



Agricultural Area Plan Implementation - Bylaw and Policy Update Project
Meeting Summary- Nanaimo Cedar Farmer's Institute
December 11, 2014

Overview

As part of the Bylaw and Policy Updates Project, Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) staff attended the regular monthly meeting of the Nanaimo Cedar Farmer's Institute. The purpose of attending the meeting was to introduce the project, provide a summary of the draft obstacles, and to discuss the project in general. Although the RDN has been in contact with individuals from the group in regard to the project in the past, this was the first time the RDN met with the group as a whole.

Participants

There were approximately 21 participants in attendance. Roundtable introductions revealed that a broad cross-section of agricultural producers was represented at the meeting including farmer's who produce the following products:

- Berry crops
- Forage crops
- Poultry, beef, pork, goat, and lamb production
- Egg production
- Horses
- Garlic
- Animal processing

Process

The RDN provided an informal verbal overview of the Bylaw and Policy Update Project and a summary of the draft obstacles and possible approaches.

Discussion Summary

The following is a summary of the discussion.

- The RDN should adopt an agricultural zone that is consistent with the ALR regulations.
- The process to consolidate two or more parcels is very difficult. The process should be easier for consolidating parcels and should not be the same as the regular subdivision process.
- Topography affects the location and size for a building and should be a consideration for setbacks.
- The current setbacks of 30 m and 8 m do not make any sense and have no relation to the use of farm buildings. A setback to try to deal with strong odours is not going to be effective.
- Setbacks should be more flexible.

- Farmers markets need to be allowed somewhere.
- Greenhouses are different than other farm buildings and should be treated separately in terms of setbacks and parcel coverage.
- What tools are available to stop people from cutting vegetation near streams?
- Farmers need to have access to watercourses outside of their property to manage them for water flow.
- Drainage from non-farm areas onto farms is a big issue; better planning is needed to make sure drainage from developed areas does not drain onto farms.
- Buffers are important and should be established between farms and developed areas.
- Is it possible for a farmer to maintain the buffered strip?
- How does one get support to maintain watercourses that flow into and through farmland. In particular to remove blockages.
- Could stream corridors be separate from building lots when land is subdivided.
- Realtors should be required to inform people that they will be living next to a farm. The CVRD has a good brochure that is given to people who move to the country.
- Local governments could provide information to real estate agents and people who are moving to the rural areas.
- Dangerous dogs also chase poultry. Many incidents go unreported. Dangerous dogs are a concern for farmers throughout the RDN.
- There is a large concern about marijuana growing facilities. These are not considered to be agriculture and can have a significant impact on farms. Concerns related to water, traffic, drainage, disposal of materials for growing plants.

Individual Questionnaire Results

Participants were provided an opportunity to complete a questionnaire where they could rank the draft obstacles according to their level of importance. The questionnaire also provided an opportunity for respondents to indicate if the RDN should take action on each of the identified approaches. Only four completed questionnaires were returned, though this was to be expected as participants were directed to the online survey to provide input.

Overall, the questionnaires indicate the majority of respondents think that each obstacle is important and that the RDN should consider taking action to address each obstacle.