



All-Council Virtual Meeting

October 6th, 2020, 9:00 – 10:30AM

Present: Mick Wilson, Amy Allcock, Rachael Roussin, Montana Burgess, Nicolas Walser, Kevin Murphy, Paris Marshall Smith, Jesse Woodward, Rob Hay, Rosemary Hughes, Nadine BenRabha, Elizabeth Quinn, Abra Brynne, Hailey Troock.

Regrets: Patrick Steiner, Shauna Fidler.

Welcome and get settled – Vice-President Mick Wilson called meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

Minutes from last meeting reviewed – Council AGM, July 8th, 2020. Motion to adopt as circulated made by Mick, Seconded by Paul. Passed by consensus.

Staff report: Abra provided highlights from her report, circulated in advance of the meeting. She expressed her enthusiasm about working with the Council's new Engagement Coordinator, Amy Allcock and invited her to say a few words. Abra provided a summary of funding plans in the works for 2021 and invited Council members to reach out to her for joint projects / funding submissions. Abra reviewed the work underway with the Cannabis Policy project and was able to confirm that the province has announced that farm gate and direct to retailer sales of cannabis will be in place in 2022, with the caveat that the sector and supporters will need to engage in the creation of the regulations so that this new market channel is as accessible as possible for the craft cannabis producers of the Kootenays. Lastly, Abra confirmed that the Pandemic and Food Systems Roundtables continue to happen monthly, on the first Thursday of the month, providing important insights into how the pandemic is impacting communities and food producers across the region.

Council Member & Guests Updates

Rachael Roussin - KBFA

1:1 support, events, outreach, Field Days happening this fall, yesterday in Rock Creek, no negative feedback about in person gatherings (covid rules being respected), blog and newsletter amped up with new communications person

Mick Q: good or bad year for farmers? → broadly, good year (lots of pivots), allowed farmers to do what they've thought about doing, had to jump into it - overall things balanced out, farmers changed outlets

Mick Wilson - Earthly Pleasures Organics / New Denver Food Hub / Farmers Market

CSA, FM was surprisingly better than thought, cancellation of garlic fest and music school in ND

Pivoted to CSA - same local support at market, good year

ND Food Hub modelling - no consensus on hub in Nelson or Slocan Valley → consensus of smaller food hubs in communities - Silverton / Winlaw - funding from RDCK, SVED, gleaning, emergency food, workshops, commercial kitchen for lease (6-8 local businesses in area are interested)

Paul Peterson - Area K Director

Toured Vernon - acres of apples on the ground, not picked - food waste is issue

Q: Happening other places?

- Abra: Okanagan was short on pickers, only premium fruit being picked right now; food producers can't source seconds as part of business plan and budgeting
- Paris: Apple value is largely in added value (mobile press investment) - CV doesn't have same volume of apples as in past since apples have moved to cherries and now also have press to help with waste mitigation (not many calls for gleaning - seeming to manage this year in CV)
- Kevin: severe wind events past months - lots of apples fell to ground
- Rachael: labour shortages in OK - didn't affect the Kootenays as severely (large commodity based ag in OK vs. small scale in Kootenays)
- Mick: CBT and College of Rockies - 75% of wages paid by this program - 4 part time employees (Mick) paid within this subsidy

Montana Burgess - West Kootenay EcoSociety

Ecosociety pivoted to Farms to Friends program (outreached to different families struggling with covid related economic challenges and matched with CSAs from 3 local farms)

Volunteers doing no contact delivery

Extending program (eggs and root veggies from Creston)

How working with other emergency food providers - had reached out to those groups to recommend families (didn't ask for income verification, just got recommendations)

Filling programming hole - contributing to community

Ecosociety working with govts to 100% renewable Kootenays - develop transition strategy for each community in RD

Kevin Murphy - Ministry of Agriculture

Election holding pattern - July 29 BC Assessment notice - 2020 Farm income requirements for 2021 property taxation year waived due to covid

Farm status retained even if sales reduced this year

Creston Kootenay Lake Economic Action Partnership - work for safe and clean campsite for migrant farm workers - wasn't overly utilized but provided assurance to pickers and community

- were farms in valley that didn't harvest all blocks because of lower fruit set but overall decent year for most in valley

