



**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA  
AGRICULTURAL POLICY & ACTION COMMITTEE  
AGENDA**

**APAC 1-2024**

**Friday, April 19, 2024**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Meeting will be held by electronic participation only**

If you are interested in viewing this meeting or would like to speak to an item listed on the agenda please contact the Office of the Regional Clerk at [clerk@niagararegion.ca](mailto:clerk@niagararegion.ca).

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**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

8.1 Bill 185 - Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act and Draft PPS

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8.3 Irrigation Project Update

8.4 Burn Permit Fees - City of St. Catharines

8.5 Surface Water Runoff Fees

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8.7 Regional Agricultural 5-year Outlook

8.8 Farm Signs on Rural Regional Roads

**9. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on September 20, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend or participate in meetings or events, please contact the Accessibility Advisor at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 (office), 289-929-8376 (cellphone) or [accessibility@niagararegion.ca](mailto:accessibility@niagararegion.ca) (email).

**April 19, 2024**

## **Pelham Greenhouse Growers Presentation to the Niagara Agricultural Policy & Action Committee**

### **Mr Chair and Committee Members**

I am before you today representing the interests of the Pelham Greenhouse Growers Group (PGGG) as they relate to the Town of Pelham Official Plan policies and Zoning By-law provisions affecting greenhouses.

PGGG is very concerned that Pelham fails to recognize the importance of agriculture in the Niagara economy generally and to support the success of the greenhouse industry more specifically.

PGGG consists of (number) growers active in horticultural, landscape, fruit and vegetable crops. John Langendoen, Louis Damm, Jan VanZanten and Jason Weirenga provide leadership to this group.

The specific concern of PGGG are Pelham's restrictions on lot coverage for greenhouses. The Town's Official Plan (2014) and Zoning By-law (2022) limit lot coverage to a maximum of 30%.

PGGG has appeared before Pelham Council on three separate occasions (June 2023, October 2023 and January 2024) requesting consideration of amendments to the planning documents. On each occasion, PGGG has voiced concern that Pelham's policies frustrate the objectives and are inconsistent with those of the Province and Region.

Provincial and Regional policies consistently state,

***...all types, sizes and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices shall be promoted and protected...***

While the direction from the Province is clear, the Town's current policies severely restrict the size and intensity of an agricultural use and consequently frustrate the development and improvement of agricultural lands for production.

### **Do Pelham's Policies Recognize The Importance Of The Greenhouse Industry In Niagara?**

As documented in the Niagara Agricultural Profile (ED 10-2023) submitted to and considered by your Committee on September 29, 2023, the agriculture sector in Niagara provides a substantial economic impact. In 2021, agriculture contributed \$1.71 billion to regional GDP. The top agriculture industries by GDP impact included greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture comprising 49% of total.

Greenhouse operations are second to none in,

- farm type in terms of revenue      \$492 million.
- average farm revenue                \$2,343,026,
- GDP impact                              \$827,542,210 (48.5%),
- employer                                 11,678,

### **Do Pelham's Policies Support The Greenhouse Industry?**

- The current Official Plan ignores that greenhouses are agricultural operations in terms of tradition and by definition at the Provincial, Regional and Municipal level.
- The PPS, Greenbelt Plan, Agricultural Guidelines and Regional Official Plan promote agricultural operations of all sizes and intensities.
- An owner could amend the Zoning By-law Amendment but that requires a costly public consultation process for a use that is already permitted and for which there is no basis for regulating in this manner.
- The Official Plan does not impose lot coverage restrictions on any other agricultural crop.
- Pelham's policies create an uneven playing field
  - Within Pelham – restricting the use of lands to 30% forces greenhouse growers to compete with farmers that are able to use the whole of their lands for other agricultural crops, placing them at an economic disadvantage in purchasing lands.
  - Adjacent municipalities are more flexible in caps on coverage (West Lincoln - 70%, Lincoln and St Catharines – no restriction).

### **What Is Our Next Step?**

Having our requests rebuffed in Pelham, PGGG has initiated an appeal with the Normal Farm Practices Board. Initial screening has been completed by Ministry Staff to explore opportunities for mediation and PGGG has been authorized to pursue an appeal.

### **What Is Our Request?**

PGGG respectfully requests that your Committee issue a resolution in support our appeal to the Normal Farm Practices Board.

