



Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee

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April 30, 2007

Striking Committee, City of Toronto
c/o Catherine Marchell
City of Toronto Clerk's Office
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
10th floor, West Tower
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Ms Marchell:

Re: Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee

I am writing on behalf of the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee (GTA AAC). The Action Committee has positions for a member and an alternate appointed by the City of Toronto. Both positions are currently vacant.

We are requesting that with the assistance of the City Clerk's Office, the Striking Committee identify and recommend a City Councillor to be the City of Toronto's member on the GTA Agricultural Action Committee. I have written separately to the Economic Development Committee requesting that it appoint a citizen to be the alternate to the member.

Background

The GTA Agricultural Action Committee was formed in 2005 to implement the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Plan, which was an initiative of the GTA Caucus of the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario (RPCO). Toronto Planning staff participated in developing the Plan, the purpose of which was to develop a strategy for a vibrant farm and food sector in the GTA. The plan covers economic development, consumer education, marketing local food, land use policy and ways to sustain co-operative working partnerships. Seed funding to assist with the costs of implementing the recommendations

contained in the Action Plan was provided by the Province to the four Regions. The funds are currently banked with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The Action Committee's office is located at the TRCA's location at Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto.

The Action Committee has 15 members and is chaired by Peter Lambrick, who was appointed to the Action Committee by the Halton Federation of Agriculture.

The Action Committee membership is structured as follows:

- (a) Four members appointed by the four Regional Municipalities (Durham, Halton, Peel and York),
- (b) Four members appointed by the four Regional Federations of Agriculture (Durham, Halton, Peel and York),
- (c) One member appointed by the City of Toronto,
- (d) One member appointed by the Toronto Food Policy Council,
- (e) Two members appointed by the Provincial government,
- (f) One member appointed by the Federal government and
- (g) Two members-at-large appointed by the GTA AAC from diverse agri-food related sectors (processors, retailers, food service, restaurants, agri-tourism, education, consumers, etc.).

The members in categories (a) to (d) all have alternates appointed by the same body that appointed them, and alternates are encouraged to attend all meetings.

As of January, 2007, the four Regional Chairs and the Mayor of Toronto are ex officio members of the Action Committee.

In January, a significant change was made to the Action Committee's operational by-law. It states that members and alternates appointed by the four Regions and the City of Toronto do not have to be members of their municipal or regional councils. Councils are welcome to appoint citizens who have the relevant knowledge and skills and can report to Councils via whatever protocol the municipality has in place. This change in the by-law was supported unanimously by all of the members and by the Regional Chairs.

The change was made partly in deference to Toronto. Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker was appointed by Toronto City Council last year, but was never able to attend because Action Committee meetings always conflicted with Toronto Council meetings. Since this will be an ongoing issue, I was directed to request of the Economic Development Committee that it appoint an individual who is not an elected official to be the alternate for the member in order that the alternate can attend meetings on a regular basis. It is my understanding that the Toronto Food Policy Council has done a search for a citizen who would meet the criteria and will provide the required information, via the Clerk's office, to the Economic Development Committee.

The Action Committee meets ten times per year and the regular meeting date is the fourth Wednesday of each month. It meets from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the winter time and from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. during the other seasons. Most of its meetings are held at the Region of York, South Service Centre, 50 High Tech Rd., Richmond Hill.

Michael Wolfson, Food and Beverage Specialist with the Economic Development Division, has been assigned as Toronto's staff support to the Action Committee. The member and alternate appointed by the Toronto Food Policy Council attend regularly. A request to have a member of Toronto's Planning staff join the GTA Agriculture staff working group is currently being reviewed.

Conclusion

The seat waiting to be filled by appointees (i.e., a member and alternate) of Toronto City Council has been regrettably empty since the Action Committee was formed. Through the Toronto Food Policy Council, we are aware that the City is committed to enhancing and energizing the GTA local food system. It will be difficult to implement our strategy to develop a vibrant farming and food sector in the GTA without an appointee of the City of Toronto being at the table. To date, the four Regional Chairs have participated actively, attending meetings whenever possible.

If there is an opportunity to provide further details about the work of the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee to whichever committee or staff of the City of Toronto is responsible for making these appointments, we would be pleased to attend and make a brief presentation on present accomplishments and plans for the future.

Sincerely,



Elbert van Donkersgoed P. Ag. (Hon.)
Executive Director

Copy:

- David Miller, Mayor, City of Toronto
- Shelley Carroll, Councillor Co-Chair, Toronto Food Policy Council
- Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker
- Peter Lambrick, Chair, GTA Agricultural Action Committee
- Ted Tyndorf, Planning Division, Executive Director and Chief Planner, City of Toronto
- Barbara Leonhardt, Planning Division, Director, Policy and Research, City of Toronto
- Donald G. Eastwood, General Manager, Economic Development, Culture & Tourism Division, City of Toronto
- Michael Wolfson, Food & Beverage Sector Specialist, Toronto Economic Development
- Wayne Roberts, Coordinator, Toronto Food Policy Council
- John O'Gorman, Member, Toronto Food Policy Council and GTA Agricultural Action Committee
- Janice Etter, Citizen Co-Chair, Toronto Food Policy Council
- Mike Schreiner, Vice President, Local Flavour Plus