



DISTRICT OF METCHOSIN

AGENDA

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING

August 31, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

Metchosin Municipal Hall

1. **Agenda, Additions, Approval**
2. **Presentations**
3. **Public Participation**
4. **Adoption of Minutes**
 - a) Agricultural Advisory Select Committee September 15, 2021..... 1
5. **Receipt of Minutes**
6. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
7. **New Business**
 - a) Debrief from Metchosin Agricultural Forum, April 29, 2022
 - DRAFT Report (received by Parks Committee July 18, 2022) 3
 - Discussion
 - Key Take aways
 - b) Metchosin Agricultural Plan, Next Steps: Timeframe (political, farm season, funding etc.)
 - c) Agricultural Forum expenses (approx. \$200 - use of funds from Committee budget)
 - d) Effect of Tiny Homes on Agriculture
 - e) Other Discussion
8. **Correspondence**
9. **Adjournment and Next Meeting Date**

District of Metchosin

Minutes

Agricultural Advisory Select Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 15, 2021 at 5:00 P.M.

Electronic Meeting in accordance with

Ministerial Order M192

Present: John Buchanan, Brent Donaldson, Alex Fletcher, Karen Hoffman, and Robin Tunnicliffe

Regrets: Councillor Little, Bob Mitchell, Tom Henry

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 p.m.

1. Agenda, Additions and Approval

The Agenda was approved as presented.

2. Presentations

a) Jay Shukin, President APRM

Jay introduced the idea of matching landowners with land seeking farmers with the aim of increasing the amount of farming happening in Metchosin. He pitched the idea of engaging with the Young Agrarians to this end. This organization has many resources including lease templates and guides to help strengthen relationships between landlords and farming tenants.

He pitched having an event at the Community House with the coordinator of the Young Agrarians and potentially interested landowners. An article in the Muse would solicit participants. Jay and Robin to co-author an article for the Muse to this end.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved and Seconded by Karen Hoffman and Alex Fletcher that the Committee approve the minutes of the Agricultural Advisory Select Committee meeting held on March 9, 2021.

Carried

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

We had an impromptu presentation from Shelly Donaldson from the working group on dogs. She gave us a summary on the report that the group is making to Council in October. We will follow this closely.

5. New Business

a) District of Metchosin Herbicide Policy W-100.50

The Committee is interested to have a self assessment by the landscaping crew to see how closely they were following the existing policy, and if it was practical. There are many municipalities, including Saanich that have progressive policies and on-line resources. We feel that the

landscaping crew should follow the precautionary principle and defer to best practices in order to set a good example for residents.

We drafted the following statement to Council:

The Agricultural Advisory Committee is very interested in pursuing the possibility of funding for carbon sequestration on farms. When Metchosin Council is reviewing the OCP, we would like to provide input to this end.

b) Funding Opportunity, Investment Agriculture Foundation BC Grant for Developing a Municipal Agriculture Plan

We discussed engaging with a consultant with the aim of securing matching funding in order to apply for this grant. The development of such a plan has been in our mandate for the past 10 years. Alex mentioned that in the past, there has been little interest from Council to support such planning. We had a good discussion about the agriculture infrastructure we have as a municipality (market, and abattoir) and how the municipality might be more invested. Brent mentioned that a study had been done in the 2014 Royal Roads students which might be a good start, and he has a copy. Robin will continue gathering information about who might be able to help us, how much a thorough plan might cost and how to secure funds to pay for this.

c) Deadline for Non-residential Groundwater permit registration

We recommend that Council be proactive in letting people know about the March 2022 deadline. It is relevant for farmers but also for any small business that draws from groundwater (pubs, hairdressers, etc.)

6. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

METCHOSIN AGRICULTURAL FORUM

Friday April 29, 2022

Metchosin farmers attended a 4-hour meeting at Bilston Creek Farm on Friday, April 29, 2022. The meeting was initiated by the District of Metchosin Councillor Marie-Térèse who holds the Agricultural portfolio on Metchosin Council. The planning group for the event included the following members of Metchosin's Agricultural Committee: Alex Fletcher, (Wind Whipped Farm) John Buchannan (Parry Bay Sheep farm), Robin Tunnicliffe (Chair, District of Metchosin Agriculture Advisory Select Committee and Sea Bluff Farm), Brent Donaldson (Ewe View Farm), and Councillor Marie-Térèse Little

The forum was attended by approximately 50 people (there was some fluctuation in numbers) from the Metchosin farming community (plus a couple from East Sooke).

