

PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) is a voluntary Working Group established by Regional Council in partnership with Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). PAAWG and its members are bound by these Terms of Reference and are ultimately responsible to Regional Council.

Goals

To assist the Region of Peel, CVC and TRCA in their efforts to:

1. protect agricultural lands as a natural resource of major importance to the economic viability of the Region;
2. support Region of Peel farmers and agricultural organizations as valuable contributors to the community and to the economy of Peel;
3. promote healthy rural communities that contain living, working and recreational opportunities that respect the natural environment and resources;
4. increase awareness of rural environmental issues and opportunities and adoption of environmentally beneficial land management practices (BMPs) in the agricultural sector to conserve resources and improve environmental quality; and
5. deliver the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP) and related programs supporting adoption of environmental stewardship practices by the agricultural community.

Purpose

The purpose of PAAWG is to:

1. advise and inform the Region of Peel respecting matters of interest or concern to the agricultural community;
2. provide advice to Regional Council regarding Regional and area municipal official plan policies and programs;
3. assist Regional Council in the implementation of provincial legislation related to farm practices and act as interim arbitrator on local nuisance complaints as may be appropriate in accordance with Provincial guidelines;
4. provide advice to Regional Council on Federal and Provincial legislation, policies, guidelines, programs and projects affecting the agricultural industry;
5. foster public awareness and understanding of agricultural and rural issues;

6. review and comment on Regional studies, plans, programs and projects that may impact on the agricultural industry;
7. advise Peel Region, CVC and TRCA staff on the development and implementation of the PRWQP, including but not limited to:
 - a) Eligible Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) for grant compensation;
 - b) Grant rate and grant cap for each BMP;
 - c) PRWQP and project eligibility guidelines;
 - d) Application and project approval process;
 - e) PRWQP delivery;
 - f) Marketing and promotional strategy of the PRWQP; and
 - g) Areas for improvement.
8. assist CVC and TRCA in ensuring that the PRWQP funds are administered on a priority basis in accordance with the PRWQP guidelines, as amended;
9. advise Peel Region, CVC and TRCA respecting the implementation of programs that support or complement the PRWQP, including the Peel ALUS Pilot Project, with regard to matters such as program guidelines, budget, community engagement and communications;
10. review and approve applications for grant assistance under the PRWQP and the Peel ALUS Pilot Project; and
11. assist Peel Region, CVC and TRCA in conducting strategic reviews of the PRWQP, and of the Peel ALUS Pilot Project, as required.

Membership

1. The members of PAAWG shall be appointed by Regional Council and serve for the term of Council or until their successors are appointed by Council. Non-elected members may serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms or for additional terms as may be approved by Council.
2. The Working Group shall be comprised of a maximum of 14 members consisting of the following:
 - Regional Chair (ex-officio)
 - Regional Councillors (3);
 - Federation of Agriculture (2; plus 2 alternates)
 - Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association (2; plus 2 alternates)
 - Representative of a Peel Agricultural Society or other special agricultural

interest group (2; plus 2 alternates)

- Three citizens-at-large (3)
- Representative of a Peel youth organization or an alternative representative of the agricultural community (1; plus 1 alternate)

3. The representatives of all organizations, agencies and citizens-at-large should have:

- a. rural and agricultural qualifications and interests;
- b. experience and willingness to liaise with the range of agencies and organizations represented on PAAWG; and
- c. the capacity and willingness to devote the necessary time to PAAWG.

Openings for membership shall be publicly advertised in accordance with the Region of Peel Public Notice Policy. Membership applications shall be reviewed by Region of Peel, CVC and TRCA staff. Recommendations for appointments to PAAWG shall be made to Regional Council via a Regional staff report. Members shall be formally appointed by Regional Council.

4. An applicant from the community must:

- a) be a qualified elector in Peel Region pursuant to the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (a Canadian Citizen, 18 years of age or older and a resident/tenant or owner of land in Peel Region), or;
- b) be a qualified elector in Ontario representing a group or organization that acts on behalf of members of the agricultural sector who reside in the Region of Peel; and
- c) not be an elected official of Peel Regional Council or of the Council of a Peel area municipality; and,
- d) not be an employee of the Region of Peel or a Peel Region area municipality.

5. Members are expected to attend all meetings. Should a member be unable to attend a meeting, it is the member's responsibility to arrange for an alternate (where applicable) to attend in his or her place.

