

**City Of Kingston**  
**Information Item To The Rural Advisory Committee**

**To:** Rural Advisory Committee

**From:** George Sutherland, Chair

**Date Of Meeting:** February 29, 2016

**Subject:** 2015 Rural Advisory Committee Report Card

**Summary Of The Discussion Item:**

The Rural Advisory Committee (RAC) exists to provide consultative leadership and advice to staff and Council on matters of rural interest, as it relates to residential, agricultural and Council matters. Additionally, the committee represents Kingston’s rural residents. In 2015, RAC accomplished many initiatives, like servings as a forum for public discussion to examine issues of interest or impact to the rural community, specifically hosting a large renewable energy public meeting in August 2015. RAC members were integral in the process, and advised Council on what applications should receive a municipal resolution.

This marks the end of the fourth full year of operation of this committee. Over 2015 the committee held six meetings (February, March, May, June, August and October)

In May 2015 a work plan was presented to the Rural Advisory Committee outlining the priorities identified by members in previous meetings. The work plan is regularly updated to reflect additional priorities for the Council term. The Rural Advisory Committee identified the following areas of interest in their committee work plan as integral for success:

	<b>Priorities/Initiatives</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Status</b>
1.	Improve engagement of rural residents and outreach to constituents.	Q1 2016	
2.	Rural transportation options including education to the public (including Kingston Access Bus).	Q2 2016	
3.	Review of land and employment use in rural area and update of the Official Plan.	2015-2016	Complete - October 2015
4.	Employment and businesses in rural area.		
5.	Promotion of rural area and recognition of its importance to urban residents.	2016	
6.	Consider partnering initiatives with bordering municipalities.		

	<b>Priorities/Initiatives</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Status</b>
7.	Review of long term infrastructure projects in the rural area based on 10 year capital plans.	December 2015	Complete - Road Project Selection Methodology Information Report on past and current (2015-2018) multi-year infrastructure programs and roads identified in the rural areas.
8.	Review winter control and road repairs in rural area. Reports to Rural Advisory Committee twice per year.	December 2015	Complete
9.	Update on Emergency Response Plan in the Rural area - especially as it relates to railway transportation.	Q1 2016	
10.	Obtain information and review local resident satisfaction in Eastview.		
11.	Waterfront Master Plan	2015	Complete - October 2015
12.	Use of Memorial Centre grounds as it relates to the Agricultural Fair.	Q1 2016	
13.	Signage for Hamlets, Highway 15, historic names and signage to create more awareness about agricultural area.	Q4 2015	Last sign on Hwy 15 to be installed by Dec 15/15
14.	Public information sessions on various topics (i.e. water wells & septic systems/secondary suites).	2016	
15.	Climate Action Plan	December 2015	Complete
16.	Level of maintenance for natural parks in rural area.	2016	
17.	Policy/procedures for brush back on roads  motion:  <b>That</b> a plan and set of procedures be developed in order to address deficiencies in roadside maintenance on rural roads, and a report be brought back to the Rural Advisory Committee in	Q1 2016	

	<b>Priorities/Initiatives</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Q1 2016 for future budget consideration.		
18.	Review of Large Renewable Procurement projects.	Summer 2015	Complete – August 2015
19.	Report back on implementation of site design guidelines for existing solar projects.	December 2015	Complete

The Committee has completed seven (7) items on its work plan in 2015, and will continue to pursue its goals and projects in 2016.

**Mandate Considerations:**

The Rural Advisory Committee pursued consultation, demonstrated leadership and served as an avenue of communication between the City of Kingston and the rural community.

The mandate of this committee is to represent the interests of Kingston’s rural residents, as they relate to residential, agricultural and rural-business matters, specifically:

1. To serve as a forum for public discussion to examine issues of interest or impact to the rural community, including but not limited to:
  - a. municipal services/infrastructure
  - b. use of private and/or public land
  - c. environmental issues
  - d. socio-economic matters
  - e. wildlife management
  - f. transportation and utility corridors
  - g. snowmobile and ATV use
  - h. hunting and firearms
  - i. trails and private property
  - j. emergency services, access to health and social services and service delivery in rural areas
  - k. proposed or existing federal or provincial legislation, policies and programs
  
2. To provide input and advice as required , through Council or a standing committee of Council on issues of interest or impact to the rural community, including but not limited to:
  - a. municipal studies, plans, by-laws and proposed projects that may have a potential rural implication
  - b. development of policies and programs
  - c. municipal economic strategies
  - d. implementation of federal and provincial legislation and programs
  - e. potential funding opportunities
  - f. strategies to improve the delivery of municipal services, programs and information and ways in which these strategies can meet the needs of rural residents

- g.** rural land stewardship programs or proposed projects of the city, community groups or other agencies

(By-law Number 2010-205; 2011-64)

- 3.** Review and recommend appropriate means and methods of communication, including information sessions, public meetings or other to communicate City information to rural residents and promote two-way communication between rural residents and the city.

**Discussion:**

In 2015, the committee was involved in a number of initiatives. This began with receiving information on planning applications that were identified as having significant public interest in the rural area. That was followed by a rural parks update which prompted the committee to pass a motion that the City could examine portions of open space that are not environmentally protected areas to ensure they are properly maintained. The committee also received information on the estate residential review and advised staff on hamlet designation and lot severances.

In 2015, the committee was a conduit for receiving public input regarding proposed solar projects from 3 proponents, prior to hosting the public meeting. Delegations regarding Aragon Road; brush back on rural roads and issues of rezoning Bylaws and applications for changes to the Official Plan via delegations. The committee listened to several delegations and items of correspondence which aided committee members in advising staff on these areas of concern and creating real change to help rural residents.

The committee learned about rural parks maintenance, ensured that signage for hamlets, Highway 15, historic names and signage to create more awareness about agricultural area were installed and advocated for the Secondary Suites Program – Kingston East Area Expansion, stating that there is a demand for secondary suites in the rural area.

The Rural Advisory Committee aided staff and Council with the Municipal Process for Large Renewable Procurement (LRP) applications. The committee identified that receiving information and providing input and advice prior to Council consideration of large ground mounted solar energy project applications was monumental in ensuring community concerns are addressed. This led to the committee hosting a public meeting as part of the Large Renewable Procurement Process (LRP), residents were invited to attend the Rural Advisory Committee Meeting on August 20, 2015, to review the large renewable procurement applications in the City of Kingston. Decisions made at this meeting were considered by a special meeting of Council on August 26, 2015. This public meeting was an opportunity for residents to have their voice heard, view presentations from the renewable energy proponents, ask questions, and provide feedback on each specific application. This process was seamless and extremely successful.

Committee members put in countless hours

The year ended with the committee receiving a Five Year Update to the Official Plan (OP) – Proposed Rural Area Changes report from staff. The committee highlighted local food policies language, the importance of encouraging rural business and advised that the definition of

clustering in the OP needs to be updated. RAC also received an update on the Waterfront Master Plan and provided feedback on Grass Creek Park, identified opportunities with developing the trail network and having more connectivity in the rural waterfront.

In an overall review of 2015 the committee...

**Recommendation:**

**That** the 2015 Rural Advisory Committee Report Card be approved as a summary of the work accomplished, and the future goals of the Rural Advisory Committee.