Attendee Statistics. Some rough counts

Years Farming. Participants' years of farming experience were as follows: Less than 5 years--8; from 6 to 15 years--14; more than 15 years--12

Age breakdown. Again, rough count. Age under 40 – 7, age between 40 to 60 – 17, age over 60 – 23.

FORUM GOALS

- Strengthen connections among the farmers of Metchosin
- Share views on the benefits that farming brings to our community and the challenges faced by farmers
- Gather support for developing an agriculture plan for Metchosin (supported by contributions from the Ministry of Agriculture).
- Identify other items for action that could strengthen farming in Metchosin

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ Participants were eloquent in describing the benefits of farming to themselves and the community. They were equally eloquent (and very concerned) about the challenges faced by farmers.
- ◆ After presentations and discussion, participants clearly favoured taking steps towards developing an Agriculture Plan (Ag plan) for Metchosin.
- ◆ They also itemized initiatives/low hanging fruit that could strengthen farming and could be acted upon in the more immediate future. (See page 14)

FOLLOWING ARE DETAILED NOTES OF THE FORUM PROCESS

Welcome: Andrew Penn of Bilson Creek Farm. Andrew spoke of the Bilston Creek Farm experience, invited participants to consider agritourism as part of the solution to preserving land, and made available the agritourism guide prepared by the province.

BENEFITS OF FARMING AND FARMS TO METCHOSIN

Participants identified a number of themes summarizing the benefits of farms and farming to Metchosin, its residents and people living in the Victoria area. The themes/categories were 'sorted' from numerous ideas submitted by small working groups in the session. They are interconnected.

- Health. Land, body, mind, spirit. A healthy environment. Better quality of life, better physical health, immune systems, and mental fitness. Healthy air quality. Healthy lifestyles and healthier diet. Empowering
- Quality food, good, fresh, organic local produce. Year-round access. Also promotes dietary diversity. Proximity to city provides greater access to fresh local food for people outside Metchosin.
- Soil and animals are healthier
- Local food (not shipped) has less environmental impact
- Food security and independence. Greater resilience faced with climate crisis. Increases sustainability. (10 contributions on this theme). Also some medicine security
- Beautiful scenery/rural esthetic. Inspirational landscape
- Biodiversity & conservation. Strengthens land stewardship. Sequesters carbon. Protects natural green spaces. Protects large green spaces that are thriving habitats for biodiversity, flora and fauna, and wildlife. Good for plants, animals, water, air, etc. Small farms especially important to habitat diversity.
- Economic driver. Supports a local economy and food security. Strengthens economic stability of community. Creates local employment, career opportunities. Hands-on work
- Protects rural values/character. Instills values and benefits of hard work in the younger and older generations. Purposeful work. Skills, family, animals. Gives us pride and awareness. Feeds our souls. People doing what they love helps everyone.
- Community building. Builds community. Is a supportive interdependent community. Fosters collaboration (stronger together). Generous sharing of skills, time, knowledge, and resources
- Education of non-farmers occurs. Exposure to farming life/grounds us to the land and lives of farmers. People learn where food comes from and how it's grown. Are introduced to new veggies(!). Non-farmers get to know growers. Youth learn about food sourcing and production.
- Education of farmers teaches skills that are a touchstone for reality. Skill building

Conversation following summary of group inputs

Recognition of the interconnection of all benefits

Tom Henry – Likes seeing generosity on there, it's a huge part of farming. People have been generous to us & we pass it on. Webbing of generosity goes on & on and is a really cool way of doing business & living in a community. Mega plus.

Andrew Penn – Farming has to happen somewhere. Why here? It provides a big value to the rest of the community, beyond people that are farming. Like a park in a city, there's a public benefit; it's for the public good.

Candace – We receive so much support from the public & farming community. Our challenge is finding an abattoir, but we get help from Tom Henry and John Buchanan. If you have a product to sell, there is lots of demand for local product.

CHALLENGES OF FARMING, FOR FARMERS

Economic challenges are multiple and inter-related. They are at play in much of the following.

