



File No.: 6500-20
(Denman Farming
Regulations Review)

DATE OF MEETING: May 31, 2022
TO: Denman Island Local Trust Committee
FROM: Marlis McCargar, Island Planner
Northern Team
COPY: Heather Kauer, Regional Planning Manager
SUBJECT: Denman Island Farming Regulations Review Project

RECOMMENDATION

1. **That the Denman Island Local Trust Committee request staff to set up an electronic special meeting for late June or early July to consider further steps in the Denman Island Farming Regulations Review Project.**

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide to the Denman Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) a project update and direct staff to work with the consultant to organize a time to hold a Special Meeting of the LTC.

BACKGROUND

The LTC passed the following resolutions at their regular business meeting, held February 15, 2022:

DE-2022-010

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Denman Island Local Trust Committee generally endorses the “Denman Island Farming Regulation Community Questionnaire” dated February 2022 subject to the points discussed at the meeting”.

CARRIED

DE-2022-011

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Denman Island Local Trust Committee release up to \$2,000 from the Farming Regulation Review Project budget for advertising and direct mail out of the questionnaire to Denman Island residents and property owners.

CARRIED

DE-2022-012

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Denman Island Local Trust Committee direct staff to work with the consultant to schedule and advertise a special meeting to hold a Community Information Meeting in the spring for the Farming Regulations Review Project.

CARRIED

For further background and previous staff reports, and public correspondence please refer to the Project webpage: <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/island-planning/denman/projects/>.

PROJECT UPDATE

Engagement

Engagement for the Denman Island Farming Regulation Review Project targeted key farming and food system players on the island as well as the broader community. Engagement aided the project team in understanding the local farming context, the assets and gaps within the community and the opportunities and challenges faced within the local food system.

Engaging with Denman Island residents occurred through four main activities:

1. Electronic meeting with Advisory Planning Committee (APC) and Denman Growers and Producers Alliance (GPA) members
2. Individual stakeholder interviews by phone
3. Community questionnaire (online and hard copies)
4. Community Information Meeting (in person)

A brief summary of the key findings from these activities follows.

1. Electronic Meeting with APC Members

Members of the APC and GPA were invited by Islands Trust staff to an electronic meeting on January 17, 2022 to be introduced to the consulting team and to discuss some key issues involving the Farming Regulations Review. During the meeting, the draft Engagement Plan was presented and leaders of the farming community were identified.

2. Stakeholder Phone Interviews

The consultant team invited 14 stakeholders to participate in an interview. A total of 8 individuals accepted. Most interviews were conducted by phone, and 2 or 3 via email. Stakeholders included local farmers (4), educators, APC members, GPA members, Trustees, and other members of the community.

The core topics explored in the interviews and the emergent themes are briefly described below:

- Denman farming definitions
 - Local context is important and definitions should be reflective of Denman’s unique circumstance.
 - Definitions which restrict food production in R1 and R2 zones will only negatively impact the island’s food security.
- Viability of farming

- Temporary Use Permits are not very helpful to farmers. They are expensive and time consuming to navigate.
- TUPs make it difficult to make long term investments in properties as landholders are hesitant to invest in housing infrastructure without long-term guaranteed use.
- Additional housing may be needed for temporary farm workers in summer months
- It is important to preserve viable farmland when consider setbacks from neighbors and secondary dwellings.
- New ALR regulations and Secondary Dwellings
 - Secondary dwellings offer opportunities for additional income for farmers and should be supported so that farming can be viable on Denman.
 - The new ALR regulations could help with the housing crisis on Denman, though there are concerns around these secondary dwellings being used for short term rentals which will not benefit those in need of housing.
 - Secondary dwellings should be allowed with adequate water and septic access as well as considerations for environmental impact.
 - Include considerations for land use when building secondary dwellings so viable farmland is not paved over, including driveways and parking pads.
 - Consider requirement of sustainable management plans for secondary dwellings
- Environmental Sustainability on Denman Island
 - It is important to prioritize protection of water and wetlands.
 - Ensure regulations are aimed at minimizing ecological impacts.

Community Questionnaire

There were 162 responses to the Denman Island Farming Regulation Review Questionnaire. The questionnaire ran from early March to early May 2022. The questionnaire provided a brief overview of the objective the project, explanations of the regulation in question and gave opportunity for respondents to provide their opinions and feedback on the review. The consultants are in the process of analyzing the results of the questionnaire and will provide a full report at a future LTC meeting.

Community Information Meeting

An in-person Community Information Meeting (CIM) was held on April 21, 2022. It was advertised through The Islands Grapevine and online through social media. The event was attended by seven community members, the three LTC Trustees, Islands Trust staff and two members of the consulting team. The consultants provided an overview of the project objectives, and a summary of the preliminary community questionnaire results.

Discussion during the CIM addressed the topics of farming outside the ALR (R1 & R2 properties), agricultural and farming definitions, secondary dwellings and agritourism.

NEXT STEPS

Should the LTC concur with the staff recommendation, staff will work with the consultant to organize a special LTC meeting in June or July. After the consultant has prepared the report and recommendations, staff will refer it to the APC for feedback.

Submitted By:	Marlis McCargar, Island Planner	May 17, 2022
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Concurrence:	Heather Kauer, RPP, MCIP, AICP Regional Planning Manager	May 18, 2022
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