To this end, the following motion is suggested:

THAT the Pelham Greenhouse Growers Group presentation respecting Pelham's restrictive greenhouse policies, dated April 4, 2024, BE RECEIVED.

AND FURTHER THAT the Niagara Agricultural Policy & Action Committee supports the Pelham Greenhouse Growers Group appeal to the Normal Farm Practices Board recognizing the harmful effect of said policies on the prosperity of agriculture within the Region.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

John Langendoen

Louis Damm

Jan VanZanten

Jason Weirenga

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## **Memorandum**

**APAC-C 1-2024**

**Subject:** Soil Health

**Date:** April 19, 2024

**To:** Agricultural Policy and Action Committee

**From:** Susan McPetrie, Planner

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At the September 2023 meeting of the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee (APAC), there was discussion related to soil health and Local Area Municipal site alteration by-laws as they pertain to the regulation of soil importation on agricultural lands. Staff indicated that a memo with an overview of soil health would be brought to the Committee in the future. The purpose of this memo is to provide this additional information with respect to soil health and the conservation and protection of agricultural soil, including an overview of relevant provincial and local legislation.

### **Soil Health Benefits**

Soil is the foundation of a healthy environment and a sustainable, productive food system. Healthy soils support increased crop growth, yield and quality, while also contributing to carbon sequestration, improved water quality and increased biodiversity. As pressures on the food production system and the natural environment continue to grow, maintaining soil health is increasingly important.

Soil health can be defined as a measure of how well soil currently performs all its functions and how those functions are being preserved for future use. Essential functions of a healthy soil include:

- Sustaining plant and animal life;
- Regulating water;
- Cycling nutrients;
- Providing physical support and stability; and
- Filtering and buffering potential pollutants.

A healthy soil has sufficient organic matter, good soil structure and adequate pore space to allow the movement of water and air. It also has well-balanced nutrients and a suitable pH level for growing crops. Soil with these characteristics will be less prone to

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erosion and compaction and will have a greater capacity to absorb and retain water, enabling crops to withstand both floods and droughts more easily. A healthy soil will also have a high level of biological diversity, which increases resilience to environmental challenges, including pests and disease.

### **Threats to Soil Health**

Ontario's agricultural lands are under increasing stress and face multiple factors that threaten soil health, including:

- Increased demands on soils to grow food for an increasing provincial and global population;
- Changes in cropping, tillage and other practices that can degrade soil health;
- Over-application of mineral fertilizers and pesticides;
- Increased frequency in extreme weather due to climate change;
- Soil pollution from road salt, chemical spills and other contaminants; and
- Encroaching development.

These pressures can lead to decreased function and health of the soil. The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization's 2015 report 'The Status of the World's Soil Resources' identified that soil erosion, nutrient depletion, loss of soil organic carbon and declining soil biodiversity are the most significant soil issues in North America.

### **Soil Management Practices**

It can take many years for healthy soil to be created through natural processes and very little time to degrade, therefore conservation and protection of soil is essential. Good soil management practices can enhance and sustain soil health. While specific management techniques vary with the context of each farm, they are generally guided by the following principles:

- Maximize soil organic matter;
- Minimize soil disturbance (e.g., reducing tillage and application of pesticides);
- Keep the soil covered with living plants or plant residue;
- Maintain living roots in the soil throughout the year; and
- Maximize plant diversity.

Key practices founded on these principles include reducing tillage, planting cover crops, companion planting, diversifying crop rotations and applying organic amendments.

However, there is no single, prescriptive approach to improving soil health. Soil conditions and requirements differ from one farm to another. Decisions about soil management are best made by the individual farmer based on their understanding of their fields and crops and what works best for their operation.

## **Resources and Supports**

Shifting farming practices to incorporate soil health management can involve experimentation and take time to yield financial benefits, with the risks borne solely by the farmer. For this reason, external resources, including financial support, can play a critical role in facilitating the transition. The federal and provincial governments have long-standing programs in place to provide technical and financial support for farmers. Key funding opportunities provided include the On-Farm Climate Action Fund and the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program, both aimed at helping farmers adopt beneficial management practices that make their lands more productive, while also sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the On-Farm Applied Research and Monitoring program supports continued monitoring of soil health and water quality, as well as the establishment of on-farm trials to evaluate the effectiveness of best management practices. The provincial government also offers an extensive library of soil health and management info sheets and guides for best practices ([www.ontario.ca/page/soil-health-ontario#section-1](http://www.ontario.ca/page/soil-health-ontario#section-1)).