6. If a member fails to attend three successive meetings without authorization from the Chair of PAAWG, that member's appointment may be terminated.

Chair

The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected at the first meeting annually and shall serve for the remainder of the calendar year. The Chair and Vice-Chair may be re-appointed for subsequent years.

Quorum

Quorum constitutes a minimum of five (5) PAAWG members. The Regional Chair shall be counted in determining quorum.

Remuneration and Expenses

Non-elected members of PAAWG shall be eligible for reimbursement of mileage or public transportation expenses incurred which are deemed necessary for full participation in PAAWG. Expense claims will be submitted in accordance with the Region of Peel Expense Claim policy.

Pecuniary or Conflicts of Interest

Members shall declare applicable pecuniary or conflicts of interest before agenda items are presented including the approval or appeal of PRWQP project applications.

Meetings

1. PAAWG shall meet on a quarterly basis or more frequently as required.
2. Agenda items should be forwarded to Region of Peel support staff or to the Chair at least three weeks in advance of meetings. Agendas shall be circulated to PAAWG members via email and made available to the public on the Region of Peel website one week prior to the meeting. Agendas shall be available in printed form upon request to the Region of Peel, Regional Planning and Growth Management Division, Public Works.
3. Decisions of PAAWG shall be decided by a majority vote of those members present at a meeting. Quorum must be met for a decision to be made.
4. Any person wishing to appear before or present information to a meeting of PAAWG shall submit a written request to support staff and the Chair of PAAWG at least one week prior to the meeting.
5. Meetings shall be open to the public unless PAAWG determines, in accordance with Section 239 of the *Municipal Act*, that an in-camera meeting is required.

Conduct and Procedures

Where not specified in these Terms of Reference, the conduct and procedures of PAAWG will be governed by the relevant sections of Peel Region Procedures By-law 56-2019 (as amended).

Minutes

The minutes of each meeting will be amended as necessary and approved by PAAWG at its next meeting. Once approved, meeting minutes will be posted on the Region of Peel website. PAAWG meeting minutes are public including the approval of PRWQP project applications.

Role and Responsibility of Support Staff

1. Staff from the Region of Peel, Regional Planning and Growth Management Division, Public Works shall provide administrative, research support and advice to PAAWG. This includes, but is not limited to, preparation and distribution of meeting agendas and the preparation minutes.
2. Staff representatives from CVC and TRCA shall provide community outreach and technical support to PAAWG for the PRWQP and other related programs. This includes, but is not limited to the review and presentation of Peel Rural Water Quality Program and Peel ALUS Pilot project applications to PAAWG; distribution of approved project grants; and program promotion.

Peel Rural Water Quality Program Funding

The PRWQP is a co-operative partnership between Region of Peel, CVC and TRCA, the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund, Peel Federation of Agriculture and Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association. Conservation authority staff are responsible for the delivery of the PRWQP and the distribution of project grants to private landowners. Grant funders include the Region of Peel, Federal and Provincial funding agencies and non-governmental funding agencies. Conservation authority staff may be required by external funding agencies to seek final approval from PAAWG, ensuring that the overall PRWQP principles, framework and funding requirements are met.

Approval Process of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PWQRP)

PAAWG shall make decisions to approve, deny or defer PRWQP project applications in accordance with these Terms of Reference and the PRWQP Guidelines. Regional staff may circulate applications to municipal, Regional and/or Provincial staff for technical review and comments prior to PAAWG making a decision.

Reconsideration of Decisions on Peel Rural Water Quality Program Applications

An applicant who wishes to request that PAAWG reconsider a decision on a PRQWP application shall submit the request in writing to the Chair and PRWQP support staff. The request shall be heard at a meeting of PAAWG at which the applicant shall be allotted five minutes to present the request. PAAWG members may then ask the

applicant questions. PAAWG shall make a decision on the request by majority vote in accordance with these Terms of Reference.

Annual Reports and Work Plan

An Annual Report summarizing PAAWG's activities and accomplishments during the previous year shall be prepared by Region of Peel, CVC and TRCA staff. The Annual Report shall be provided to Regional Council as well as CVC and TRCA's respective Board of Directors.

At the beginning of each year a work plan shall be prepared by PAAWG for the upcoming year. The work plan shall be submitted to Regional Council and the CVC and TRCA Boards of Directors after the first PAAWG meeting of the year.