised by the public

- Indoor all season farmers market.

4.2. Individual Comments

The following points are other comments that were noted for consideration by those attending the workshop sessions.

1. Public procurement: guaranteeing markets to local farmers through public contract for food programs is a key economic development strategy in many Canadian and U.S. Cities. University of Toronto has just introduced such a policy.
2. CSA Promotion—community shared agriculture (CSA) is an excellent direct marketing method for local growers—few middlemen = higher share of food dollar for farmers = increased profitability.

3. Business development funding: targeting local processing initiatives—KEDCO.
4. Co-operative processing makes the operation affordable.
5. A good example to consider is the Desert Lake Gardens, an organic produce and now supplier, distributor and restaurateur near Sydenham, Ontario. The City should talk with Desert Lake Gardens to learn their experiences. They are true rural entrepreneurs who value the environment.
6. Farm vacations would be a new use to support the farm with no downside.

5. Dealing with regulations and restrictions on agricultural practices

The discussion on how the Official Plan should deal with regulation and restrictions on agricultural practices identified the following points:

5.1. Comments notes which appear to be widely held by many participants

The following opinions were frequently noted and which appear to be widely held by many participants as important messages.

Frequently noted comments raised by the public

- Acknowledge that farming is unique.
- Concerns about protection of natural heritage.
- Impact of nutrient management and source water protection.
- Issues about code of practice.
- There needs to be a firm definition of boundaries.
- Emphasis on small farms; organic farms; diverse/mixed farming.
- The City should emphasize its ability to provide information and services to farmers.

5.2 Comments noted by individuals

The following points are other comments that were noted for consideration by those attending the workshop sessions. These points highlight issues and concerns raised by individuals.

1. There are chunks of farmland that are not big enough to be protected under Provincial policy but we still need to recognize it as agricultural land and protect it as a resource.
2. The current system of provincial assessment with farming assessed as a commercial operation is not helpful to the farmer.
3. Support upper-tier policies.
4. There should be less regulation, but more education.
5. Let farmers farm and police their own industry.
6. With respect to pesticides: they cause cancer for farmers and others in the food chain. The City should promote organic practices through a long-term phasing out of many agri-chemicals.
7. With respect to water: contamination from feedlots and pesticide run off in environmentally unsustainable and therefore economically unsustainable. Long-term phase outs are the solution.
8. For soil conservation: encourage diversified farming and cover cropping by encouraging local market growth and a turn away from monoculture commodity farming.
9. A land use policy could discourage large feedlots or industrial hog farms.
10. Development should not be permitted where it will create conflicts around agricultural practices now and in the future (noise, smell, pesticide use). Essentially, most residential development in the rural areas is urban sprawl and should be borne by those creating them. For example, the need for improved public transit, and the need for more and better highways when highways are converted to residential streets with reduced speed limits.

6. Candidate areas and long term protection in an agricultural designation

Clark Consulting presented information and asked whether there was agreement with the candidate areas shown and their designation for long term protection in an Agricultural designation? The following responses were noted.

6.1. Comments notes which appear to be widely held by many participants

The following opinions were frequently noted and which appear to be widely held by many participants as important messages.

Frequently noted comments raised by the public

- Good agricultural land should be protected for agricultural (for the future).
- Agricultural designation may be too restrictive based on current farm economic situation – leave it rural with the option for farming.

6.2. Comments noted by a number of individuals

The following points are other comments that were noted for consideration by those attending the workshop sessions. These points highlight issues and concerns raised by a number of individuals.

- Protect what we have and what we can get.
- Look into land trusts.
- Agricultural Land designation restricts severances. The rural designation allows more flexibility.
- Kingston Township has lots of land but not many farms and limited water.
- Pittsburg drain to be addressed – another investment into soils – raises soil capability classification.
- Would like to see how the designation would allow for the fair price of land.
- There needs to be an area of viable farms – to help them stay in business.
- Provide support should be provided beyond the Planning Act.

7. Individual comments received on the Agricultural Study

The following individual comments about the Agricultural Study and input to the Official Plan Review were noted:

1. The current practice in Kingston makes it too easy to amend the zoning. Kingston is too developer friendly. The Ontario Municipal Board how it is currently configured is not useful to those wishing to restrict unrestrained development.
2. Hopefully, the City will become an active partner in the “building a sustainable local food system” project now beginning. The National Farmer’s Union will seek participation in the Project Steering Committee from a variety of food system stakeholders (farmers, restaurateurs, retailers, processors, food bank, meal providers, public health departments, college/university professors and students and all citizens). The City should be on this committee as it works towards a local food system speaker series, conferences, local food policy council, and a local food charter for the Kingston area. To be successful this initiative will require public leadership.
3. There needs to be a flexible planning approach adopted for encouraging and managing agricultural and rural land uses that supports long-term protection and ongoing viability of farming operations.
4. There is a need for caution in introducing uses that could conflict with farming operations. Severances for non-rural and farming uses – i.e. residential and entertainment and other non-rural

uses create many issues. The planning approach has been too flexible in some instances to the detriment of the farming community.

5. Planning documents are sometimes too flexible – anything goes.
6. The Provincial Policy Statements should be considered as a minimum standard.
7. If Kingston aims to truly integrate the rural areas, I think that they will need to do these 2 things: Come up with a new representation formula: solely by population means that they will forever be underrepresented. Secondly there needs to be facilitation of local markets for produce from the farms into the city would go a long way to integrate the rural areas into City of Kingston life.
8. Ribbon development currently exists along most rural roads. The new plan should allow anyone with property along an existing road to sever of as many lots as they want as long as they have the road frontage of 200 feet and meet requirements for septic and water without doing a plan of subdivision.
9. Infilling is fine below the 401 but don't try and force everyone to live in that area. Allow the creation of nice lots in the rural areas as it is only going to increase your tax base and give people a choice of where to live. Otherwise they will go to other counties to get the property that is more suited to their lifestyle.
10. One individual wrote that he would like the City to consider allowing more severances in the rural area. He indicates that by only allowing the severance of two lots with anything after that being a plan of subdivision, that this is too costly and makes no economical sense thus stifling any future lot creation. He further notes that he is not talking about allowing lots for new development where more roads have to be put in but on lands that have an existing road. He notes that not everyone wants to live in the area south of 401.
11. There was a question from a local high school student about urban agriculture and what regulations would deal with a community garden project, in the City and specifically in the Calvin Park – Portsmouth neighbourhoods. He inquires about the possibility of use park land within the City to grow a communal garden or church lands or a network of home gardeners.
12. We do not need the creation of new non-farm lots. This is not consistent with the Official Plan.