



**Salt Spring Island
Agricultural Advisory Planning
Commission
Minutes of a Regular Meeting**

Date of Meeting: Thursday, December 12, 2019

Location: Baptist Church, Lower Level Meeting Room
520 Lower Ganges Road, Salt Spring Island

Members Present: Zack Hemstreet, Alternate Chair
Ken Byron, Commissioner
Conrad Pilon, Commissioner
Jan Steinman, Commissioner
Ruth Waldick, Commissioner

Regrets: Bree Eagle, Chair
George Laundry, Commissioner

Staff Present: Jason Youmans, Island Planner
Kristine Mayes, Planner 1
Sarah Shugar, Recorder

Media and Others Present: Peter Grove, Trustee
Laura Patrick, Trustee
Two Members of the Public

These minutes follow the order of the agenda although the sequence may have varied.

Alternate Chair Hemstreet called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By general consent the agenda was adopted.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Draft Minutes of the June 13, 2019 AAPC Meeting

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED**,
that the minutes of the June 13, 2019 Salt Spring Island Agricultural Advisory Planning
Commission meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

Commissioner Byron and two members of the public arrived at 3:03 p.m.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

3.1 Regulation of the Production of Cannabis

Planner Youmans presented a staff report dated October 19, 2019 regarding Regulation of the Production of Cannabis.

In discussion, the following comments were noted:

- There was a question regarding whether processing of cannabis would be permitted where cannabis sales are permitted and concern was expressed that the proposed 500-meter setback may not be adequate. Planner Youmans reported the definition of “Cannabis Production” would include the production, cultivation, synthesis, harvesting, altering, propagating, processing, packaging, storage, distribution or scientific research of cannabis or cannabis products but excludes the growing of cannabis by an individual for their personal use and consumption.
- There was a question regarding lot coverage for indoor and outdoor production. Planner Youmans reported lot coverage for indoor production would be limited to 200 square meters and no lot coverage limit for outdoor production.
- It was noted the Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission (AAPC) recommended to forward application SS-ALR-2018.2 (192 Vesuvius Bay Road) to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) and that the subject property would exceed the 200 square meter lot coverage maximum and would not be permitted if Bylaw No. 518 is approved. Support was expressed for applicants in process of obtaining federal licenses to be exempt from Bylaw No. 518.
- Concern was expressed that AAPC members are not cannabis experts and it will be important to consult with environmental cannabis experts.
- Concern was expressed that permitting cannabis production on the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) only, will encourage illegal cannabis production.
- Support was expressed for limiting warehouse sizes.
- Support was expressed for cannabis as a carbon sink crop.
- Support was expressed for considering organic practices and safe access for consumers.
- Concern was expressed that there are no best management standards for cannabis production.
- Concern was expressed that the potential water demand for a cannabis crop is estimated at twenty times the water demand of a high water crop, such as corn.
- Concern was expressed regarding the range of density of cannabis plants per acre and the potential impact to land costs and impacts to food security on Salt Spring Island.
- Concern was expressed regarding wastewater and contamination risks to water sources.
- Concern was expressed regarding volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from cannabis fields and potential impacts to nearby farms and forest ecosystems.
- There was a question regarding whether wetlands are protected in Agriculture 1 and Agriculture 2 zones. Planner Youmans reported there are no Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR) setbacks on ALR land although, there are wetland protection regulations within Rural Watershed zones.
- There was a question regarding whether the local government can regulate setbacks in the ALR as the ALC has delegated local governments to deal with cannabis production. Planner Youmans reported staff will look into this.

- There was a question regarding how the proposed Bylaw relates to the *Right to Farm Act* and it was noted the *Right to Farm Act* applies on non-ALR land for properties that have farm tax status.
- Support was expressed for small, mixed farms to be permitted to grow cannabis.
- Concern was expressed regarding the vision for ALR land on Salt Spring Island and impacts to food security.
- Support was expressed for farmers to be able to grow valuable crops such as cannabis.
- It was noted the Climate Action Plan and the Area Farm Plan updates would speak to protection of wetlands including within the ALR.
- There was a comment that the cash crop value of cannabis may not be sustainable. There was a comment that if cannabis value drops to \$300 per pound it would still have a higher value than any other crops.
- There was a comment that if reasonable regulations to allow cannabis to be grown legally do not exist, then cannabis will be grown illegally.
- Concern was expressed for paving over farmland.
- Support was expressed for the emphasis to be on food production in the ALR.
- Concern was expressed regarding monoculture.
- Concern was expressed regarding water availability and if application SS-ALR-2018.2 (192 Vesuvius Bay Road) will draw water from St. Mary Lake and whether North Salt Spring Waterworks District is responding to the water draw issue. The Chair invited a member of the public to speak, who then reported the rainwater catchment system for application SS-ALR-2018.2 (192 Vesuvius Bay Road) has the potential to provide more water than would be needed for the proposed cannabis production and that the property holds a high volume water license on St. Mary Lake. The member of the public also spoke to the water consumption of cannabis crops.
- The same member of the public suggested that Health Canada cannabis regulations should be considered.
- Support was expressed for best practices regarding water consumption and wastewater to be included in Bylaw No. 518.
- Support was expressed for public consultation regarding draft Bylaw No. 518. Planner Mayes reported a Community Information Meeting regarding draft Bylaw No. 518 is scheduled on December 17, 2019.

A member of the public and Trustee Patrick left the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Salt Spring Island Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission recommend to the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee proceed with Bylaw No. 518, with the following

recommendations:

- Applicants currently in process of obtaining a cannabis license to be exempt from the bylaw;
- Pre-existing licensed cannabis producers to be exempt from the bylaw;
- Further consideration be given to best practices including water demands, riparian setbacks, soil management, and the Islands Trust policy checklist;
- Consideration be given to not excluding cannabis production on non-ALR land;
- Include regulations regarding lot coverage for cannabis productions on non-ALR land;
- Consideration be given regarding scale of operation for indoor cannabis production within rural watershed zones;
- that the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee may want to reconsider Bylaw No. 518 following the updates to the Area Farm Plan and the Climate Action Plan.

CARRIED

4. OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 2020 AAPC Meeting Schedule

The 2020 AAPC Meeting Schedule was received for information and a date of Thursday, January 9, 2020 was added.

5. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Zack Hemstreet, Alternate Chair

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Sarah Shugar, Recorder