



Agricultural Advisory Board

Terms of Reference

1. Nature of Advisory Board / Reporting and Functional Relationships

The Norfolk County Agricultural Advisory Board ("AAB") is an Advisory Committee of Norfolk County Council.

2. Mandate

The mandate of the AAB shall be to:

- 2.1. Advise Council on matters pertaining to agricultural issues in Norfolk County;
- 2.2. Develop alliances and partnerships between individuals, businesses, organizations and government through financial and other means to advance the County's strategic plan for agriculture; and,
- 2.3. Provide a forum for discussion and coordination of agricultural initiatives and programs with other community groups and agencies.

3. AAB Composition

3.1 Appointed Members: The AAB will be comprised of no more than 11 volunteer voting members, all of whom will either be individuals who reside, work or own property in Norfolk County, hold a valid Farm Business Registration number (except agri-business supplier), and who have direct experience and connections to County-wide stakeholders. The voting members will serve at-large and represent successful growers in key commodities. At least one of the appointees will be 30 years of age or under. Council may appoint:

- Two (2) vegetable growers (e.g. asparagus, cucumbers, pumpkins, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, sweet corn)
- Two (2) fruit growers (e.g. apples, strawberries, cherries, raspberries, pears, blueberries, peaches)
- Two (2) specialty crop growers (e.g. ginseng, tobacco, nursery, greenhouse, maple, nuts)
- One (1) grain grower (e.g. soybeans, rye, corn, wheat, alfalfa, oil seeds)
- One (1) value-added processor (e.g. cheese, cider, preserves, oil, ice cream, meat)

- One (1) livestock farmer (e.g. pork, poultry, beef, dairy, lamb, horses, bees)
 - One (1) agri-business supplier (e.g. equipment, bank, insurance, etc.)
 - One (1) agri-tourism business owner/operator (e.g. B&B, tours, market)
 - One (1) Norfolk County Council Liaison, who will serve in ex-officio capacity.
- 3.1.1 All members will be appointed for four-year terms with alternating terms of appointment to ensure that there is continuity of knowledge on this board. Members will be appointed at the second Council meeting held in January of the first and third years of Council's four-year term.
- 3.1.2 A Chair and Vice Chair will be selected by members at the first meeting of each year.
- 3.1.3 Council shall assign a Council Liaison to the AAB who shall serve in an ex-officio capacity, at the second Council meeting held in January of the first and third years of Council's four-year term.
- 3.2 Non-Appointed Resource Team Members: Farm organizations may select one representative to attend meetings in an ex-officio capacity. Non-Appointed Resource Team Members will be circulated agendas and minutes of the Agriculture Advisory Board. Representatives of all appropriate ministries and other agencies of the provincial and federal governments, and other non-profit organizations, locally and regionally, are welcome to attend meetings. The resource team may include but is not limited to the following organizations:
- Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada
 - Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS)
 - Asparagus Growers
 - Cattlemen's Association
 - Central Erie Fruit & Veg Growers Assoc
 - Christian Farmers Association
 - Corn Producers
 - Dairy Producers
 - F.A.R.M.S. (Offshore Worker Supply)
 - Farm Credit Canada
 - Farm Safety Association
 - Ginseng Growers
 - Irrigation Committee
 - Long Point Region Conservation Authority
 - National Farmers Union
 - Norfolk Agricultural Society
 - Norfolk Agriculture Marketing Partners
 - Norfolk District Business Dev. Corp.
 - Norfolk Environmental Adv Comm Chair
 - Norfolk Federation of Agriculture
 - Norfolk Fruit Growers
 - Norfolk County Health & Social Services
 - Norfolk Soil & Crop
 - Norfolk Woodlot Owners
 - TEDAB Chair
 - Tobacco Growers Marketing Board
 - Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers Assoc.
 - Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food
 - Port Dover Farmers Market
 - Simcoe Farmers Market
 - Soybean Growers
 - University of Guelph Researcher

- 3.2.1 The Mayor of Norfolk County is also an ex-officio member of the Agriculture Advisory Board.
- 3.2.2 A staff member from the Planning & Economic Development Department will act as County Staff Liaison, in an ex-officio capacity.
- 3.2.3 Staff from other departments of Norfolk County and other agencies and organizations, within the municipality and external to it, will be identified by AAB as Resource Members.

