



DISTRICT OF NORTH SAANICH

COUNCIL POLICY

TITLE: AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE	NO. COU-149
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The Attached Terms of Reference pertains to the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee.

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 8, 2024	APPROVED BY: COUNCIL	LAST AMENDMENT: N/A	REF: Staff Report # CS-24-009	PAGE 1 of 1
	PREVIOUS POLICY NO. 1002.24			



Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Effective April 8, 2024: The District recognizes the diversity of our community and believes that all have the right to work and do business in a workplace that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. The district is committed to providing a work environment in which all individuals are treated with mutual respect, personal worth and human dignity.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the District of North Saanich Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee is to establish the active involvement of members to provide input to assist Council with their community focused decision-making respecting agricultural land use, or proposed by-laws and permits governed by the *Local Government Act, Community Charter, Agricultural Land Commission Act* and *Soil Conservation Act*, referred by Council, the Committee of the Whole, or District Staff. From time-to-time matters may be referred to more than one Committee for input.

2. Mandate

The following pertains to the mandate of the Committee:

- All matters referred to the Committee and subsequent recommendations to Council shall align with Council’s Strategic Goals and Priorities:
 - *Protect the natural environment.*
 - *Focus on local Agriculture and support food production and systems.*
 - *Maintain a safe, inclusive, healthy, and vibrant community.*
 - *Support growth that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.*
 - *Embody good governance principles of community engagement, accountability, leadership, impartiality, and transparency.*

- Review irrigation and drainage issues.
- Review of current regulations – municipal, regional, and provincial.
- Improving food security.
- Enhancing the sustainability of the agricultural land base.
- Collaborating on the food processing infrastructure.
- Increasing public awareness and support for farming.
- Identifying essential data required for further understanding of agriculture in North Saanich.
- Stating priorities for agricultural land.

- Input on regional or provincial planning initiatives that may impact North Saanich residents.
- Matters relating to the Official Community Plan.
- Matters related to accessibility planning in alignment with the District's Accessibility Plan.
- All recommendations shall be scored using the best-practices environmental performance index and framework available globally at the time of decision making.
- Raising awareness of agriculture.
- Enhancing an understanding of agriculture's role in the local and /or regional economy.
- Examining legislation to identify improvements to support agriculture.
- Improving opportunities for joint funding of drainage and irrigation works.
- Reporting on the impacts of park and recreation proposals on agriculture.
- Identifying and effecting change regarding the impact of transportation and utility corridors on agriculture.

3. Authority

Committees do not have the authority to communicate with other levels of government, pledge the credit of the District of North Saanich or authorize any expenditure to be charged against the Municipality. Members will not misrepresent themselves as having any authority beyond that delegated by Council. Committees shall conduct their business in accordance with their Terms of Reference, and as directed by Council. They will complete their tasks within the time prescribed, or by any extension that may be provided and report their findings and recommendations to Council.

4. Legislation

Each Committee is established in accordance with the District of North Saanich bylaws and policies, the *Local Government Act*, *Community Charter* and all other relevant Provincial and Federal Legislation as required.

5. Process

Committees are advisory bodies to Council, and any actions resulting from their findings and recommendations are at the discretion of Council.

- Staff shall present applications, permits, or matters of community interest to the Committee for input and recommendations prior to presenting to Council or the Committee of the Whole.
- All recommendations to the Council must be in the form of a resolution and approved by majority vote of the Committee.

6. Membership

The Committee shall consist of 7 voting members as follows:

- Seven (7) members of the public appointed by Council.
- One (1) Non-voting District of North Saanich elected official (plus 1 alternate member).

- One (1) Non-voting Staff member (plus 1 alternate member).
- One (1) Non-voting Recording Secretary (staff member).
- At Council's discretion, up to two (2) youth non-voting members may be appointed for a one (1) year term.

7. Member Appointment

The voting members are appointed by Council through a recruitment process. The application form and Terms of Reference shall be posted to the district's website and via social media channels during this process.

8. Term of Member

The Term of each voting member shall be two (2) years to a maximum three (3) consecutive Terms unless extended by majority vote of Council.

9. Meeting Framework

The Committee membership shall appoint a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson at the first meeting of each calendar year. A member may not serve as Chairperson or Vice Chairperson for consecutive years.

Meetings are normally held at Municipal Hall, 1620 Mills Road, and scheduled the first or second Wednesday of the month or at the call of the Chair or designate. Each meeting shall last up to 90 minutes unless agreed upon by the majority membership to extend the meeting. There will be no meetings scheduled in August or December each year.

