

Denman Island Agricultural Committee November 25, 2010

Present: Anne de Cosson (facilitator), David Graham (local trustee), Harlene Holm (notetaker), Dave Niedermoser (keeper of the flipchart), Marina Reid, Ralph Walton and Danni Crenna who braved snow to arrive from Vancouver mid-meeting.

Phone connection: Courtney Campbell (Trust planner), Jill Hatfield (BC Agronomist), Bruce Jolliffe (Area A Director) with AEL consultants coming in mid-meeting.

The meeting focused on the draft Denman Island Agricultural Strategy 2010.11.18 and three agenda items:

1) what works, 2) what needs changing and 3) what is missing.

What works

Generally, the committee felt that the consultants had delivered beyond strategy and that the result was good value/ “impressive” given the funding and time limitations and project parameters. Harlene highlighted sections 5.0, 6.0 and Appendix D as particularly useful.

What needs changing

Specifics were difficult because of the length of the document and the time for review.

a) Integrate the CVRD into the strategy.

b) Either remove, re-locate and/or reword 8.0 “Recommendations”- discussion focused on the tone, sources, setting of priorities and the implementing agencies. While the committee did not want to lose the recommendations as a background resource for the subsequent Plan, the AgC felt that as 8.0 embodied the consultants’ recommendation and not necessarily those of the committee, **8.0 would best be (1) removed from the text (and Executive Summary) and appear as an appendix with clear identification that the source was AEL experience and background; and (2) reviewed for “tone” for example, change Recommendations to “Possibilities for Consideration” with Implementing Agency to “Resources,” Action Required softened to such as “Ideas” and Priority Level dropped as a category.**

c) **Remove 7.0 - 7.4 to an appendix for clear access for those who wish to learn more about the various authorities behind agriculture on Denman Island and to avoid burdening the text. However, leave 7.5.3 OCP excerpts and 7.5.4 Land Use Bylaw excerpts - with additions noted in What is Missing (below).**

d) **Remove the last paragraph of 4.2 “Initial Results” (page 21) as the text contains statements which the AgC needs to review in the context of developing a Denman definition of “Farming.” The committee undertakes to bring a brief definition to the next AgC meeting to begin the consideration.**

What is missing

a) Some acknowledgment of the built-in conflict between the BC Ministry of Agriculture and the Denman Island OCP and Land Use bylaws protection of wetlands and marshes (land protected in the bylaws as watershed, streams and wetlands very often corresponds to land designated as ALR).

b) Geographical Context 3.1 needs more recognition of/detail on (i) Denman topography consisting of a series of ridges which run lengthwise and which create watershed/water reservoirs; (ii) the significant area of arable land (second only to Salt Spring): and (iii) climate and climate change refer to <http://www.dulcemelos.ca/wx/index.asp> and click on the links for an excellent resource specific to Denman Island, 1992-2010 and in graph form.

c) The trend for producing farms to become horse farms should be acknowledge and at least examined.

e) In 7.5.3 OCP excerpts there are some omissions which could be reconsidered: (i) Land and Forest Advocacy Policy 5 referring to noxious weeds, (ii) given the importance of water, include at least C.2's guiding objective, (iii) in Water Management include Objective 3, (iv) in Resources Policy 1, 2 and 3 plus Advocacy Policy 2 seem missed.

f) in 7.5.4 Land Use Bylaw excerpts include the definition of *agriculture* and *intensive agriculture*.

Denouement (volunteer members and local trustee David Graham)

The AgC discussed its role in light of its experience to date. This discussion will be continued in the AgC's January 13, 2011 meeting with Ralph as facilitator. Trustee Bell will hopefully be able to attend.