4 Roles/Responsibilities

- 4.1 Agriculture Advisory Board: The AAB, as a whole, shall:
 - 4.1.1 Provide input into the agricultural portions of the Economic Development Strategy.
 - 4.1.2 Advise on general zoning and land use policy, municipal infrastructure and marketing strategy, and other County policies and programs which may have an impact on the agricultural sector;
 - 4.1.3 Consult with agricultural stakeholders and community organizations and actively encourage coordination and cooperation;
 - 4.1.4 Attend and assist with meetings of other agencies and organizations specializing in certain sectors, commodities and areas and to report back on issues, news and recommendations of relevance from those bodies;
 - 4.1.5 Invite participation of the County's federal and provincial representatives on a regular basis to keep abreast of senior government policies and programs which affect agriculture;
 - 4.1.6 Participate, as requested, in the execution of an annual symposium with the aims of raising awareness of all sectors of Norfolk's economy and encouraging stakeholders to work together.
- 4.2 Members: Individual Members of the AAB shall:
 - 4.2.1 Attend meetings;
 - 4.2.2 Prepare for meetings by reviewing material provided and/or consulting with stakeholders regarding issues;
 - 4.2.3 Participate in discussions and activities;
 - 4.2.4 Carry out tasks assigned to them;
 - 4.2.5 Solicit suggestions and resources from the community and elsewhere;

- 4.2.6 Actively encourage financial partnerships with individuals, organizations, businesses and government, as part of County's strategic plan in an integrated and collective approach, with the assistance of County staff, through the Marketing Partner program and other methods.
 - 4.2.7 Be encouraged to attend deputations made by the AAB to Council;
 - 4.2.8 Refer media enquiries on AAB issues to the County Staff Liaison; and
 - 4.2.9 Refrain from making any purchases or accepting any revenue on behalf of Norfolk County or the AAB.
- 4.3 Chair/Vice Chair: The Chair shall:
- 4.3.1 Run meetings in an effective manner;
 - 4.3.2 Communicate on a regular basis with AAB Members, the Council Liaison, the County Staff Liaison, and the Chairs of the Norfolk County Tourism & Economic Development Advisory Board (TEDAB) and the Norfolk County Environmental Advisory Committee (NEAC);
 - 4.3.3 Lead any deputations prepared by the AAB to Council;
 - 4.3.4 Notify the Vice Chair when his/her assistance is needed to fulfil the role of the Chair.
 - 4.3.5 The Vice Chair shall take on the role and responsibilities of the Chair, when necessary.
- 4.4 Council Liaison: The Council Liaison shall:
- 4.4.1 Provide regular verbal reports to Council on the progress of the AAB; and
 - 4.4.2 Provide support to the AAB and the County Staff Liaison when reports or presentations in regard to the AAB come before Council.
- 4.5 County Staff Liaison: The County Staff Liaison shall:
- 4.5.1 Prepare the appointments report for Council's consideration;
 - 4.5.2 Schedule meetings, and prepare and distribute agendas in cooperation with the Chair;
 - 4.5.3 Record and distribute minutes to AAB Members, Resource Members, and the County Clerk for acceptance at Council;
 - 4.5.4 Provide other documents, where appropriate and relevant, prior to meeting via email or for pickup; and
 - 4.5.5 Encourage participation by County staff in other departments of the County to the AAB, when available and relevant.

5. Appointment Process / Criteria for Selection

- 5.1 Vacancies for appointments shall be publicly advertised in the local newspapers, if resources are available, and on the Norfolk County website in the month of September prior to the first and third years of Council's four-year term. Notification will also be sent to general farm organizations and commodity groups across Norfolk County.
- 5.2 By mid October prior to the first and third years of Council's four-year term, applicants shall be required to complete and submit to the Council Services Division an application form, available from County offices and the Norfolk County website.
- 5.3 The Staff Liaison will prepare a report regarding appointments, which will be presented and considered for approval by Council at the second Council meeting held in January of the first and third year of Council's four-year term.
- 5.4 Criteria for selection will follow representation outlined under Section 3.1.
- 5.5 Upon Council's approval of AAB appointments, the Council Services Division will prepare the necessary appointment by-law.
- 5.6 The Council Services Division, on behalf of Council, shall send out confirmation letters to new AAB appointees and advise of the Staff Liaison and any other relevant contacts.
- 5.7 In the start-up year of the AAB, members will be assigned one-year terms if Council considers the appointments in the second or fourth year of its four-year term.