- **Profitability** very difficult to achieve.
 - Faced with competition from global/industrial agriculture. ('We are inefficient producers compared to industrial agriculture').
 - Mostly small farms/land base means not enough efficiency at a scale for profitability. It's hard to generate profit.
 - Rising costs: Costs of inputs such as fertilizers and irrigation are increasing, plus "island price tag" (equipment, livestock, feed, seed, fertilizer, fuel, etc.). Taxes.
 - Shrinking profit margins result from rising costs (see above) plus consumers who need to save money. Farmers are underselling their products
 - At mercy of supply chain regarding affordability and timely availability of inputs. Can't get bulk discounts. Smaller scale farmers at disadvantage.
- **Cost of living** generally + cost of farming means many who are renting land need to work at other jobs to survive
- **Cost of farmland** is prohibitive (Many comments)
- **Access to land** is limited/lack of land supply. Competing demands for land versus profits: Farm versus RV pad.
- **Lack of succession opportunities**; lack of long-term leases – little or no security for farmers who don't own land. Older farmers moving towards retirement.
- **Housing. Limited/little access** to housing for young farmers, for farm workers (whether permanent or temporary) or for multigenerational families. Need for affordable, stable, quality, long term housing. Access challenge combines with insufficient income to access what is available.
- **Marketing.** Need for greater market access. Need marketing which advocates for healthy local choices which will be more expensive. (Need to convince consumers to pay more money for farm products that are raised in healthier and more ethical way.)
 - Need continued support for access to farmers market and expansion of the market.

- **Farm labor** shortages, lack of interest in working full time, challenging finding & retaining employees, dependence on foreign labour. Not enough skilled farm Labour. Hard to find and retain workers
- Lack of **seed security**. 97% of seed is imported.
- **Farm infrastructure and resources** need to be strengthened and shared.
 - **Abattoir** is key farm infrastructure: challenges relate to lack of access, long wait list, distance, costs, uncertain future
 - There is less now than before (e.g., mechanics, feed mill, shearer, etc.). Need for shared equipment, land, grants, information, tool library etc.
 - Isolation challenge. Need for networking, breaking down isolation to share information, news, skills, resources, help getting started
- Lack of **financing and funding** for small businesses. Insufficient government and financial/capital support and respect
- **Lack of local control** to address issues, challenges combine with weakness of local **government advocating** at other levels of government
- **Weather/climate** are unpredictable. Wind, heat/drought, flooding dangers. Climate change exacerbates unpredictability, produces more extremes, increases expenses. Soil, light, water, length of growing season in some parts of Metchosin can be challenges.
- Management of **invasive species**
- Insufficient support for **wildlife control**. Predation threatens crops and animals – e.g., geese, deer, elk, starlings, bears, cougars. Increase cost of fencing
- **Water is costly** especially if you don't have farm status. Climate crisis increases demand on water. Will become more costly as population increases. Threat to aquifer: flattening and building on hill tops removes recharging of ground water that then recharges aquifer. This will have economic impacts.
- Hard to get **farm status**...e.g., told: "too much forested land".
- Farming is **physically exhausting**, particularly as we age. Only 24 hours in a day!
- **Neighbours complain** about "farm nuisances": rooster noise, manure and seaweed smells, slow machines on roads, etc. (rural/urban conflict)

Conversation following summary of groups input

Charles Knight – On quality of water/tainting of aquifer, notes that we are removing recharge of ground water by flattening & building on hill tops. Need pressure from rain that infiltrates on hills to recharge aquifer.

Dorothy – Many of the challenges are connected, e.g., predation is an issue, and so is the cost of fencing to prevent predation.

Tom Henry – We need more money. We don't do things as cheaply as the other producers we compete against. Because we may treat our plants/soils differently, we ask customer to pay more for something that won't have immediate benefit. E.g., we ask to pay more for pork for the way the animal is raised, as

opposed to the taste. On our farm we are failing to monetize that – to get enough money to pay to treat animals this way.

Andrew Penn – There's a sense of isolation, that each of us are in our own bubble. Marketing gets at the whole piece. Let's approach to marketing as a region/municipality – a rising tide lifting all ships.

John Buchanan – Succession is a very difficult item, and ties to preserving farmland. How can farmers save money without spending it all on renting a small cabin, when farming provides such a small income?

Marilee – I lease out a small portion of my land to 2 people farming, through Young Agrarians. Both have 2 other jobs. They live in town. This is part of the barriers faced by new farmers – I give them a free lease, but even there they need to hold 2 other jobs to attempt to farm. The stress is crushing.

