

Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup> Farm Plan SC Minutes

Present: Harlene Holm, facilitator, David Graham, Courtney Campbell, Bruce Jolliffe, Anne de Cosson, Dave Niedermoser, Marina Reid, Danni Crenna, Ashley Jonesmith, Louise Bell

Agenda:

- 1) Additions/changes
- 2) Welcome new members
- 3) Review of Vision Statement/ Purpose Statement
- 4) Definitions of “agriculture”, “farming” and “sustainability”
- 5) Clarifying who “We” are/ whose voice is speaking in this plan
- 6) Research reports –
  - a) DI Agriculture Strategy – Harlene
  - b) SSI Farm Plan – Marina
  - c) Cowichan Valley Plan – Dave N.
  - \* d) Saanich Plan – Doug
  - e) CV Sustainability Plan - Danni
  - f) “Bits from IT Binder” – Anne
- 7) Planner Update
- 8) Agenda for next meeting – March 22, 9:30 - 1pm

1.No Additions or Changes were added

2.We learned that Gary Piercy, one of our two newest members, has had to withdraw after realizing that he was unavailable for any of our meeting times. Ashley Jonesmith was present after receiving a thorough grounding in our work so far by David Graham. It was decided by the group to remain the size we are and not to pursue further members/additions as we are about to embark on the core of our process and it would be difficult for someone to be included after today.

3. Our Vision Statement: “An Island where we feed each other abundantly because farming is a viable and valued foundation of our sustainable community” was unanimously agreed on to remain as is at least until final proofing of our Plan.

Our Purpose Statement: “To protect and encourage agriculture within the context of Denman Island and to create guiding principles for the Islands Trust to use in making policies and bylaws through:

- Studying/recommending resolutions for areas of regulatory conflict
- Educating

- Exploring alliances
- Researching and promoting agricultural facilities
- Strengthening food security
- Maximizing agricultural land security
- Recognizing/ supporting local small-scale and diverse nature of DI agriculture
- Engaging the community
- Working with/ providing input to other levels of government
- Encouraging youth engagement in farming
- Recognizing the importance of healthy ecosystems and their interrelationships with farming\*
- Considering / supporting local agriforestry and its best practices\*\*

It was decided to maintain this statement as read for the present but that we will want to prioritize these purposes before presenting to our consultant. The two starred objectives still need agreement from the group as a whole.

#### 4. First pass at defining “agriculture”, “farming” and “sustainability”

##### Agriculture:

- Science/art?
- Plants
- Cultivation
- Support of farming
- More bureaucratic
- A noun
- Potential/ a concept
- More sterile

##### Farming:

- Growing food, raising livestock
- Business
- Minimum \$ under BC assessment for farm status/ \*\* Ask Jill Hatfield re size parameters
- Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm Act)
- Art/dedication
- Verb
- More possible/inclusive
- Came before “agriculture”

- More anarchistic
- More than what happens on ALR lands
- historic

\*\* “Lifestyle Farming” = not up to farm status but includes some farm aspects to country home ... ? Protection for new classification under ALR for small self-sustaining farms (not presently included in ALR)

\*\*\* Zoning discussion will be important in Phase 2 according to Courtney Campbell

#### Sustainability:

- (closed) loop, circle/continuum that supports itself
- Sustenance, providing for life
- Food security
- Food sovereignty
- Capable of being maintained indefinitely
- Need to include climate change
- In IT mandate
- Definition from CV Sustainability Plan: “A unifying concept that compels us to improve the quality of life for all citizens and species, while protecting the environmental systems and resources on which all life depends. It is a global journey that takes local actions. It requires us to reexamine our values, take a deeper look at how the earth and its systems function, and find new models for cooperative action.  
Beyond protecting our planet’s health, sustainability is also about promoting resilience, allowing us to effectively respond to changes or severe events that may impact our communities.”

#### Voice/Speaker for the Plan:

Who are we speaking for? Some plans seem to be created by government and a few farmers; we want our plan to represent everyone who reads it – farmers, non-farmers, future farmers, new community members. It should be inclusive; community – oriented as opposed to representing special interests. It should parallel the OCP and the “we” should be the whole community. We want to phrase it in accessible language, with a purpose of overcoming the lack of understanding between farmers and the rest of the community. Other

phrases describing our intention: consultative, “from the ground up”, harmonizing, “growing” vs “farming”, realistic, locally-sourced info, “ground truthing”, NOT absolute – a “snapshot in time”

Land Use Inventory (from the Denman Island Agriculture Strategy)

Comments from reviewers “unworkable”, “not user-friendly”; according to Courtney Campbell the Parcel ID numbers can be cross-referenced with the computerized map and were intended for the use of the consultants for map formation. They can be omitted from the final plan “Ask Islands Trust” could be substituted.

Appendix E is not a final format; it will be revised for the final plan. “General Policy Updates” will be important for our next consultant; we need to review these ideas with him/her.