6. Resignation & Dismissal

- 6.1 If any AAB member is absent from three consecutive meetings, without justification, the Chair of the AAB, in consultation with the Staff Liaison, will ask the member whether or not they wish to attend meetings and remain on the AAB or resign.
- 6.2 AAB members wishing to resign their appointment shall submit a letter of resignation which shall be forwarded as soon as possible to the Clerk. Upon acceptance of the resignation, the Clerk in consultation with the Staff Liaison will initiate the aforementioned appointment process to fill the vacancy.
- 6.3 Council, at its discretion, can dismiss the AAB in its entirety or any member thereof at any time.

7. Rules of Procedure/Order

- 7.1 Quorum will be considered to be a majority of the appointed members on the AAB; the Mayor is included in the count, if present.

7.2 AAB members shall observe the Rules of Procedure outlined in the Council Procedural By-Law, as far as applicable, keeping in mind that members may feel more comfortable and appreciate the opportunity to exchange views with fellow AAB members in a more informal atmosphere.

7.3 In the event that a quorum is not present within fifteen (15) minutes after the appointed time of the meeting, the names of those present will be recorded and the meeting shall stand adjourned until the next meeting.

7.4 In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall conduct the meeting. If neither is present, the AAB shall appoint an Acting Chair from amongst those members present.

8. Schedule/Location of Meetings

8.1 The AAB will establish a meeting schedule, setting out the time and place for meetings at the beginning of each year. The schedule of the meetings for the year will be circulated to the County Clerk for distribution and the information of Council.

8.2 Meetings of the AAB shall be either quarterly or more frequently by special meeting from time to time as required.

8.3 Adequate provision for accessibility shall be made by the Chair of the AAB and relevant staff to ensure that meeting locations, agenda and minute formats, communications and conduct of meetings be accessible, to ensure maximum participation and quality customer service. Reference may be made to the provisions of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and similar legislation, policies and guidelines.

9. Access to Meetings / Closed Meetings / Pecuniary Interest

9.1 Except as provided in this section, all meetings shall be open to the public and the media and AAB Minutes shall be available on the County website or at the office of the Tourism & Economic Development Division. The Chair may expel any person for improper conduct at a Meeting.

9.2 A meeting may be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered is:

- The security of the property of the Municipality;
- Personal matters about an identifiable individual, including Municipal employees;
- A proposed or pending acquisition of land for Municipal purposes;
- Labour relations or employee negotiations;
- Litigation or potential litigation, affecting the Municipality; and/or
- The receiving of advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege; including communications necessary for that purpose.

- 9.2.2 Before holding a meeting or part of a meeting that is to be closed to the public, the AAB shall state by Resolution:
- the fact of the holding of the Closed Meeting; and
 - the general nature of the matter to be considered at the Closed Meeting.
- 9.2.3 All deliberations while in Closed Session shall be recorded but remain confidential. Only the final results of deliberations may be made public when such disclosure is authorized by a majority vote of the AAB.
- 9.2.4 If an AAB member has a pecuniary interest in any matter and is, or will be, present at a meeting at any time at which the matter is the subject of consideration, the member:
- shall, before any consideration of the matter, at the meeting verbally disclose the interest and its general nature;
 - shall not, at any time, take part in the discussion of, or vote on, any question in respect to the matter; and
 - shall leave the meeting and remain absent from it at any time during consideration of the matter.

10. Meeting Structure, Agenda and Minute Formats

- 10.1 An orientation session will be held at the first meeting of the AAB each year.
- 10.2 Agendas and minutes for AAB meetings may include any or all of the following components:
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| • Date, time, location of meeting | • Presentations/Deputations |
| • Members present (include Chair, Recorder) | • General Business and Reports |
| • Members absent/regrets | • Correspondence |
| • Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest | • Other Business |
| • Approval of previous minutes | • Closed Session |
| | • Next meeting |
| | • Adjournment |
- 10.3 Minutes will briefly outline the substance of each of the agenda items discussed during the meeting, including actions taken and recommendations by motion. Motions shall not be required to be seconded.
- 10.4 Minutes of the AAB shall be forwarded by the Staff Liaison to the Clerk in order to present them to Council as information on a timely basis. If warranted, staff will be required to prepare a Staff Report requiring action by Council.

