
MEMORANDUM

APAC-C 2-2023

Subject: Draft Agricultural Policy and Action Committee Terms of Reference

Date: September 29, 2023

To: Regional Council

From: Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

The Agricultural Policy and Action Committee Terms of Reference was last updated on March 26, 2020. Since then, there have been some housekeeping updates that are required to ensure the Terms of Reference is up to date. Staff have reviewed and provided a draft Terms of Reference to ensure the meeting location, organization names, and department titles are accurate. The draft Agricultural Policy and Action Committee Terms of Reference is included as Appendix I.

A motion of the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee is required. Suggested wording is as follows:

That this Committee recommends to the Planning and Economic Development Committee:

That Report APAC-C 2-2023, dated September 29, respecting the Draft Terms of Reference for the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee Terms of Reference attached to APAC-C 2-2023 as Appendix I, **BE APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

**AGRICULTURAL POLICY & ACTION COMMITTEE
(APAC)**

***DRAFT* TERMS OF REFERENCE**

DRAFT

Appendix to Report APAC-C 2-2023

Recommended for Approval by the <name of standing committee> on <date>

Ratified by Regional Council on <date>

AGRICULTURAL POLICY & ACTION COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

PREAMBLE:

The Agricultural Policy & Action Committee (APAC) was formed in 2013 as a result of a direction from Regional Council to amalgamate the Agricultural Sub-Committee and the Regional Chair's Agricultural Task Force. The Agricultural Sub-Committee was established in 1972 for the purposes of creating support programs through the two federations of agriculture to promote the agricultural industry in the Niagara Region and to provide input into planning issues that could have an impact on the agricultural industry. The Regional Chair's Agricultural Task Force was formed in 2002 to identify and take action on major blockades to the long-term viability of agriculture and to influence positive changes in agriculture-related policy at all levels of government. The amalgamation of the two committees into the Agricultural Policy & Action Committee provides the opportunity to recognize and align the work of both committees, and to recognize the critical primacy of agriculture in the Niagara Region in terms of both public policy and demonstrable actions.

MANDATE:

The Agricultural Policy & Action Committee (APAC) is an advisory body established by the Niagara Region in accordance with the following Terms of Reference. The Committee has been established to advise Regional Council on issues that impact the agricultural industry and support Regional Council, reporting through the Planning and Economic Development Committee, by initiating, developing, implementing, and participating in actions and strategies needed to advance the agricultural industry and preserve the agricultural land base throughout the Niagara Region.

GOALS/PURPOSE:

- Initiate, develop, implement, and participate in strategies to advance the agricultural industry and preserve the agricultural land base in the Niagara Region
- Update, as necessary, and carry out the tasks contained within the Agricultural Action Plan
- Act as a continuing liaison committee to further the interests of and promote the agricultural industry of the Niagara Region
- Provide input on planning-related matters that could have an impact on the agricultural industry
- Provide a link between the agricultural industry, the Agri-Food industry, and the economic development and health agendas

REPORTING STRUCTURE:

The APAC will report to Regional Council through the Planning and Economic Development Committee.

WORK PLAN:

The APAC will provide guidance to staff in the development of an annual work plan identifying the specific initiatives and activities to be undertaken within each of the areas of focus, inclusive of budget needs, to further guide decision-making and resource management.

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership for the APAC shall not exceed a maximum of 15 members with the majority of members being from the agricultural sector (primary producers).

Membership for the APAC shall include:

- *At least two (2) representatives of the Niagara Federation of Agriculture*
- *Up to six (6) Regional Council Representatives as appointed by Regional Council*

Depending on the priority issues outlined in the APAC's work plan, the remainder of the membership should target membership from across the Niagara Region, throughout the value chain, from a range of commodities and sectors related to the agricultural industry. Membership or participation by the Niagara Federation of Agriculture is considered an asset.

The remainder of the membership may target but is not limited to the following commodity/interest groups:

- Tender Fruit Industry
- Research Sector
- Dealer/Shipper Industry
- Grape Industry
- Meat/Food Processing Industry
- Greenhouse Industry
- Land Preservation and Environmental Protection Sector
- Nursery & Landscape Industry
- Cash Crop Industry
- Poultry Industry
- Livestock Industry

The term of membership shall be four years, concurrent with Regional Council's elected term of office, and the membership shall be approved by Council in accordance with membership requirements in the Terms of Reference. Current Committee members shall indicate their desire to be reappointed to the Committee no later than the December meeting prior to the change in Council.

All attempts will be made to stay within the guideline composition; however, if the applications received or the qualifications of applicants do not fully address the guideline composition criteria, the most capable and qualified applicants will be recommended for appointment to fulfill the membership composition.

The call for membership shall be made by invitation circulated to local agricultural stakeholders.

CHAIR & VICE CHAIR:

A Chair and Vice Chair will be elected from Committee members on a biannual basis at the first meeting of the New Year to preside over meetings and Committee business. The Chair of the Committee shall be a Regional Councillor. The Vice Chair of the Committee shall be a stakeholder member.

WORKING GROUPS:

To fulfill its mandate and accomplish its goals, the APAC will establish working groups to deal with specific issues or projects. The working groups will meet, as needed, to review specific issues referred to them by the APAC and otherwise complete their assigned tasks.

Working groups are considered to be time-limited, project specific sub-committees of the APAC in that they are convened to accomplish a specific task (or tasks) in a narrowly defined time period.

Working groups must be comprised of at least two members of the APAC and may include community members and other individuals with relevant knowledge and expertise. Local municipal participation should be sought depending on the nature of the work being undertaken.

Working groups shall be chaired where possible by a voting member of the APAC and shall provide regular updates to the APAC regarding recommendations on assigned projects. Minutes of the meetings of the working group shall be recorded and submitted to the APAC for proper directing through the approval process. Working groups may meet at a time and place as decided by the members of the working group.

RESOURCES:

The Growth Strategy and Economic Development Department is the designated lead department regarding resource support for the APAC; however, the Committee also has access to the technical expertise of staff from other Regional departments as may be required. It is recognized that staff time and the level of participation will be dependent on other departmental priorities as determined by senior management and/or Regional Council. As required, additional resources may be sought. Additional resourcing may be required for projects with senior levels of government.

The Committee shall receive administrative support from the Office of the Regional Clerk for meeting and agenda management.

MEETINGS:

A meeting schedule following a quarterly cycle shall be set for the APAC. The schedule will be circulated to the members for approval each year. Should a time sensitive matter arise, the APAC may meet at the call of the Chair.

The APAC meetings may be held in a virtual format, at Regional Headquarters or another suitable location as may be determined. All meetings will be open to the public.

Meetings shall be governed by the Region's Procedural By-law, being a by-law to govern the calling, place and proceedings of the meetings of Council and its Committees, as may be amended from time-to-time. This includes rules surrounding quorum.

A schedule setting the due dates for materials to be included on the agenda will be circulated to each member pending adoption of a meeting schedule or the scheduling of a meeting date.

ABSENTEEISM:

Members, who miss three unauthorized consecutive meetings, shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and will be notified of this in writing by the Committee Chair.

AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE:

The Terms of Reference should be reviewed and refined at a minimum of every four years to ensure that they remain current and meaningful.

Proposals to amend the Terms of Reference shall require the approval of a majority of the members present. Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference shall be submitted to Regional Council for approval through the Planning and Economic Development Committee and shall take effect only upon the approval of Council.