Dorothy King – Farm status affects what you can get as far as pricing on input & water. Some of the rules to get farm status (e.g., when a big chunk of a property is forested lands) are limiting. It's complex to challenge that, most people don't have the energy or connections to navigate the bureaucratic processes.

Eric White – I have direct experience with that. Applied last year, got lots of good information by helpful people. Needed to be above 2 acres. I sketched it out, but when the person visited, I was told I was down to 1.9 acres, so I was denied.

Christine Rehfeld – I fall in same category as Marie-Lise's tenants. A sense of isolation, and not having connections/networks at this point., is a challenge. Coming into a new community, not yet part of it, not in Metchosin "news" circle.

WHY METCHOSIN NEEDS AN AGRICULTURE PLAN

Presentation by Alex Fletcher, (Wind Whipped Farm)

"I have been asked to speak about the Background and Opportunities of developing an Ag plan from the perspective of a farmer and member of the Metchosin Agricultural Advisory Committee.

First, I will speak briefly about my farm context and motivation for farming.

Second, I will give some background about the concept of an Agricultural plan in Metchosin

And Third I will talk about a couple of the big opportunities I see in developing an Ag plan for Metchosin.

1. Wind Whipped Farm and The Local Food Box

My partner and I started Wind Whipped Farm in Metchosin over 10 years ago. We are a market garden that practices intensive, certified organic production on less than 1 acre. We supply around 100 weekly CSA members for a 20 weeklong harvest season. We partner with 6 local farms to offer their products to our CSA members.

Our motivation in running a collaborative food box program reflects a primary reason we farm and also relates to the need we see for a Metchosin Agricultural Plan.

For us, like for many farmers, farming in and of itself is not the end goal.

The goal is to be part of a thriving agricultural community, to be part of a resilient local food system.

Obviously, we cannot achieve these goals as an individual farm. So we need to use all the tools at our disposal.

An agricultural plan is a tool to help *establish a clear vision that will provide the necessary foundation on which to develop goals, objectives, strategies, and actions to determine and guide future agricultural decision making.* An ag plan can help map out a path towards a thriving agricultural community and a resilient local food system.

2. Metchosin Ag Plan Background-or-the Recipe for a Metchosin Ag Plan Soup

An agricultural plan is not a new idea. Of all the agricultural municipalities in the CRD, Metchosin is the only one that does not have Ag plan...yet.

The Metchosin Ag Advisory committee was formed in 2008 with the mandate to:

“Advise and assist Metchosin Council in developing a plan to sustain the agricultural community and improve agricultural viability within Metchosin, with assistance from the Agricultural Land Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.”

So Metchosin Council has already expressed its intention of developing an Ag plan and identified the critical need to improve agricultural viability.

I joined the Ag committee in 2011. Around then the Ag committee began working on drafting an Ag plan but was advised by council that there was insufficient political will to advance it at the time. As you all know, Metchosin Council has a lot on its plate and our municipality has very limited resources.

As an alternative, the committee worked with a student at Royal Roads who wrote a Metchosin Farm Study Report. While this report identified several challenges and opportunities and made recommendations it was only a report with no commitments and no accountability. There was no action that resulted from it.

So, like a bland soup, the Metchosin Ag plan concept has been simmering on the back burner for over a decade, waiting for the right ingredients to make it politically appetizing.

What ingredients are needed?

Here is a recipe I found to make the political will needed to develop an Ag plan:

Take ridiculously high farmland prices,
Add the pressure of incessant development, urban encroachment, and population growth
Combine with an aging farmer population
Incorporate increasingly unpredictable and severe weather, flooding and wildfires Add in a global pandemic that disrupts supply-chains around the world
Throw in a war that further increases the cost of fuel and fertilizer and thereby food. Stir...
And the final ingredient: a united, critical mass of farmers and concerned citizens demanding action.

There has never been a greater justification for bold commitments and swift action to strengthen agricultural viability and food security.

3. Opportunity 1: Collaboration and Leadership for agricultural viability in the CRD. Example of the Foodlands Trust Initiative

One of the big opportunities I see in an Ag plan is to develop a strategy to advocate for support from multiple levels of government to collaborate and strengthen agricultural viability. Metchosin does not have a lot of resources, so it is especially strategic to focus on regional opportunities. One example of this is with the development of a Foodlands Trust in the CRD.