Conservation authorities in Ontario may also provide funding to farmers for stewardship projects. These programs are primarily focused on the ecological benefits of conservation farm practices, such as improving habitat and water quality. In Niagara, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority offers restoration grants for projects that address nutrient management and soil stabilization, as well as one-time grants to promote the establishment of cover crops.

Municipal governments are often less directly involved in agricultural funding; however, Wellington County offers a recent example of a municipal level program intended to promote soil health and sustainable farming practices. In 2022, the County launched Experimental Acres as a pilot program to support farmers in their first year of trying new practices on a small scale. It offers financial and research support to help farmers test a practice before scaling up to their whole operation. In 2023, the program expanded to include farms in Dufferin and Grey Counties, supporting a total of twenty-one (21) farms. With the success of the program, Wellington County has created a guide for municipalities interested in replicating this model.



There are also non-profit and non-governmental organizations that provide resources and support for Ontario farmers, such as the Ontario Soil Network, the Ontario Crop and Soil Improvement Association and the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario. Currently, the Greenbelt Foundation and the Soil Health Institute are offering free soil testing to grain and oilseed farms in the Golden Horseshoe Region, which will allow farmers to evaluate their current soil health compared to similar soils in their region and measure the impact of different management practices on soil health.

## **Legislation**

### **Provincial**

One soil management issue that has been addressed through legislation is excess soil reuse. Excavation for development projects often generates large amounts of excess soil that cannot be reused at the site of excavation and must be taken off-site. The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks estimates that 25 million cubic metres of excess soil is generated in Ontario every year. While this soil can potentially be put to beneficial use on agricultural or other lands, some excess soil may contain contaminants that could threaten soil health and water quality. Additionally, the improper management of excess soil can create local issues such as noise, dust, truck traffic, road damage and drainage problems.

In December of 2019, the Ontario government created the On-site and Excess Soil Management Regulation under the *Environmental Protection Act (1990)*. The regulation is intended to support proper management of excess soil and ensure that, as a valuable resource, excess soil does not end up as waste in municipal landfills. Under the regulation, excess soil is to be reused for a beneficial purpose, and the quality and quantity of the soil to be deposited at the reuse site are to be appropriate for that purpose.

The regulation is being implemented in three phases. The first two phases, which have already taken effect, established rules and standards for excess soil reuse, clarified when soil is not designated as a waste, and outlined the requirements for testing, documentation and tracking of excess soil for certain projects. The final requirements under the regulation will come into force on January 1, 2025. At that time, restrictions will come into place to ensure that excess soil will not be landfilled unless it is used for a beneficial purpose at the landfill, such as daily or final cover, berm construction or any other use that supports the operation of the landfill.

On October 17, 2023, the Province proposed amendments to the regulation to provide clarification on certain regulatory requirements and remove barriers to the reuse of low-risk soils. One key proposed change, as it relates to soil health, is the amendment of rules to enable the use of salt-impacted soil on agricultural properties in areas not used for growing crops or pasturing, or in natural areas. The commenting period for these changes closed on December 1, 2023.

## **Municipal**

The Province has recognized the role of municipalities in excess soil management within the regulatory framework. While the regulation sets out generic requirements for soil quality and quantity, if a site-specific instrument, such as a municipal by-law, outlines requirements related to the quality and/or quantity of excess soil to be received at a reuse site, the instrument prevails.

Single-tier and lower-tier municipalities can use site alteration by-laws to regulate the placement of excess soil, including establishing a permitting system for these activities. Through these site alteration by-laws, the municipality may impose conditions on the quantity and quality of soil being deposited at reuse site. They may also address appropriate beneficial uses for soil reuse and set site-specific operational requirements.

Municipal authority over site alteration is broad, however there are limitations. As set out in the Municipal Act (2001), site alteration as a condition to the approval of a site plan, a plan of subdivision or a consent is exempt from a by-law. Additionally, site alteration on agricultural lands may be exempt from site alteration by-laws if considered a 'normal farm practice' carried out as part of an agricultural operation. There is no definitive list of normal farm practices. Normal farm practices are determined on a case-by-case basis by the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board.