The CVRD Regional Growth Strategy on page 42 does not apply to Denman Island; it should be an appendix. It is a resource for the future plan.

This document needs to be discussed with the Consultant of Phase II with our comments as part of the discussion. Our Plan is not a continuation or an extension of Phase I.

We need to provide a report to the Investment Agriculture Foundation re usefulness of the document that was created in our Phase I process. In some ways it has been very useful; the Growers and Producers Association were very excited to see some of the demographics discovered by our consultants. We need to send it out to the community with a caveat that this is not the final Plan but only “Phase I – Stay tuned!” and that there are a few errors and omissions.

Salt Spring Island Plan:

- Harmonizes local bylaw policies on farmland with existing federal and provincial regulations
- Includes programs for school/ school gardens
- Getting farm size clear – how much property actually used for farming; percentage of ALR used for farming/ non - ALR farmed
- Environmental farm plan used everywhere
- New zones for R2 land farming to possibly provide tax breaks for non-conforming farmers
- Includes environmental considerations
- Had several meetings for public input

- Includes desired outcomes – and the next step needed
- Includes a fairground for farmers' market
- Includes 25 key recommendations, none of which addresses water needs and which do not, in fact, reflect entirely the community input found in the "Direction"
- The "Direction" includes useful input from the community/ groups
- The "Strategic Objective" can be ignored in Harlene's opinion; there are too many redundancies

#### Cowichan Valley Plan

- A good plan but the environmental aspects were short and vague; it didn't discuss water needs or include much history
- Actions were listed with goals
- Tables were excellent
- We could be a lot more specific because we are much smaller
- 3 out of 12 creators were farmers; the rest were "others" ie government representatives
- Interesting demographic: horses were increasing in numbers; all other stock has been decreasing over time

#### CV Sustainability Plan

- Includes vision and "sustainability perspectives" for food
- Each goal includes specific targets with "by when dates" and steps/actions to be taken by each involved agency and relevant group
- Only 6 specific goals with many actions associated with each;
- goals include:
  - Supporting a diverse and thriving local agriculture system,
  - Bolstering the local farm and food economy,
  - Labeling local food products and making them available in every possible venue,
  - Requiring that new neighbourhoods integrate local food system considerations into their design and support work to ensure that existing neighbourhoods increase their urban agricultural capacity,
  - Increasing community and youth education re food production, harvesting, and healthy eating
  - Increasing the ecological sustainability of the local food system

- They talk about land use driven by needs – proportions of different agricultural purposes of farms = % of required nutrients
- Utopian in nature; does not seem to be applying to an existing community but a future community to be designed by this plan; would be a wonderful community to live in and very earth-friendly

“Bits” from the Islands Trust Binder

1) SSI Plan extra parts : a) Land Use Inventory – part of Plan

- liked detailed info/ definitions
- Liked distinctions of ALR land being used not being used, etc
- Broken down into land uses on different parts of properties

b) Produce Study – came out of plan

- “Liked a lot”; would like to make our own study over this coming summer – a study of what crops are actually being grown this year and how much of each/ where
- Likes visuals of SSI Plan
- Likes collaborative language
- Looked at preliminary data re carbon footprints
- Looked at local fresh produce compared to off-island sourced
- Looked at home food garden production
- Created a very readable, nicely laid out booklet which would be easy to hand out to the public for a quick informative process.
- Includes greenhouses as a way to extend the growing season

- 2) BC's Food Self-Reliance: - good baseline document; may want to include as an addendum – overall view for province
  - 3) BC Food Guide – still 50's thinking re healthy diet
  - One of Denman Island's strengths is that we already have an idea of a truly healthy diet
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- 4) Small Scale Farming in the Cowichan Valley – back yard gardens will be included in our discussion

Planner Update:

(As reported by Courtney Campbell) – excellent workshop

- Power point synopsis of agricultural plans
- Funding offered
- Researcher on Agricultural Plans completed to date
- 2 useful discussions on “Where you are in the Planning Process” and “How to Implement your Plan” we should include steps as part of our Plan
- Evaluation by researcher= “all too long”
- Evaluation of our process/effectiveness needs to be built in to Plan

Other Reports from Courtney

- Formatting problems from Phase I have been fixed
- We need to keep the May 13<sup>th</sup> deadline in mind
- Nanaimo North Regional Plan regarding special areas meeting between April 8 and 10; will be attended by Louise Bell

Agenda for Next Meeting: ( Tuesday, Mar 22, 9:30 – 1pm) Facilitator – Anne de Cosson

- Saanich Plan analyzed by Doug Wright
- Take definitions/voice to next step
- Key focus areas of Plan
- content of Plan
- best format for accessible Plan
- Implementation/ success evaluation of goals
- Community input
- Film Night

Courtney will send out overview of format preferences she heard in this meeting