As you all know, the extremely high cost of farmland in Metchosin and on Southern Vancouver Island is one of the greatest barriers to farming, particularly for new farmers. In recent years the CRD has undertaken an initiative to address this challenge through the development of a Foodlands Trust. The Trust is intended to start with existing municipal lands that are appropriate for agriculture, invest in infrastructure to make them

viable and then lease them to farmers. Overtime the goal is to acquire more farmland to be farmed in perpetuity.

In 2019, when the CRD reached out to its municipalities to gauge support, Metchosin Council requested input from the Metchosin Agricultural committee. The committee discussed it quite a bit and recommended that council support the initiative.

Despite this, Metchosin has been one of the most vocal critics of the Foodlands Trust project. At a recent CRD meeting the elected representative from Metchosin said “every time the government has gotten involved in farming, production has gone down or failed, there has been regional starvation, there’s lots of examples of it”

I don’t say this to criticize the Metchosin politician involved but to point out that Metchosin does not have an Agricultural plan to give elected officials direction on the development of a Regional Foodlands Trust and The Agricultural Advisory Committee is just that, Advisory. Also, I want to note that in the example above, the Metchosin representative did ultimately, reluctantly, vote in favour of advancing the initiative.

I think that this example demonstrates the limitations of an Advisory Ag committee and demonstrates the value of establishing an Ag plan with clear directions, strong commitments, and specific goals. An Ag plan would allow us to give clear direction to Metchosin’s elected leaders on key agricultural issues involving the CRD and specifically regarding a Foodlands Trust.

North Saanich, which has been a leader of the Foodlands Trust initiative, has an Ag plan a specific goal to “Support the establishment of a local farmland trust. Support the creation of a local land bank or trust either as a District or in collaboration with adjacent municipal jurisdictions or a local non-profit organization, to accept farmland donations and actively purchase and manage farmland in perpetuity.”

I would like to see Metchosin take a similar stand to actively protect farmland.

3.2. Opportunity 2: Enhance and secure critical infrastructure- Metchosin Slaughterhouse

Another important opportunity is to ensure the continued viability of the Metchosin slaughterhouse. The Covid pandemic exposed the fragility and risks of intensely concentrated, industrial scale, meat processing systems: thousands of Covid infections, worker deaths, and bottlenecks that shut down major supply-chains.

Luckily for farmers and consumers on the Southern Island, the Metchosin slaughterhouse has remained in operation throughout the pandemic. This is a critical piece of agricultural infrastructure for the region that we should all be proud of. The only slaughterhouse on the island South of Duncan, I have heard firsthand from farmers in Metchosin and East Sooke that would find it very difficult if not impossible to continue

operating without it. Two Metchosin farms supply the critical bulk of the livestock being processed and as a result around 100 smaller farms in the region are able to access this service. But the slaughterhouse is expensive to operate, rent is over \$3000 per month, it is an old facility that requires upkeep, and it is privately owned so continuity is not guaranteed.

This asset needs to be protected and supported by our community and by our region. The Covid pandemic has made it all too obvious why. An ag plan can articulate the significant role this infrastructure plays in supporting small farm viability and local food security. Ensuring its continued operation should be a key tangible objective of a Metchosin Ag plan.

4. Final Thoughts:

These are just a few of the opportunities that exist. Jeff Weightman and Reed Bailey from the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries will be able to provide a broader view of the value of Ag plans and specific examples of what is possible to achieve.

In order to achieve a thriving agricultural community and a resilient local food system I believe we need to engage every tool at our disposal. An Ag plan is not a silver bullet that will solve all of our problems, but it is an important step to take towards articulating a shared vision, setting goals and establishing a standard by which future Council decisions and priorities can be measured against.

The Metchosin Ag Plan soup has been simmering long enough. I think it is almost ready to be served. The final ingredient is a united, critical mass of farmers and concerned citizens demanding action.” Thank you

Ministry of Agriculture Presentation

Summary notes from presentation by Jeff Weightman, Team Lead, Land Use Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and Reed Bailey, Land Use Planner, Land Use and Geospatial Unit, Strengthening Farming Program, BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

Reed – Ag plans are an opportunity to look at challenges and opportunities. Are one way through which the province can work with local governments.

Agricultural plans are **great for defining long term vision for the community, establishing priority areas for growth and development** (e.g., Abattoir).