Ten (10) of the Local Area Municipalities (LAMs) in Niagara have by-laws that address site alteration and placement of fill (refer to Appendix I). These by-laws prohibit site alteration without obtaining a permit to do so. As part of the permit application process, property owners may be required to submit information about the project, such as the proposed haul route, a lot grading and drainage plan, and a site alteration plan with information about the site, including existing soil types, surrounding water bodies, proposed sediment control measures and other location and project specifications. While not always the case, some by-laws specify maximum allowable volumes within a certain period. For example, in Wainfleet, Thorold and Grimsby, permits for site alteration that involve importing more than 1000 cubic metres of excess soil within any

twelve (12) month period may only be issued when approved by Council. Most of the LAMs rely on provincial standards and enforcement to ensure fill does contain contaminants. However, for site alteration on agricultural lands, the Welland and Port Colborne by-laws also require a report signed by a professional engineer or soil scientist confirming that the proposed alteration will not negatively affect the soil fertility or capacity.

In the past, there have been issues in some municipalities with property owners accepting excess soil on a commercial basis or developers purchasing properties for the purpose of dumping excess soil from construction. Recent conversations with by-law enforcement staff in Wainfleet, West Lincoln, Grimsby, Lincoln, Pelham, and Fort Erie indicate that this is not currently a significant or on-going issue and that the by-laws have been effective in addressing concerns related to site alteration. In most cases, when by-law enforcement officers become aware of site alteration occurring without a permit, they are able to successfully educate the property owner about the by-law requirements and achieve compliance under the permitting process.

There are instances of non-compliance that require by-law enforcement to issue fines. In addition to fines issued under the Provincial Offences Act, many municipalities are now implementing Administrative Monetary Penalty Systems (AMPS), which provide a faster internal process for payment, appeal and collection of penalties that bypasses the court system. In Grimsby, the AMPS approach has proven to be an effective deterrent in an area with a history of issues of commercial soil importation. Conversely, Niagara-on-the-Lake has faced challenges with enforcement, as the by-law currently references fines no longer in the provincial legislation. The Town has retained a consultant and is in the process of updating the by-law. Lincoln is also looking at revising its by-law to include consideration of the proposed use of imported soil and encourage alternatives where appropriate.

## **Conclusion**

Niagara's soil health is of critical importance to the region's agricultural sector. Protecting and enhancing soil health not only supports a productive agricultural system, but also contributes to environmental sustainability and resilience against the challenges of climate change. Effective soil management practices, funding and regulation play a pivotal role in promoting soil health in Niagara.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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Susan McPetrie  
Planner

### Municipal Site Alteration By-Laws

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Site Alteration By-Law</b>	<b>Maximum Quantity of Fill Allowed with Permit</b>	<b>Penalties</b>
Fort Erie	By-Law No. 201-96	No maximum specified.	Provincial Offence Fines.
Grimsby	By-Law No. 2020-44	Approval of Council required for amounts of fill exceeding one thousand (1000) cubic metres within any twelve (12) month period. Additional requirements for site alteration application, public notice and public meeting apply.	Provincial Offence Fines.  Administrative Monetary Penalty.
Lincoln	By-Law No. 2020-64	No maximum specified.	Provincial Offence Fines.
Niagara Falls	Permit application, no Site Alteration By-Law	N/A	N/A
Niagara-on-the-Lake	By-Law No. 3941-05	No maximum specified.	Update of fines in process.  Administrative Monetary Penalty.
Pelham	By-Law No. 3357 (2013)	No maximum specified.	Provincial Offence Fines.  Administrative Monetary Penalty.
Port Colborne	By-Law No. 5528-125 (2010)	No maximum specified.	Provincial Offence Fines.
St. Catharines	No Site Alteration By-Law	N/A	N/A

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Site Alteration By-Law</b>	<b>Maximum Quantity of Fill Allowed with Permit</b>	<b>Penalties</b>
Thorold	By-Law No. 17-2021	Approval of Council required for amounts of fill exceeding one thousand (1000) cubic metres within any twelve (12) month period. Additional requirements for site alteration application, public notice and public meeting apply.	Provincial Offence Fines.  Administrative Monetary Penalty.
Wainfleet	By-Law No. 025-2022 (Amended 2023)	Approval of Council required for amounts of fill exceeding one thousand (1000) cubic metres within any twelve (12) month period. Additional requirements for site alteration application, public notice and public meeting apply.	Provincial Offence Fines.  Administrative Monetary Penalty.
Welland	By-Law No. 2010-81	No maximum specified.	Provincial Offence Fines.  Administrative Monetary Penalty.
West Lincoln	By-Law No. 2016-41 (Consolidated 2019)	Approval of Council required for amounts of fill exceeding one thousand (1000) cubic metres within any twelve (12) month period. Additional requirements for site alteration application, public notice and public meeting apply.	Provincial Offence Fines.  Administrative Monetary Penalty.