11. Budget & Financial Reporting

- 11.1 The AAB may make requests for budget allocations through their staff liaison in advance of the County's annual budget process. All related revenue and expenditure transactions will follow Council approved policy. Requests must relate to specific activities approved in the AAB's mandate and work plan. Requests shall be submitted by the appropriate department head for consideration in the County's budget review.
- 11.2 Members of the AAB are not remunerated by Norfolk County. If approved by the appropriate spending authority (typically, the Staff Liaison) prior to the expenditure being incurred by a member, a member may submit a receipt for reimbursement of specific expenses related to AAB activities.

12. Sub-Committees

- 12.1 When appropriate and relevant, sub-committees may be formed by the AAB. They will be provided with a specific mandate and a timeline for completion by the AAB and shall follow the Terms of Reference set out below.
- 12.2 Except where set out under separate policy by Council as per Section 12 (a); a sub-committee will have a minimum of five (5) members. A sub-committee that meets for three (3) consecutive meetings with less than minimum attendance will be reviewed by the AAB for possible intervention or termination.
- 12.3 The mandate, timeline, membership and Chair of each sub-committee will be reviewed by the AAB meeting at its first meeting of every calendar year.
- 12.4 Members of sub-committees shall serve without remuneration.
- 12.5 The AAB shall appoint one of its members as Chair of the sub-committee.
- 12.6 A Norfolk County staff member shall also attend sub-committee meetings.
- 12.7 At its first meeting each year, a sub-committee shall elect a Vice-Chair from amongst the members of the sub-committee.
- 12.8 Any sub-committee member who is absent from three consecutive meetings without leave of absence or without reason satisfactory to the sub-committee, shall forthwith cease to be a member. AAB will review the vacancy at its next meeting.
- 12.9 Sub-Committee Members shall:
 - 12.9.1 Notify the County Staff Liaison in advance of their intent to be absent from a meeting;
 - 12.9.2 Prepare for the meeting by reviewing material provided and/or consulting with stakeholders regarding issues;
 - 12.9.3 Assist in considering the goal or task assigned to them by the AAB;

- 12.9.4 Consult with stakeholders and community organizations and to actively encourage coordination and cooperation with the Board and County staff; and,
- 12.9.5 Actively encourage financial partnerships with individuals, organizations, businesses and government, as part of the County's strategic plan in an integrated and collective approach, with the assistance of County staff, through the Marketing Partner program and other methods.
- 12.10 The Sub-Committee Chair shall:
 - 12.10.1 Run meetings in an effective manner and communicate on a regular basis with members, the Council Liaison, and the County Staff Liaison. The Chair will also notify the Vice Chair when his/her support is needed to fulfil the role of the Chair;
 - 12.10.2 Work with the Staff Liaison to ensure appropriate membership representation on the sub-committee; and
 - 12.10.3 Report membership on the sub-committee at the beginning of each year to the AAB.
- 12.11 The Staff Member assigned to the Sub-Committee shall:
 - 12.11.1 Schedule meetings, prepare agendas and distribute agendas to Sub-Committee Members and AAB Members;
 - 12.11.2 Act as recording secretary for each scheduled meeting for the purpose of recording the minutes, which will consist of only recording attendance, recording specific tasks assigned to individuals, and recording any resolutions; and
 - 12.11.3 Distribute the minutes of the Sub-Committee to Sub-Committee Members, AAB Members and the AAB Staff Liaison.
- 12.12 Sub-Committee Appointments
 - 12.12.1 The AAB shall appoint a minimum number of five (5) members, including the Chair (who must be a member of AAB);
 - 12.12.2 Any sub-committee member who is absent from three consecutive meetings without leave of absence or without reason satisfactory to the sub-committee, shall forthwith cease to be a member. AAB will review the vacancy at its next meeting.
- 12.13 Norfolk County Policies and Procedures
 - 12.13.1 Committee members shall adhere to the policies and procedures of Norfolk County.