Agricultural Plan are **generated by the community**. Makeup of the group is the spirit of the plan – need a solid group so it is not shelved. **Need to go through planning & implementation, it can be a long haul.**

Jeff – Worked with CRD, supported development of regional food & agriculture strategy. Metchosin is in a good position to kick start an ag plan process – starting with available data: we already have some through the regional inventory and census info.

Ag plans are most impactful when they focus on practical solutions – Alex touched on some of what these could be in Metchosin.

Accurate issue identification is key. Issues tackled by various ag plans are often similar: water supply, wildlife, edge effects, farmland access, etc. Once challenges/issue identification is clear, then develop goals/objectives, identify key local government levers, implementation plan.

Metchosin could be a model for land access – e.g., a bunch of young farmers are accessing land, could be advertised & scaled up. Encourage all you to pursue that.

Reed – Two examples of recent, impactful ag plans: Squamish/Lillooet and Salt Spring Island.

Salt Spring Island (SSI) – Plan done in 2008, after ag land use inventory showed decline in agricultural land. Extensive community consultation. The plan guides long term planning & management. Its goal is to increase food production and support farmers. SSI Alliance formed – brought multiple groups into 1 group.

Two main outcomes: abattoir + new farm center to promote food security. Food production increased as a direct result. Centre for food security is called The Root. Includes an industrial kitchen, large cold storage. Building of facility has been ongoing since 2012 and is almost completed.

- Also led to artists finding creative ways to enhance connectivity (e.g., travelling bards and promoting cider)

Squamish Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) includes 3 different ag plans for 3 different areas.

Ag plan resulted in the establishment of the Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society, which was tasked with implementing the ag plan.

Outcomes include the branding/labelling “Lillooet grown”, available throughout BC. It increased demand, which increased production.

Reed met with planners from both SSI + SLRD. Based on those conversations, he highlights a few key findings:

- Motivation was huge, they really wanted a plan. That’s what led to its completion & implementation
- Important that this push happen outside of local government staff. Local gov staff often don’t have capacity. The community-driven/led aspect is **really key**.
- Funding is critical to start. After the plan was created, SLRD saw more funding opportunities. Plan provides something tangible to point to for funding requests/applications.

Jeff – Was recently in meetings with several municipalities. Now, every municipality in BC is expected to have a climate plan, and agricultural land is increasingly seen as a natural asset to include in inventory for climate planning. Ecological/natural services provided by ag land may be, in future, captured in GHG emissions calculations as part of municipal climate plans.

Questions/conversations

Sasha – About SLRD marketing -- we had a successful launch of Metchosin grown campaign, would like to see reinvigorated again, funding was an issue. Great thing to revitalize.

Fiona – In Lillooet, unsuspected outcome was a real boom in demand for local products in immediate & regional community.

Reed – SLRD ag plan also had an agritourism component.

Andrew – On SSI there's a real sense of place. Allows them to put price up. Marketing plan for the region may be helpful – where to eat, drink. Part of what the community does. Metchosin is accessible and concentrated. Potential for linking different part of communities.

Jeff - Pemberton initiated a bike tour, participation continues to grow.

Violaine Mitchell – In the plans that you've seen developed, how important is it to define how you measure success?

Reed and Jeff

- Successful ag plans often come with (or are followed by) an implementation plan.
- Are very outcome focused. Tangible and achievable objectives. Ag plans often include targets used to benchmark success.
- Implementation is typically tasked to non-profits, who lead the charge on projects.

Alex – Part of developing an ag plan is establishing a baseline. Currently there's no system to collect data – we need to establish that to evaluate how much we are making a difference.

Reed: Costs

- Plans for a region this size could cost 40 to 60K
- However, plans can be scaled to the resources available (Mentions Min of A consultant)
- (Real estate foundation?)

John B --

Immediate needs include improving farmers market and finding housing for farm workers. We train up new farmers and they always leave because they can't find toehold. Need incentives/disincentives to ensure land is used for agriculture/farming. Local tax base and BC Assessment Tax revenues are available levers. The threshold for farm classification is way too low and needs to be revamped. Is there will to move to a different tiered system in the ALC which will strengthen the position of real farms?

Summary

Agricultural Plan is beacon to guide us

- Key to be generated by the community. Community commitment and input is essential
- Has to be spearheaded by a local group – motivation and momentum is critical
- Consultant would write, community move it.
- Will be a long haul.
- Once a plan is in place, it is easier to get funding for initiatives/plans, easier to attract donors (e.g., Real Estate foundation)

We already have

- Land use inventory (CRD)
- Recent census data
- Water

- Model for Land access which could be scaled up.
- Existing plans in other communities can provide a template.

