

## **Terms of Reference**

### **GTA Agricultural Action Committee**

#### 1. Vision

- 1.1 To sustain a dynamic, viable GTA agricultural industry where committed stakeholders work together with agricultural industry leaders to address challenges and lead change.

#### 2. Preamble

- 2.1 In 2001, the GTA Federations of Agriculture approached the GTA Regional Chairs seeking assistance about the long-term sustainability of agriculture in the GTA. The Regions agreed to assist the Federations and a key outcome was the production of a GTA Agricultural Action Plan (Action Plan).
- 2.2 The Action Plan provides guiding principles and practical directions to be advanced and implemented by key agricultural interests.
- 2.3 The partners (GTA Federations of Agriculture, GTA Regions, City of Toronto, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) all support and commit to the implementation of the Action Plan.
- 2.4 A GTA Agricultural Action Committee (herein referred to as the “Committee” or “GTA-AAC”) is necessary and called for in the Action Plan to provide leadership and represent the agricultural industry in the GTA.

#### 3. Goal

- 3.1 The goal of the Committee is to ensure the implementation of the actions identified in the Action Plan and provide advice to the partners and the agricultural industry on GTA agricultural and rural matters.

#### 4. Purpose and Role

- 4.1 The GTA-AAC exists to implement Action No. 7 in the Action Plan to:
- provide a coordinating function for agricultural issues in the GTA;
  - facilitate the involvement of each organization or sector the members represent;

- encourage innovation and diversification within the industry;
- build a broad partnership that ensures the information and resources are available to jointly implement the Action Plan; and
- develop a work plan to implement the actions in the Action Plan and track their process.

## 5. Mandate

- 5.1 The GTA-AAC is a non-partisan steering committee.
- 5.2 The GTA-AAC focus is to encompass both activities in the Action Plan and new directions that ensure the continued relevancy and innovativeness of the Action Plan.
- 5.3 Develop a budget, designate funds, and provide advice and guidance on the content and extent of the programs and recommendations for implementation of Actions in the GTA Agricultural Action Plan to the partners.
- 5.4 Members of the GTA-AAC will report directly to the organization or agency they represent.

## 6. Scope of Activities

- 6.1 The scope of the GTA-AAC may include activities such as providing leadership and advice on such matters involving:
  - a) Influencing, shaping and helping to implement Federal, Provincial, Regional, as well as non-government policies, programs, guidelines and initiatives that support the agricultural industry in the GTA;
  - b) Issues and concerns of the agricultural community;
  - c) Identification and implementation of programs that encourage public awareness and education of agricultural and related rural issues; and
  - d) Matters as they arise, at the request of the partners.

## 7. Composition

- 7.1 The GTA-AAC will be comprised of (15) members in total, including: four members from the four respective GTA Federations of Agriculture, four members from the GTA Regional Municipalities (Regional Chairs or delegates), two City of Toronto representatives (i.e. Toronto Food Policy Council and City), two Provincial government representatives, one Federal

government representative and two representatives of the agricultural industry (e.g. producers, processors).

- 7.2 Alternates to the Committee Members will be assigned, as appropriate.
- 7.3 The GTA Regional Planning Commissioners and City of Toronto will act as advisors to the GTA-AAC.
- 7.4 An Executive Committee of the GTA-AAC will be comprised of (7) seven members in total including: one representative from each of the four GTA Federations of Agriculture, two from the Provincial government, and one from the Federal government. The GTA Regional Planning Commissioners and City of Toronto will act as advisors.
- 7.5 Membership shall be a 3-year term corresponding with the term of Regional Council; however, members shall continue to serve until their replacements are appointed. At the discretion of the GTA-AAC, non-attendance of three consecutive meetings will be sufficient grounds for replacement. Committee members' length of term may be staggered to ensure continuity.
- 8. Membership Selection
  - 8.1 The four GTA Federations of Agriculture will nominate one person (and an alternate) to represent their Federation.
  - 8.2 Each of the four Regional Councils (or Regional Chairs) shall appoint one representative and an alternate to the GTA-AAC from the members of Council.
  - 8.3 The City of Toronto shall appoint a representative and alternate to the GTA-AAC.
  - 8.4 In nominating members to the GTA-AAC, regard shall be given to achieving a diversity of members with knowledge of agriculture and related rural issues. Ability to influence decision-making in their organization or sector, and availability to attend meetings will also be considered.
  - 8.5 In the case of a vacancy, the approach described in this section will generally be followed.
- 9. Support Services and Funding
  - 9.1 The Executive Director, working closely with the Chair and reporting to the GTA-AAC, will lead the delivery of the GTA Agricultural Action Plan.

- 9.2 The Executive Director will advise the GTA-AAC on the resources required to implement the Action Plan, and may recommend the hiring of staff and consultants where necessary.
- 9.3 The Regional representatives, as well as the GTA Federations of Agriculture and the GTA Regional Planning Commissioners, will ensure the Committee maintains a link to the Regional Agricultural Advisory Committees.
- 9.4 The GTA-AAC will establish an appropriate budget and timeframe for the implementation of action items. It will investigate and pursue potential Federal, Provincial, Regional and private funding options, as appropriate.

