

# Report

Date August 20, 2025  
Subject Agricultural Advisory Committee July 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes

File:

## PURPOSE

To provide the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AgAC) minutes for receipt.

## BACKGROUND

The AgAC held its scheduled meeting on July 22, 2025. The draft minutes are attached to this report (Attachment 1).

## DISCUSSION

### **Agenda item 5.1 (Agricultural Land Commission Application ID No. 104108 – 4098 Cowichan Lake Road, ALR00093)**

The AgAC reviewed this application for a non-adhering residential use for habitation of an existing dwelling while a replacement dwelling is constructed and heard from the applicant's representative. The AgAC expressed concerns regarding the siting of the new dwelling with respect to compromising agricultural potential and further concerns pertaining to the extent to which the existing dwelling is decommissioned. In particular, the AgAC noted that retaining the existing dwelling and merely decommissioning it for residential use may present a risk of inappropriate non-agricultural uses being assumed within the building in the future.

The AgAC declined to provide a recommendation to Council regarding whether or not the application should be forwarded to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). Should Council decline to forward the application to the ALC, it would not be able to progress further. The applicants would still be able to construct a new dwelling, but would need to demolish the existing one first.

In the alternative, should Council opt to forward the application, the Committee provided comments that it recommends Council append to its approval, namely:

*THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee recommends that, should Council authorize Agricultural Land Commission Application ID No. 104108 for a Non-Adhering Residential Use on 4098 Cowichan Lake Road to be forwarded to the ALC, the following comments accompany it:*

1. *That particular attention is given to the siting of the new building in order to minimize the impact on agricultural potential, including:*
  - *Amount and placement of fill*
  - *Septic field siting and design*
  - *Driveway access*
  - *Soil quality and distribution*

2. *That the existing dwelling is removed entirely within a specified period following an occupancy permit being granted for the new dwelling.*

The option for Council to assume these comments (with or without modification) will be provided in the cover report for application ALC00093.

It should be noted that, should the ALC approve this non-adhering use application, the applicants would still be required to apply for a Temporary Use Permit from North Cowichan to ensure zoning bylaw compliance. This application type is delegated to staff under North Cowichan's Delegation of Authority Bylaw and would not appear before Council, unless the application were refused and the applicant asks Council to reconsider, as per the Procedures Bylaw.

Council is advised that subsequent to the AgAC's consideration of this item, the applicant has withdrawn the application. Council will therefore not be receiving the application and will not have any decision to make. Should the applicant re-apply in the future, the AgAC would review the new application again prior to it being placed on a Council agenda.

#### **Agenda item 5.5 (Backyard Chickens)**

In anticipation of a potential future direction from Council regarding backyard hens, Council was sent an email by AgAC member Jennifer Woike on July 17, 2025. Jen Woike also requested that this email be added to the AgAC meeting agenda. Prior to the meeting, Council was also sent a petition from a community group, Citizens Oversight Accountability Project (COAP), on July 21, 2025, in support of broadening hen-keeping provisions. This petition and covering letter was provided to the AgAC at the meeting as supplementary information.

The AgAC passed a resolution requesting that the issue of backyard hens be explored and addressed within the review of the Strategic Agricultural Plan (SAP):

*THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee recommends to Council that any future consideration of changes to backyard hen regulation is referred to the AgAC for potential inclusion in the upcoming Strategic Agricultural Plan review.*

The SAP review would include consideration of backyard chickens under the umbrella of "Urban Agriculture" and may or may not result in specific policy recommendations being included within the plan. Staff therefore have no concerns with the AgAC's resolution.

The SAP does not fetter Council's discretion or ability to make zoning bylaw amendments at any time. Council could also refer the issue of backyard hens to the AgAC as a standalone matter to be dealt with independently of the SAP process, if it wished.

The zoning bylaw review would also include revisiting section 48.1, which provides for limited poultry-keeping on certain parcels in excess of 1,675m<sup>2</sup>. Depending entirely on the timing and progression of both the zoning bylaw review and the SAP review, this element of the zoning bylaw may or may not be informed by the SAP process at this time.

**OPTIONS**

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council receives the minutes of the July 22, 2025, Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting.

- No decisions are required of Council in relation to receiving the AgAC minutes.

**IMPLICATIONS**

No implications are identified from receipt of the AgAC minutes.

**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council receives the minutes of the July 22, 2025, Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting.

Report prepared by:



Chris Osborne RPP, MCIP  
Manager, Planning

Report reviewed by:



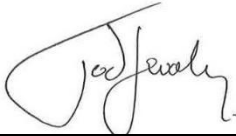
Amanda Young, RPP, MCIP  
Director, Planning and Building

Report reviewed by:



George Farkas  
General Manager, Planning,  
Development and Community  
Services

**Approved to be forwarded to Council:**



Ted Swabey  
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment:

- (1) Agricultural Advisory Committee July 22, 2025, Meeting Minutes