**From:** [Spratt, Jenna](#)  
**To:** [Spratt, Jenna](#)  
**Subject:** An open letter to all Regional Councillors, Provincial, and Federal representatives  
**Date:** April 5, 2024 10:08:39 AM

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**From:** Renee Delaney <[info@smallscalefarms.ca](mailto:info@smallscalefarms.ca)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 2, 2024 5:05:46 PM  
**To:** Renee Delaney <[info@smallscalefarms.ca](mailto:info@smallscalefarms.ca)>  
**Subject:** An open letter to all Regional Councillors, Provincial, and Federal representatives

**CAUTION EXTERNAL EMAIL:** This email originated from outside of the Niagara Region email system. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

### **An Open Letter to all Councillors, Provincial and Federal Representatives: A Note On Climate Change**

Healthy soil is the base of our entire food system. But more importantly it is the base of our entire earth.

#### **Soil is life.**

Whether you're left or right, or anywhere in between, everyone agrees that healthy food comes from healthy soil. So why, if our soil is being destroyed, is no one, including you, doing anything about it?

**Niagara is a peninsula**, we are practically surrounded by water and our watershed is extensive. The fertilizers we are using on our crops are travelling. We can't even swim in our lakes anymore.

Systemic pesticides are travelling. Gone are the days of contact spraying where the bug would die when it came in contact with the toxin, (and the toxin would fairly quickly dissolve). Now, we are destroying much more than the targeted bug with our genetically modified science.

**Chemicals and synthetic fertilizers** are used extensively on our soil in Niagara and they have all but destroyed a significant amount of our microbiome - which in fact, keeps our planet healthy. They've affected our food supply and simultaneously they've leached into our water supply. These chemicals are getting into our body's and our babies, so I ask you now, why is nothing being done about this? Why, as the region of Niagara, have we done nothing?

Why have we not even recognized our own farming potential, (shutting down processing plants, little to no marketing campaigns to support local farmers) let alone accept our economic and environmental responsibilities as it relates to our food system?

#### **Especially given the targets and mandates being applied now in regards to climate change.**

If Niagara is a corporation then it should be run like one. Businesses and social enterprises constantly leverage their abilities. We have a very particular skill set here in Niagara - all we need now is a government who sees that. I know you see our wine, our weed, and our cash crops, but do you see us small scale farmers?

Clearly, you only need to take one guess as to why we are continuing instead with farming practices that are having such a negative effect on this earth, and it's people:

#### **Profits.**

The global pesticide market is Worth 78 billion dollars.

The global soy bean market is 185 billion dollars and is expected to nearly double by 2028.

Corn and corn starch derivatives are at 264 billion and expected to nearly double by 2033.

The global vegetable oil market 258 billion dollars and is expected to increase to 550 billion by 2028.

Obviously there is profit in agriculture. But should we not be looking at more than just financial profit? What about local economic profit or social profit?

And we haven't even started talking about the effect these products have on our health, or on our health care system. **The fact of the matter is** these products and the farming practices utilized to produce them, are literally destroying our ability to take care of ourselves. We are now having to come up with solutions to save us from ourselves?

Why not just fix the problem!

If we ALREADY ARE growing in this manner, on such a large scale, how can farming possibly be ignored when it comes to climate change. We are killing our soil - world wide. So what happens next?

Well. **That's up to you all.** You can either stop participating in this madness and support the growing of a local, sustainable food system, **or** you can suffer the consequences.

There is one thing for sure you can't do though. You can't say that no one told you. Or that you didn't know. Because I can't for the life of me understand how anyone can say they know what climate change is, and yet continue to participate in such a broken system. Or worse. Politicize it.

At the end of the day, it is literally your job to help create policy around protecting our environment, and it is **my job as a farmer** to encourage you to start paying a lot closer attention to our food. And how it's being grown.

