



Committee Report

To: Warden Mitch Twolan
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

From: Kara Van Myall
Director of Planning and Development

Date: June 20, 2019

Re: Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) and Natural Heritage Study (NHS) Project Update Report

Recommendation:

That the Land Evaluation and Area Review and Natural Heritage Study Project Report has been provided for information; and

That Committee adopt the membership of the LEAR Steering Committees as outlined; and

That Committee endorse two members of County Council to be members of the NHS Steering Committee; and

That the Committee provide direction to proceed with the RFP for the Natural Heritage Study.

Background:

Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR):

On March 15, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) provided a draft of the Bruce County LEAR results, using the same methodology that was used in mapping the Agricultural System in the area of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The mapped results of the draft Bruce County LEAR exercise appear to generally align with the larger prime agricultural areas designated on Schedule 'A' of the current Bruce County Official Plan. A meeting with OMAFRA staff was held to discuss the parameters used in the evaluation, as well as mapping refinements and possible next steps.

In a Report to Committee on March 21, staff had suggested that the composition of the LEAR Steering Committee should be, as follows:

- One or two members of County Council,
 - Anne Eadie, Planning and Development Committee Chair (Mayor of Kincardine),
 - Chris Peabody, member of Council (Mayor of Brockton);
- Two individuals representing the Agricultural Sector,
 - Les Nichols, Bruce County Federation of Agriculture

- Robert Emerson, Executive Director, Bruce County Federation of Agriculture;
- One or two individuals of Local Councils,
 - Steve Hammell, Mayor of Arran-Elderslie,
 - James Mielhausen, Northern Bruce Peninsula Councilor,
 - Mike Niesen, South Bruce Councilor;
- Bruce Stickney, Manager of Land Use Planning
- Mark Paoli, Senior Planner, Project Manager.

Currently we have one additional elected official that has agreed to participate on the LEAR Steering Committee, bringing the total to nine (9) members. Staff has no concerns with the current composition.

Planning for agricultural areas and uses does not preclude the need to plan for the long-term protection of natural heritage features and areas and therefore, the timing of both studies moving forward in concert is important.

It is a common and often appropriate municipal practice to use an overlay approach in the Official Plan to identify natural heritage systems and they often may contain agricultural uses. Reviewing where this dual function exists, should be considered when the County moves forward with its Official Plan review.

Natural Heritage Study (NHS):

On April 18, the Committee directed staff to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) from consultants to perform a Natural Heritage Study for the County of Bruce; and further directed staff to return to the Committee before contracting with a consultant or proceeding with the study.

The delay at the time was in response to a letter from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, suggesting that more information would follow related to the Province's streamlining and housing supply objectives. Since that time first reading was given to Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act on May 2, 2019 that is proposing changes to the Planning Act, Local Planning Appeals Tribunal Act, Development Charges Act, Conservation Authorities Act, and more. In addition, the More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan has been released.

Bill 108 also proposes to make changes to the Endangered Species Act to clarify certain matters and give the Minister additional powers; the Environmental Assessment Act to exempt certain undertaking for class assessments, clarify certain matters and update the name of the Minister or Ministry; and, the Environmental Protection Act, to allow officers to seize vehicles, if necessary.

To date, there is no indication that the Province intends to make changes to the Provincial Policy Statement, or the requirement to identify a natural heritage system in the Official Plan.

Therefore, staff recommend advancing the RFP for the Natural Heritage Study. The results of the consultant selection will be brought to Committee for information.

Staff had suggested that the composition of the NHS Steering Committee should be, as follows:

- One or two members of County Council;
- One staff individual from Transportation and Environmental Services (Kerri Meier);
- One individual from Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, Andrew Sorensen, Environmental Planning Coordinator;
- One individual from Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority, Erik Downing, Manager, Environmental Planning & Regulations;
- One individual from Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON - Doran Ritchie);
- One or two individuals of Local Councils (Debbie Myles, Deputy Mayor of NBP, Laurie Golden, Councilor in NBP, Terry Bell, Councilor of SBP and Don Murray Councilor of H-K have been offered);
- Bruce Stickney, Manager of Land Use Planning
- Jack Van Dorp, Senior Planner, Project Manager.

Staff request that Committee endorse two members of County Council to participate in the NHS Steering Committee. Also, staff are looking for Committee's consideration of the local Council representatives. Currently, four local municipal Councilors have expressed an interest in participating, including two from Northern Bruce Peninsula, one from South Bruce Peninsula and one from Huron-Kinloss.

It is further recommended that one or two individuals from the Bruce County Federation of Agriculture should be added to the Committee that would result in eleven or twelve (11 or 12) members. Bruce County Federation of Agriculture have put forward John Rodgers and Robert Emerson as their current selection. It is anticipated that the Committee would meet monthly or as required to guide the general course of activities until a final report is provided to the Planning and Development Committee.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no financial, staffing, legal or IT considerations associated with this report.

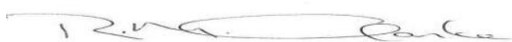
Interdepartmental Consultation:

Transportation and Environmental Services has recommended Kerri Meier to be a member of the Steering Committee.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Written by: Bruce Stickney, Manager of Land Use Planning.

Approved by:



Murray Clarke
Acting Chief Administrative Officer