10. Rules of Procedure

The Rules of meeting procedures shall be regulated by the District of North Saanich Council Procedure Bylaw and the following:

- A majority of the voting members (4) is required to constitute a quorum.
- Committee meetings are conducted in a spirit of good faith and respect to foster a free flow of ideas among members and unconstrained development of options.
- Committees must not hold any closed sessions.
- Meetings must be held on municipal property.
- Meeting agendas will be posted on the district website and notice boards a minimum of 48 hours in advance of the meeting start time.
- Members of the public may attend meetings as observers.
- The public and media shall similarly exercise good faith and respect, mindful that the proceedings are a "work in progress," and not a forum for lobbying or decisions.
- Electronic recordings of Committee meetings including discussions, decisions or activities shall be uploaded to the municipal website in alignment with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- Any member who is absent from three (3) consecutive Committee meetings without reason satisfactory to Council may be removed from the Committee.
- All questions that may come before the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee shall be decided by a majority of those members present at a meeting, including the Chair.

- A member of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee who abstains from voting shall be deemed to have voted in the affirmative.

11. Participating in meetings Electronically

Up to 3 members (based on 7 members) may participate in a committee meeting by electronic means. The Chair must not participate electronically.

12. Minutes

Minutes of all meetings shall be made available to the public via the district's website. The Committee shall be assigned a staff member to act as Recording Secretary to record and prepare minutes at each meeting.

13. Communication

Each Committee shall communicate directly with the District of North Saanich Council, by providing minutes after each meeting to the to the Corporate Officer for inclusion on Regular Council meeting agendas.

14. Code of Conduct

DECORUM AND DEBATE: Committee members must devote the necessary time and effort to prepare for meetings, arrive at meetings on time, provide feedback in keeping with the Committee mandate, and be respectful of others' thoughts and opinions.

AUTHORITY AND REPORTING: The Committee and its members shall not represent themselves as having any authority beyond that delegated in the Terms of Reference approved by Council.

MEDIA / SOCIAL MEDIA: Members of the Committee are not permitted to communicate with the media or post to any social media platform as representatives of the Committee unless authorized to do so by majority vote of Council.

REPRESENTATION: Committee members must strive to convey the public interest and remember that they represent the District of North Saanich; this means that they must be consistent with the district's position on specific issues.

PROFESSIONALISM: Committee members who engage in activities regarding the District of North Saanich or Committee initiatives / projects and promotions are expected to maintain a respectful, constructive, professional tone that maintains the brand consistency of the District of North Saanich.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All Committee members are required to respect the confidentiality of any matters discussed during Committee meetings.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT: All Committee members/ volunteers must reside in the District of North Saanich. In the event that a committee member's primary place of residence changes to another Municipality during the term of an appointment, the member must notify the Chair and Corporate Officer regarding change of address. Depending on the

length of appointment term remaining, the Committee member may be asked to step down, thus creating a vacancy. Vacancies will be filled through advertisement placed in local newspapers, social media and on the website; applications received will be reviewed by Council.

15. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists if a working group member is a director, member or employee of an organization seeking to benefit from the district or if the Committee member has a direct or indirect pecuniary (financial) interest in the outcome of Committee deliberations. Committee members who have a conflict of interest with a topic being discussed must declare that they have a conflict of interest, describe the nature of the conflict, and leave the room prior to any discussions and must refrain from voting thereon. Committee members are not permitted to directly, or indirectly, benefit from their participation on the Committee during their tenure. Where an actual or potential conflict of interest exists, the Committee member shall explain its nature to the group and the Chair shall submit the matter to the Corporate Officer.

16. Remuneration

Committee membership is voluntary; therefore, members will serve without compensation.

17. Term of Committee

The Committee shall be active until such time the Council decides otherwise and dissolves the Committee by majority vote.

18. Budget

The Committee shall have a reasonable use of miscellaneous services such as clerical services, photocopying, office supplies with adequate prior notice of at least 2 business days. These are provided primarily through the Staff Representative. Any funds beyond this, including the provision of professional consultants, must be approved by Council.

19. Mid-Term Check-in with Council

Each year the Chairperson or designate of each Committee shall present a mid-term report to either Council or the Committee of the Whole outlining the progress of the Committee's work, governance, and membership to date.

20. Annual Orientation

Each year all Committee members, Council and Staff Liaison members are required to attend an annual orientation workshop organized by staff.