Announcement of 10 billion program from federal govt - Canadian infrastructure banks - 1.5 billions for irrigation infrastructure

Funding for irrigation infrastructure improvements in BC

Rosemary Hughes - Old Firehall Collective (Ag. Food Hub in Nakusp)

New Community Garden - 1 acre fenced land

2020 was unusual year - bears active this year - food security assessment for Nakusp area

Jesse Woodward - City of Nelson / Nelson Farmers Market

Community garden on seventh street working with some groups and City - Youth Climate Corp - mitigation work in forest, youth training and community garden

Food for senior centres etc. / climate work / youth education

Market is winding down - harvest market this Saturday

Cottonwood - Youth centre management - Saturdays were very well attended and Wednesdays were decent and grew over the summer - Council voted on adding artisans back into market

one month ago - helped to get more people back down there - City concerned of outbreak

Full break down of analysis of how summer went will take place - Mayor wants market back downtown

Reassess in early spring to see what direction to go in

Nicolas Walser - Linden Lane Farm manager - COABC Accreditation Board member

New to Kootenays

Numbers comparing to previous years - LL down in sales from previous years but overall season has been good (pivoted)

Plant sales early season were great (garden renaissance)

Pumpkin Festival

Organic farm inspection when physical visits can't be done - virtual inspections being done with COABC

Rob Hay - Valley Kitchen

Online store, scheduling for use

Weekly orders with sunday pickups

Lost clients who use kitchen to make hot food for farmers market

Juicing business - can't secure supply of jars - stall opening for 3 weeks

Workshops taken a hit

9-10 businesses currently renting kitchen time and have cafe to keep open

Food hub project (kitchen / workshops space) makes them nervous since they offer that already in area (5-10% used by community) – there are real challenges to making food businesses successful all year (seasonality and cost)

Nadine BenRabha - Kootenay Coop / True Local Program

COVID - challenge to keep store working and open

Reliable and secure market for local producers

Stay open, fiscally viable and safe for community

Shopping habits difficult to predict

Artisanal producers impacted by modified FMs in Nelson

Wednesday was particularly challenging - location / time really affected sale of primary

producers - Ravine Creek (50-70% lower revenue in produce sales on the Wednesday)

Demand not there on Wednesday so decided not to go - by end of season fewer growers there so those who stayed made a few more sales

Case lot sales - adding more producers - true local products being added to online store

Online doesn't have shipping option, just shop online and pick up option

Hailey Troock - Young Agrarians

Lots of inquiries generally from both land seekers and owners through out COVID

Lots of interest in land for homesteading but less farmers follow through to providing business plans etc - lots of challenges currently and uncertainties in business planning so moving farmers through business planning process takes time / less interest in commercial production than for personal use

People may drop off as you discuss housing challenges, seasonality or market challenges of region within business planning process

Paris Marshall - RDCK

CV Farmers market avenue for vendors throughout winter and artisans for CV FM

RDCK - sustainability planning for RDCK

Update - info from RDCK head planner - ALC exclusion policy adopted by board in September -

Paris can send to Abra

September 30 - applications for exclusions - now in discussion

Watershed governance initiative - protection

Residual material from forestry activities → cheaper heating sources

Elizabeth Quinn - Fields Forward

Food processing facility in Creston - debrief about application to strengthen it - survey being sent out through CBT / Coop True Local Suppliers - data on who wants to use food processing facility in Creston (anchor product would be cherries)

Would not want to undermine local businesses
7 food hubs as part of covid recovery economic plan
Mick - same page - food hub in ND - should talk with Elizabeth

Treasurer's Report - Elizabeth Quinn

Call to action: Core funding request to Council
Motion to approve as presented (including retained earnings)
Moved by Elizabeth; Seconded: Mick; passed by consensus.

Budget - more revenue than anticipated
31k income more than expected (as of Aug 31 2020) with grant funding
BC Gaming Grant application - no reply yet
Fee for service work being taken on (Squamish / Warfield / Fernie / possibly Kimberley), which helps to build our core funds since the fee surpasses the hourly rate of the staff.

Systemic Racism and food system learning exercise (postponed)

Closing & Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 10:35 - Mick