Data Needed

- Baseline (what's here: how much land being farmed, owned versus rented, what is being produced, revenue, age of farmers, etc.)

Measures of success and evaluation

- Establish initial base line against which to measure progress
- Objectives and targets that are measurable
- Defined implementation and planning stages/timelines

Resources/people that can help us develop an Agriculture Plan

1. The BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries consultant Reed Bailey was referring to is probably: [Ione Smith, from Upland Consulting](#). Her [portfolio](#) is impressive. In recent years, Ione's work/experience in the CRD includes the [Saanich Agriculture and Food Security Plan](#), and the [CRD Regional Foodlands Access Program Feasibility Study and Business Case \(executive summary\)](#). Of potential interest, Ione will be delivering a public lecture on [Climate-Proofing Your Food-Systems with Community Economic Development](#). Virginie knows Ione and can introduce her to the ag advisory committee, if this is of interest to the committee.
2. The links to the ag plans/initiatives mentioned by Reed & Jeff.
 - [Salt Spring Agricultural Alliance](#), here's information on the [original \(2008\) Area Farm Plan](#), and the full [SSI 2008 Area Farm Plan](#). Salt Spring recently worked on a [Farm Renewal Plan](#), with support from Ione Smith.
 - [Lillooet Agriculture and Food](#)

(Compiled by Virginie Lavalee-Picard)

Relationship Building with Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) First Nation

A participant asked about what efforts had been made to engage Sc'ianew First Nation from the outset. Councillor Little described how invitation to the event had been communicated. The participant asked if CSA boxes were being delivered to Indigenous elders.

A short discussion resulted in the following:

- Important to engage with/involved indigenous community from the outset
- Get clear about what partnership would look like.
- Learn from Indigenous approach to agriculture
- Importance of reciprocity and food security (e.g., CSAs to Indigenous Elders)
- This process/aspect can be linked to education and awareness building in the community and schools

COMING TO A CONCLUSION

THE GROUP WAS ASKED: ARE WE IN FAVOUR OF MOVING TOWARDS DEVELOPING AN AGRICULTURAL PLAN FOR METCHOSIN?

A hand vote was taken of those present to test support for proceeding with development of an Agricultural plan. Of those still present, 32 raised their hands in favour.

Some were abstaining, but the facilitator neglected to take a clear abstention/opposed count – she apologizes)

LOW HANGING FRUIT/INITIATIVES THAT CAN BE UNDERTAKEN WHILE METCHOSIN MOVES TOWARDS AN AGRICULTURAL PLAN

After the vote to move towards and Ag plan was taken, a discussion about initiatives (low hanging fruit) that could be undertaken in the near future ensued.

The ideas are listed below. Participants 'voted' on these as the meeting wound up. (Number indicates weighting. Each participant had 3 'votes')

1. Marketing Campaign – 'Metchosin Grown' combined with Touring Map of farms (17)
+ Revisit older community map (3)
2. Improve/grow Farmers Market (12)
3. Ensure stable future for Abattoir (7)
4. Bike Lanes (6)
5. Summer Farm Tours (5)
6. Develop outreach/connection with First Nations (+ increase networking) (3)
7. Micro loans for small farmers (3)
8. Mine annual provincial data reports for baseline data, preparing ground for Ag Plan

Added from earlier discussion

9. Increase networking among farmers. Morgan offered to help with setting up a Facebook page

Appendix 1

Overview Agenda

- Welcome, Territorial Acknowledgement, Facilitator, Welcome from Bilston Creek Farm
- Getting to know one another
- Goals, Agenda, Guidelines
- Community Input: **Value/benefits** and **Challenges** of farming in Metchosin community (70 min)
- Break (225 – for 20 min)
- Summary of Challenges
- Benefits and Opportunities: Why we need an Agricultural Plan? (60 min)
 - Presentations by Alex Fletcher (farmer) and Jeff Weightman & Reed Bailey (Min of Agriculture). Followed by questions and comments.
- Shall we move towards developing an AP for Metchosin? (40 min)

- Discussion and indication of support?
- Also: Collect other ideas for action to strengthen farming.
- Next steps, Closing and Appreciations

DRAFT