### **Committee Procedures**

#### **10. Officers**

- 10.1 A Chair and two Vice-Chairs (first and second) will be elected annually by the membership of the GTA-AAC.

#### **11. Role of the Chair and Vice-Chair**

- 11.1 The Chair shall preside over the meetings of the Committee and assist them in reaching consensus on decisions.
- 11.2 The Chair shall act as spokesperson, and co-ordinate the presentation of the Committee's position to its partners and other stakeholders as required.
- 11.3 It shall be the duty of the Chair, with respect to any meetings over which he/she presides, to:
- a) preserve order and decide on all questions of order;
  - b) receive and submit to a vote, all motions presented by the members of the Committee where consensus cannot otherwise be achieved;
  - c) announce the results of votes on any motions so presented;
  - d) decline to put to a vote motions which infringe upon the rules of procedure, or which are beyond the jurisdiction of the Committee;
  - e) enforce on all occasions, the observance of order and decorum among the members;
  - f) adjourn the meeting when business is concluded;

- g) represent and support the Committee, declaring its will and implicitly obeying its decisions in all things; and
  - h) perform other duties when directed to do so by Committee resolution.
- 11.4 The first and second Vice-Chair respectively, shall assume the authority and perform all the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair.
- 12. Roles and Responsibilities of Members
- 12.1 Committee Members shall:
  - a) attend and actively participate at all meetings;
  - b) work with other members to attempt to reach consensus on decisions before the Committee;
  - c) coordinate with agricultural stakeholders and the organization or sector they represent, to implement actions; and
  - d) adhere to these terms of reference.
- 13. Quorum
- 13.1 It is recommended that quorum for the GTA-AAC be eight (8) members, this representing a majority of the members (including the Chair and Vice-Chairs).
- 14. Committee Resolutions
- 14.1 The GTA-AAC will seek to achieve consensus on decisions. Recommendations are “carried” if supported by a majority. Only resolutions as they appear in the adopted Minutes shall be considered as officially representing the position of the GTA-AAC.
- 14.2 When an issue arises, the Committee will attempt to reach a consensus on how the Committee should resolve the issue.
- 14.3 If a consensus cannot be reached, a question before the Committee will be put to a vote and each Committee Member will be entitled to one vote, except the Chair.
- 14.4 A motion shall be deemed to be carried when a majority of the members present and voting have expressed agreement with the question. Consequently, on a tie vote, the Chair is entitled to a vote to break the tie.

15. Public Access and Delegations

15.1 Unless otherwise determined, all meetings will be open to the public. At the call of the Chair or majority vote, meetings may go in-camera session.

15.2 Any delegation wishing to address the Committee:

- (a) should, where possible, notify the Chair five (5) days in advance of the date of the meeting, providing in writing, a description of the item to be presented to the Committee,
- (b) on matters not on the agenda, may be heard by leave of the Committee, subject to the Committee's assessment of the topics' relevancy and time availability.

15.3 Every such delegation shall be limited to ten (10) minutes for speaking to the Committee unless approval of the Committee is obtained by the Chair to extend or limit the speaking time for the delegation concerned.

15.4 Upon the completion of a presentation to the Committee by a delegation, any discourse between Committee Members and the delegation shall be limited to members asking questions for clarification and obtaining additional, relevant information. Committee Members shall not enter into debate with the delegation respecting the presentation.

15.5 No delegation shall:

- a) speak disrespectfully of any person;
- b) use offensive words or inappropriate language;
- c) speak on any subject other than the subject for which they have received approval to address the Committee on; or
- d) disobey the rules of procedure or a decision of the Chair or Committee.

16. Meetings

16.1 The GTA-AAC will hold approximately eight meetings per year. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Chair. The GTA Regional Planning Commissioners are to be kept informed of such meetings.

17. Minutes and Agenda

17.1 The minutes of each GTA-AAC meeting will be amended as necessary and approved at the following meeting. The unapproved minutes will be forwarded to all the organizations represented on the Committee, for information.

- 17.2 When approved, any amendments will be forwarded to same. The GTA-AAC agendas will be prepared by the GTA-AAC Executive Director with input from the Chair, Vice-Chairs and other GTA-AAC members.
- 18. Annual Reports and Workplan
- 18.1 An annual report summarizing the activities completed in the previous year and on an on-going basis, shall be prepared by the Executive Director on behalf of the GTA-AAC. The annual report shall be forwarded to the partners represented on the Committee.
- 18.2 An annual work plan with an estimate of the resources necessary and any suggested revisions to the Terms of Reference for the coming year shall also be prepared by the GTA-AAC.
- 18.3 An annual review of the GTA-AAC's role and effectiveness will be completed to encourage continuous improvement.