



Burlington Agricultural & Rural Affairs Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes

Date: January 28, 2026
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Room 247, City Hall, second floor

1. Members Present:

Vincent Sowa (Chair), Maura Romanelli, Erin Fleming, Larry Campbell, Michiel Barnard, Mariam Abu-El-Magd, Peter Starcevic and Norm Richardson

2. Regrets:

Wilma Jacobs

3. Others Present:

Councillor Kelvin Galbraith, Paul Szachlewicz (Corporate Strategic Lead, Government Relations), Kelly Cook (Planner) (arrived at 7:50 p.m.) and Jo-Anne Rudy (Clerk)

4. Land Acknowledgement

The Chair read the Land Acknowledgement.

5. Declarations of Interest:

None

6. Approval of Minutes:

6.1 Approve minutes from meeting held November 19, 2025

On motion, the minutes from the meeting held November 19, 2025 were approved as presented.

7. Delegation(s):

None

8. Regular Items:

8.1 Planner update

a. Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference

- Paul Szachlewicz, Corporate Strategic Lead, Government Relations, advised that Government Relations staff will attend BARAAC Meetings moving forward to support current staff to further advance initiatives and priorities of the Committee across the municipality's advocacy activities. Government Relations will work closely with Communications and Engagement to further bolster Burlington's rural voice.
- Paul noted that Mayor Marianne Meed Ward, Ward 6 Councillor, Angelo Bentivegna, Chief Administrative Officer, Curt Benson, and some city staff attended the 2026 Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Annual General Meeting and Conference in Toronto from January 18 – 20, 2026, and had the opportunity to meet directly with representatives from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Transportation, and the Ministry of Energy and Mines. Please see the [full news release](#) for more information on the city's activities during the conference.
- Paul added that Government Relations staff will begin planning for the 2026 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual General Meeting and Conference in the spring and will leverage BARAAC for its expertise and input on key advocacy priorities.

b. Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) update

- Kelly advised that the GHFFA working group met on January 23 and discussed future funding and governance structures. The Alliance is proposing a standardized Memorandum of Understanding for its seven member municipalities and anticipates some level of continued interest from Halton Region, at the political level. The Alliance plans to request a transitional three- year funding commitment from its members to support a mandate/structure review and a potential new action plan.

- c. 2026 Farmland Forum - Ontario Farmland Trust, March 19th in Elora
 - Members were asked to let Jo-Anne know if they have an interest in attending this Forum. The early-bird pricing is available until February 19. Link to information [is here](#).
- d. Approved Provincial Agricultural Impact Assessment Guidance Document
 - Kelly advised that the [ERO posting 013-2454](#) was updated on January 12, 2026 to reflect the approval of a new Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) Guidance document, as part of implementing the new Provincial Planning Statement, 2024.
 - Kelly noted that she will review and compare to existing guidelines inherited from the Region, as well as the 2018 HAPP submission, and develop a set of initial recommendations to be considered during the future review of the City's rural and agricultural policies.

8.2 2025 Annual Report

- The draft 2025 annual report was shared with members for review and approval at the February committee meeting. The annual report will be presented to Council in March along with all other advisory committee annual reports.

8.3 2026 Workplan and Budget

- The draft 2026 workplan and budget was briefly reviewed. It will be shared with members for final review and approval at the February committee meeting. The workplan and budget report will be presented to Council in March along with all other advisory committee workplans and budgets.

8.4 Burlington Hydro issues in the rural area

- Maura advised that rural residents continue to deal with significant hydro issues and shared that several emails have been sent to Burlington Hydro with no responses being received to date. Maura noted that she has collaborated with the Rural Ward 6 Citizens Group on a hydro survey that could help document and measure how hydro outages and power surges affect residents in the rural area. She asked if the survey could be sent out to rural residents

with a link to the survey via the rural Councillor's upcoming newsletters. Councillor Galbraith agreed to include it in his March newsletter which will go out at the beginning of the month. **Action:** Maura and Erin will work on creating the survey in google forms and send to Jo-Anne who will send email to rural Councillors (Galbraith, Nisan and Bentivegna) requesting the survey link be included in their upcoming newsletters.

8.5 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

On motion, Vincent Sowa and Maura Romanelli were elected as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, for the term ending December 31, 2026.

9. **Other Business:**

- Jo-Anne shared the 2026 meeting schedule and will email to members.

10. **Adjournment:**

Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:31 p.m.