



RDN REPORT		
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BOARD	✓	July 26/11

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dale Lindsay
Manager, Current Planning

DATE: July 19, 2011

FROM: Lainya Rowett
Planner

FILE: 0360 20 AAC

SUBJECT: Agriculture Area Plan Update

PURPOSE

To update the Board on the Agricultural Area Plan process and selection of a project consultant.

BACKGROUND

On April 26, 2011, the Regional Board of Directors appointed the Agricultural Advisory Committee as the Steering Committee for the RDN Area Agricultural Plan. Following this appointment staff completed a Terms of Reference for this project, and the committee endorsed these terms in its meeting on April 29, 2011.

In May 2011, staff distributed a Request for Proposal (RFP) with the Terms of Reference to seek qualified consultants to conduct an Agricultural Area Plan for the Regional District of Nanaimo. The following report provides an update to the Board on the status of this project, the selection of a consultant and the next phase of the work plan.

DISCUSSION

Staff received six submissions in response to the RFP. These proposals demonstrated a wide variety of knowledge and experience in conducting similar agricultural studies in other urban and rural areas. Staff and the Steering Committee reviewed and evaluated the proposals, and the committee selected Upland Consulting as the project consultant at the committee's meeting in June.

At the same meeting, the BC Ministry of Agriculture presented an option to conduct the Land Use Inventory and Water Demand Model component of the Agricultural Plan. The committee was interested in having the Ministry conduct this analysis in collaboration with Upland Consulting. Staff met with the consultant to discuss the project work plan considering the potential engagement of the Ministry, whose work would not commence until Spring 2012.

From these meetings it was concluded that:

1. The consultant would conduct a preliminary review of agricultural uses and the associated water demands within the region to inform their research and better frame the context of their public engagement process. This information would also support a more robust inventory, if completed by the Ministry next year.

2. That there is an opportunity for further collaboration within the Regional District to relate the water demand assessment to current initiatives within the RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program.
3. The consultant and staff will attend the Vancouver Island Exhibition Fair in August to provide general information to the public concerning the agricultural plan project. A web site has also been secured at www.growingourfuture.ca for this project, and a press release will be prepared by staff in the coming weeks to announce the project initiation.

ALTERNATIVES

This report is being presented for information only.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS

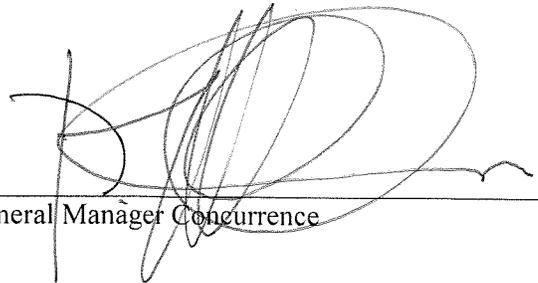
Staff completed a Terms of Reference for the RDN Agricultural Area Plan, and distributed a request for proposals for the project. Staff and the Agricultural Advisory Committee (the Steering Committee) evaluated the proposal submissions, and the committee selected Upland Consulting as the project consultant. The committee also expressed an interest in having the BC Ministry of Agriculture involved in the project to conduct a comprehensive land use inventory and water demand assessment. The information gathered through this assessment would relate to the work conducted by the project consultant, and support current initiatives within the RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program. A press release will be published in the next few weeks announcing the plan project and opportunities for public engagement at the VIEx fair in August.

RECOMMENDATION

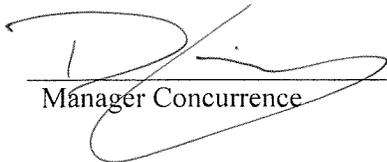
That the Board receive this report for information.



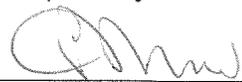
Report Writer



General Manager Concurrence



Manager Concurrence



CAO Concurrence