

## York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

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### Description

The York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee (AAAC) is established by Regional Council in accordance with these Terms of Reference. AAAC members are bound by these Terms of Reference and are ultimately responsible to Regional Council. The AAAC will report to Regional Council through the Planning and Economic Development section of Committee of the Whole.

### Purpose

The purpose of the AAAC is to provide advice to Regional Council and staff on agriculture, agri-food and rural matters in York Region. AAAC will work with Regional staff on implementing approved work plan activities to advance the execution of York Region's Agriculture and Agri-food Strategy.

### Mandate

The mandate will be fulfilled by considering and providing input on matters such as:

- a) Issues and concerns of York Region's agriculture, agri-food industry and community groups.
- b) Implementation of York Region's Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy including its strategic goals and recommended actions outlined in the strategy.
- c) Education and public awareness regarding agriculture and rural issues, including urban agricultural practices.
- d) Review of studies, plans and proposals referred by Regional Council or staff and providing comments on agricultural and rural impacts. This includes future updates to York Region's Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy.
- e) Recommendations for tools to ensure agricultural land is available for growing and producing local food and other agricultural products that are accessible to York Region residents and neighbouring communities.
- f) Proposed new or revised legislation, programs and funding from Provincial ministries, Federal departments and other agencies that affect agriculture, agri-food and rural issues in York Region.

## Terms of Reference

### York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee

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- g) Strengthening collaboration between the Region, local municipalities and key agri-food stakeholders.

## Membership

### 1. Composition

The AAAC will consist of a minimum of seven (7) to a maximum of eleven (11) members who are appointed for a term of four (4) years to coincide with the term of Regional Council.

The members shall be appointed as follows:

- Regional Council: one (1) to two (2) appointees, plus the Regional Chairman and CEO as an ex-officio member
- York Federation of Agriculture: one (1) appointee, plus one (1) alternate
- York Region Food Network: one (1) appointee, plus one (1) alternate
- Other agricultural groups in York Region: three (3) appointees , plus three (3) alternates
- Agri-food value chain groups (e.g. input supplier, food processing, distribution, food service and retail) in York Region: three (3) appointees, plus three (3) alternates
- Citizens-at-large: one (1) appointee

### 2. Qualifications

The representatives of these organizations or agencies should have qualifications, interests and abilities that will support delivery of the AAAC's mandate and must also be willing to devote the necessary time to the AAAC. The members-at-large should possess expertise, experience and willingness to liaise with the range of agencies, organizations and interest groups represented on the AAAC and represent the interests of the broader community rather than a specific interest group. Additional individuals and agencies are encouraged to attend the meetings and participate in discussions; however, only the membership will carry voting privileges.

### **3. Terms of Office**

Members appointed to the AAAC will serve for a term of up to four years to coincide with the term of Regional Council. Non-named members remain eligible for reappointment up to a maximum of two (2) terms and must reapply for consideration after each municipal election. Citizens-at-large will be limited to residents of York Region; however, organization representatives are not required to be residents of York Region. AAAC will not be dissolved until after the recruitment of new members is completed.

### **4. Recruitment**

All citizens and any nominated representatives of organizations involved in agricultural, agri-food and rural issues are invited to apply. A call for representation will be publicly advertised through print and electronic media, including posting on York.ca. Applicants will submit their application to the Office of the Regional Clerk. Qualified applicants will be interviewed by a panel of Regional Staff and a list of potential candidates will be recommended for consideration by Regional Council.

### **5. Appointment of Chair**

The AAAC Chair shall be appointed by the membership at the first AAAC meeting. A member may hold the Chair position for a maximum of four (4) years. If necessary, the committee may select an Acting Chair for a portion of, or an entire meeting.

### **6. Membership Review**

The membership will be reviewed and evaluated annually based on the ability of members to carry out advisory duties, attendance and participation. Council has the ability to remove members from the committee should they fail to fulfill the responsibilities of the AAAC Membership Responsibility Agreement.

### **7. Resignation of Members**

Any resignation of a member during the term of the AAAC must be given in writing to the Regional Clerk's Office. Regional Council may choose not to fill a vacancy, except where a resignation will leave the AAAC without a minimum of seven (7) members.

In order to maintain a high level of commitment, members may be required to resign if they or their alternate have been absent for more than three (3) consecutive meetings without good cause. Request to appoint new or additional members of the AAAC will be submitted by AAAC Chair to the Regional Chair during the term of Regional Council.

