

THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF MORRIS

The Council of the Rural Municipality of Morris held a Committee Meeting on Tuesday, April 22, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. in the Lowe Farm Community Centre.

Reeve Herm Martens presided.

Council Members present were: Ralph Groening, Denis Robert, Sieg Neumann, Lionel Wiens, Barry Fraese.

The purpose of this Committee Meeting was to meet with area hog producers to discuss aspects of the Concerns of Council and the Conditions of Barn Approval.

There were 21 producers in attendance. The notification for this meeting was done by written invitation for those operations that had been approved by Conditional Use Order in the last 10 years.

Reeve Martens welcomed those in attendance.

Councillor Neumann then opened the meeting by indicating that the Municipality and the producers need to keep a high standard of operation. We want to keep things open and fair to operations. The Municipality is currently creating a new Development Plan with incorporating such issues as the flood plain, agriculture in general, hog barns, residences and residential areas. These are only some of the major issues in creating such a Development Plan.

Odour

The first topic was that of odour and environment and how to minimize the odour from hog barn operations. Peoples concerns relating to hog barns is that of odour and its effect on their lifestyle and household. Recent questions have arisen relating to the siting of applications, size of applications and what are the benefits of having hog barns. How much does the industry focus on odour control.

Dave Waldner – noted that the industry does as much as it can. Other industries do as much as they can for issues of their industry and the hog industry is doing what it can to reduce odours.

Bruce Mazinke – mentioned the situation of emotional issues. Barn applicants have to come to Council and neighbors for their application and this can be very trying. We are required to put on plastic covers which is very costly. The industry is changing very fast.

Mike Toews – indicated that trees were very important to protect the site to make the site look better and improve the overall aesthetics of the site. Hog operations need to be aware of their neighbors. New barns need time to grow the trees and time to order the right trees. Straw cover on lagoons has a cost but is much less costly than tarps and tarps are very difficult to insure.

Menno Bergen – told Council that it is too easy to make a complaint against an operation. Any complaints should be in writing and they should be checked if they are valid or not. He also mentioned that operations should not plant evergreens around their sites as they take far too long to grow.

Trees

Having trees, a nice yard area, etc. gives a good presentation to the general public and all operations should be striving to that end. It was mentioned that some operations have tree shelter belts and some have none. There seems to be a reluctance of some operations to plant trees and look after them.

The R. M. of Morris does have a tree planter available to use in the springtime.

The revenue for a hog barn operation is created inside the barn and not outside and therefore there is not enough care and attention given to the outside of the operation.

April 22, 2003

Lagoon Cover

It was then mentioned the issue of the Municipality flying over the hog operations to check on straw cover. This avenue of looking is allowing the Municipality a better understanding of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of having barley straw cover. It was mentioned that by doing the fly over, it was very good for bio security of the hog operations. Barley straw does seem to work well, however, it may need touchups later in the year. There is now someone in the area that does spread barley straw onto lagoons and this should allow each operations to have a better and consistent coverage of their lagoon.

It was also mentioned that planting tall grass around the top of lagoons would give greater wind protection to the lagoon, however, the Dept. of Environment does not allow this type of grass to be planted there.

The problem with straw cover is that of maintenance. It is often that at least a second cover attempt is needed and very few are attempting to maintain the cover by filling in the open areas.

On the issue of tarp covers for lagoons, the Municipality generally requires barley straw cover for operations below 400 A.U. and tarp cover's for those operations over 400 A.U.

Ron Schroeder – stated that a shredder unit costs approximately \$30,000.00 and large barn operations could have their own shredder and be able to do their own touch ups.

Bruce Mazinke – there is only one tarp producer in the Province and he has a patent on that design.

There was a question asked in Council would reconsider straw cover on lagoon instead of requiring tarp covers. With the purchase of a straw spreader unit they would then be able to maintain their own lagoons. Council did respond that they would give further consideration to the straw/tarp issue.

Manure Incorporation

Councillor Neumann stated that the disposal of the manure must be done correctly and if it is done correctly, then there should be a more minimal smell from the lagoon. If it is not incorporated properly into the soil, there is a high loss of the nitrogen content. If it is done properly, the neighboring residences should be less affected.

Dave Waldner stated that many operations need to use neighboring farm land to dispose of their manure. The Province has created a dilemma regarding manure in stipulating the amount of manure and that the farmer can add additional fertilizer to the field.

There was a question raised as to what can be done during a wet year and that some flexibility is needed for extreme conditions.

Mortalities

The fact of having disposal bins along the roadside should be avoided. Public perception is not good with the view of dead animals along the road.

Community Benefits

Reeve Martens indicated that 60 new jobs have been created by the hog barn permits in 2002. Hog barns need to show a positive support in their community. Big companies also need to be more positively involved and have good exposure to the general public.

Consultation with area residents

This issue created a great range of response. Who should do the consultation and why when doing that may only be adding fuel to the fire? How much consultation should there be for an application? What about consultation with other hog barns? What area should there be consultation with, what distance, and who determines who is most directly impacted?

It was mentioned that there should be a check list for applicants to see what they need to do.

Decision on Hog Barns

The question was asked if the Municipal Council should make the final decision on hog barn applications. Some of the comments were that Council should remain as the approving authority, however they should be using the Provincial guidelines. It was also mentioned that having a mediator does have some benefits.

The standards should be brought to today's levels, but what are they?

Sabbatical

The Municipal Council thought that this was the right thing to do in order to give time to consider issues relating to hog barns. It was questioned if the Municipality had the authority to create the sabbatical. Another question raised was that of hog barns that wish to expand and what consideration should be given to those in that situation.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.



Grant Macaulay,
Secretary