Don't just read the stats. Check in on whether or not there's even enough REAL food growing in Niagara to feed ourselves. For example, how can you hear about farmers retiring and not be concerned?

We live in the best place in all of Canada to grow food. And we are in the very best position to show the rest of the country - and world - **how it should be done.**

If of course, we care enough to.

Locally yours,  
Renee Delaney



[www.smallscalefarms.ca](http://www.smallscalefarms.ca)

1-844-SOW-SEED (769-7333)

13145 Lundy's Lane, Thorold, ON L0S 1A0

Facebook: [@smallscalefarming](https://www.facebook.com/smallscalefarming)

Instagram: [@smallscalefarms](https://www.instagram.com/smallscalefarms)

*"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."*



**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA  
AGRICULTURAL POLICY & ACTION COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**APAC 2-2023  
Friday, December 1, 2023  
Meeting held by electronic participation only**

Committee: Bradley (Regional Chair), Easton, Kaiser, Seaborn; G. Janes, S. Marshall, C. Mullet Koop, J. Schonberger, K. White, K. Wiens (Committee Vice Chair)

Absent/Regrets: Bateman, Steele, Witteveen (Committee Chair)

Staff: E. Acs, Manager, Community Planning, K. Boyko, Economic Development Officer, K. Costantini, Senior Planner, J. Federici, Senior Planner, B. Landry, Manager, Economic Research and Analysis, M. Marino, Associate Director, Economic Development, J. Spratt, Legislative Coordinator, A. Stea, Director, Community & Long Range Planning,

Others Present: P. Bootsma, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, I. Potter, Vineland Research Innovation Center, M. Sipos, Greenbelt Federation, C. Yungblut, Ontario Federation of Agriculture,

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Vice Chair, Kai Wiens, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

**2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

**3. PRESENTATIONS**

There were no presentations.

**4. DELEGATIONS**

There were no delegations.

**5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

There were no items for consideration.

**6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**6.1 APAC-C 3-2023**

Draft Agriculture Economic Development Action Plan

Michael Bugeja, Optimus SBR, provided a presentation respecting the Draft Agriculture Economic Development Action Plan. Topics of the presentation included:

- Project Overview
- Project Approach
- Project Outputs
- Actions Plan Framework
  - Building a Unified Identity for Agriculture in Niagara
  - Working together to Reduce Red Tape
  - Protecting Agriculture Talent and Inspiring the Next Generation
  - Attracting High Value Agri-Based Investment
  - Proactively Embracing a Changing Climate
- Marketing Strategy and Target Audience

Moved by Councillor Easton  
Seconded by C. Mullet Koop

That Report APAC-C 3-2023, dated December 1, 2023, respecting Draft Agriculture Economic Development Action Plan, **BE RECEIVED**.

**Carried**

**Committee Information Request(s):**

Provide the amount associated with the Draft Agriculture Economic Development Action Plan marketing strategy. Councillor Kaiser.

**6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

Moved by Councillor Easton  
Seconded by J. Schonberger

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

APAC-C 4-2023  
Committee Membership

APAC-C 5-2023

Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS)

APAC-C 6-2023

Update on Provincial Modifications to 2022 Niagara Official Plan

APAC-C 7-2023

Town of The Blue Mountains - Abandoned Orchards By-law

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**Carried**

**Committee Information Request(s):**

Provide information respecting Abandoned Orchard By-laws. Kai Wiens.

**7. OTHER BUSINESS**

**7.1 Irrigation Project Update**

Committee member Sarah Marshall requested that an update respecting the Irrigation Project be brought to each meeting. Erik Acs, Manager, Community Planning, provided a verbal update and informed Committee that information can be provided at each meeting respecting the project status and next steps.

**7.2 Excess Soil Regulations**

Councillor Easton provided information on the excess soil regulations, the monitoring and compliance burden that it could have on municipalities, and the need for the Ministry of the Environment to have a more comprehensive look at these changes. Erik Acs, Manager, Community Planning, informed Committee that Regional staff are working with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority to include soil planning in site plan application to assist with this issue.

**8. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Friday, February 2, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:12 p.m.

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Kai Wiens  
Committee Vice Chair

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Jenna Spratt  
Legislative Coordinator

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Ann-Marie Norio  
Regional Clerk