## Terms of Reference

### York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee

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#### Meetings

A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum. If the membership is comprised of an equal number, then quorum is one-half of the membership.

The AAAC shall meet six times a year. Additional meetings may be held at the request of AAAC Chair. AAAC meeting agendas will be made available online in the week preceding the meeting. Meetings will generally be held at the York Region Administrative Centre, located at 17250 Yonge Street in Newmarket.

Meetings shall be open to the public and will be conducted in accordance with York Region's Procedure Bylaw 2018-59, unless otherwise stated in these Terms of Reference.

The AAAC, by resolution or through its Chair, may invite any individual, interest group, agency or consultant to appear at a meeting as a delegation or to submit or present information, which will assist the AAAC in carrying out its mandate.

#### Staff Support

Planning and Economic Development Branch Staff will be designated to provide subject-specific expertise support for the AAAC. The Regional Clerk's Office will coordinate and support the committee's meetings. Regional staff will co-ordinate involvement of other Regional Departments and agencies as necessary, and prepare reports as required on the work of the AAAC.

Expenses for the normal ongoing work of the AAAC shall be provided as part of the Regional Municipality of York operating budget.

Local municipal and senior government staff may be invited to participate in an advisory non-voting capacity.

#### Conduct and Procedures

##### 1. General

Where not otherwise specified in these Terms of Reference, conduct and procedures of the AAAC will be governed by the relevant sections of York Region [Procedure Bylaw](#).

##### 2. Conflict of Interest

AAAC member Conflict of Interest matters will be addressed through the Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Liaison Group Membership Responsibility Agreement. The agreement must be signed by all AAAC members.

### **3. Delegations**

Requests by any person wishing to appear before the AAAC as a delegation must be forwarded to the Regional Clerk's Office advising staff of the topic or item to which they wish to speak. It is preferable that this should be completed at least five (5) days prior to the meeting in order that the delegation may be included in the Agenda.

Any persons wishing to address the AAAC as a delegation, and who are not listed as a delegation in the Agenda, may be granted permission to do so by majority vote of the AAAC Membership.

### **4. Reporting Structure**

AAAC minutes will be reported to Regional Council through the Planning and Economic Development section of Committee of Whole.

### **5. Amendments to the Terms of Reference**

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed and amended in the fourth year of every Council Term.

Regional Council will have the authority to make changes to these Terms of Reference as required.

## **Membership Responsibility Agreement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ understand I have the following responsibilities as a member of the York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee.

My role is to provide Regional Council and staff with advice regarding key agriculture, agri-food and rural issues matters in York Region.

As a member of the York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee, I understand and agree to carry out the responsibilities set out in this Membership Responsibility Agreement and further detailed in the Terms of Reference.

I understand that if I fail to fulfill those responsibilities, I may be removed as a member of the York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee.

### **Responsibilities**

- 1) It is considered a conflict of interest if I give advice, in the course of carrying out my duties, that directly benefits my personal, financial or business interests, or the personal, financial or business interest of my immediate family, being my parent, my spouse or my child.
- 2) I am ultimately responsible and accountable for using good judgment in the course of carrying out my duties.
- 3) If I am asked to speak publicly to an organization or professional association as a member of the York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee I must notify the Region.
- 4) If I choose to speak as an industry representative or private citizen at a conference, meeting or other public forum and I am not speaking as a representative of the Region, I understand that I do not appear to represent the opinion or policy of the Region and may not present any information I have received or reviewed as a result of my membership on the York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee.
- 5) If I am approached by the media I will refer all inquiries to the Region's Planning and Economic Development branch.
- 6) I understand that the information discussed at York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee meetings becomes public record.
- 7) I will not use confidential information shared with the York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee for personal, financial or business use without written consent from the Region.

**Terms of Reference  
York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee**

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- 8) I will not use the York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee mail, phone or email communication list for personal or business purposes and understand that this information must only be used to conduct the business of the York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee.
- 9) I will not use my personal email, listserv, social media accounts, or other modes of communication to represent the opinions or policies of the Region.

I understand and agree that I will be a member of the York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee starting on [DATE] and ending on [DATE] unless my membership ends early for any of the reasons outlined in this Membership Responsibility Agreement or the Terms of Reference.

**Acceptance of Appointment to York Region Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_