



# AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

Meeting will be Held Online via ZOOM

## AMENDED AGENDA

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**CALL TO ORDER** 3:30 pm

### AGENDA

1. Adoption of the Agenda

### DELEGATION

2. Chris Hergesheimer, One Straw Society  
Upcoming Food Systems Snapshot project and Food Systems Action and Planning Committee

⇒**ADD** Letter from One Straw Society Delegation Received July 15, 2021 Pages i - iv

### MINUTES

3. Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of May 25, 2021 (*Receipt and Adoption*) pp 1 - 2

### BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### REPORTS

### NEW BUSINESS

4. Evolution of the Agricultural Advisory Committee

### NEXT MEETING

### ADJOURNMENT



Attention SCRD, Town of Gibsons and District of Sechelt.

It is not known exactly how much food consumed on the Sunshine Coast is grown locally, though estimates are within a range less than 3%, significantly below the provincial average. Farming has been declining over several years, as measured by the broad stats provided by the Agricultural Census: number and size of farms, farm gross margins, and the amount of land in crops. Meanwhile, the cost of land, inputs, and average age of farmers have been steadily increasing, along with the challenges and cost of food transport to a ferry-dependent, sprawling and rapidly growing community.

The One Straw Society was founded over 25 years ago, and has been the founder or key collaborator in the creation of almost every farm and food initiative on the Sunshine Coast. We are a regional organization with the vision of seeing the Sunshine Coast participating in and becoming a role model for a diverse, connected, thriving and sovereign local food system.

We provide education, mentorship, advocacy, policy, resources and connections in order to meet our ends: (1) People grow and produce food locally and sustainably; (2) Healthy, local food is accessible; (3) The local food system is environmentally sustainable; and (4) We have a robust food economy, making food production a viable business. Within this, we focus on access to knowledge, equipment, arable land, cultural and traditional food lands and food practices, as well as regenerative land use, and zero food waste.

In addition to the One Straw Society, there are several organizations, committees and businesses committed to sustainability, agriculture and the food system, but over the past 20 years, local food security has not improved. We presume, but do not have concise data to prove that it has actually gotten worse. The lack of data puts the Sunshine Coast at a disadvantage in vying for investment and resources from many funders and levels of government that have recently prioritized food security. It's difficult - if not impossible - to measure any impact our activities may have on the food system overall without this data.

In support of the SCRD's Agricultural Area Plan, the commitment of the Town of Gibsons and District of Sechelt's to the Sunshine Coast Food Charter, and compounding on the 2021 Agricultural Census, One Straw Society is leading a

project to gather this critical, missing data on what we produce, where we produce it, how much, who buys and eats it, barriers to change or producing more, and how that compares to previous and future years in our region and others. **This project is being called the Food Systems Snapshot and is being funded in part by the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia.**

The project is officially launching on July 15th, 2021. The project is broken down into four distinct phases (phase specific details available upon request but are beyond the scope of this letter). However, at a broad level, we are confident that within 18 months, we will have achieved the following outcomes:

1. A newly formed "Food Systems Planning and Action Committee" ("FSPAC") which includes representatives from relevant food and farm organizations, regional agrologist, local governmental representatives and others who collaborate on the research, design, and collection of data and provide expert knowledge as it relates to food systems planning their respective arenas
2. The FSPAC also acts as a key resource for ALL regional governmental referrals and questions as they relate to broad food systems planning.
3. We have concise and current statistics and analytics regarding land use, production, processing, distribution, consumption, disposal, investment and policy
4. Local governments, organizations and the community have access to and use data, which supports understanding of the food system on the Sunshine Coast, and provides clear and measurable rationale for investment, initiatives, and prioritized strategies
5. Farmers and farmland owners have engaged in and been compensated for their involvement in a Peer-to-Peer Information gathering process to highlight the lived experiences and to complement statistical data.
6. Farmers and land-owners have built new connections, which increases likelihood of partnerships, sharing of resources and knowledge, cooperative land use and business development, etc;
7. A Guide and Templates for data collection exist for future years, and other regions
8. Organizations and local governments are more connected and more supported to collaborate on projects, to openly share data and resources, contributing to the greater likelihood of project and initiative successes

The food systems snapshot project will also follow our Agricultural Area Plan Action Item Review (currently underway) & assist with the development of the upcoming Regional Growth Strategy

In light of this funded project and One Straw's initiatives to enhance our collective knowledge of food systems planning, we **request that the SCRD, Town of Gibsons and District of Sechelt support the food systems snapshot project in two main ways**

- 1) **We request that the existing SCRD AAC be put on hold for a trial period of 18 months to coincide with the launch and first year of the Food Systems Action and Planning Committee (FSAPC). The FSAPC is a much broader committee and will include the discussion of issues that extend well beyond land use concerns and the primary production sphere. A holistic committee such as this with a diverse range of experts is crucial to become a force of planning for the years ahead. Strengthening food systems on the Sunshine Coast will require a broader and more integrated understanding of the various opportunities and challenges in production, distribution, storage, marketing, consumption, and disposal and the accompanying regulatory and policy challenges. Strategic food systems conversations around supportive policy, sustainable planning and investment opportunities are necessary. We believe that the FSAPC will meet this goal and begin to provide the basis for strong planning and evidence informed policy recommendations as they relate to the whole food system.**
  
- 2) **We request that the SCRD, Town of Gibsons and District of Sechelt each maintain a direct line of communication with the project lead as a means to a) share information throughout the process and hear about progress and b) utilize the expertise and experience of the FSAPC as place for ALL referrals and requests as they relate to food systems on the Sunshine Coast. This may include referrals related to agricultural land use(s), food waste initiatives, agricultural water concerns, as well as business concerns related to production, marketing, distribution, consumption and disposal. A centralized resource such as this that can work with all governmental referrals and inquiries is integral to developing coherent and consistent policy and is central to solid, regionally focused decision making processes. This will ensure the local food system is regionally supported and understood and that the knowledge of our regional experts are mobilized, utilized, and respected.**

One Straw Society recognizes the limitations on staff and elected officials at the current time to pursue and prioritize local food systems initiatives/efforts with the vigour and investment that is needed. The One Straw Society, in deep

collaboration with its community partners, is prepared and excited to take on this important work which will be a benefit to governments, the non-profit and business sectors and civil society at large.

We kindly request your support for our endeavour, the SCRD's willingness to allow us to pilot test a new regional committee (and the Town of Gibsons and District of Sechelt taking advantage of this committee for referrals and policy development) and each government's willingness to create direct communication channels with our research and planning team to avoid unnecessary data sharing challenges and resource constraints as we move through this process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chris Hergesheimer  
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&

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For more info, please see One Straw Society [www.onestraw.ca](http://www.onestraw.ca)