



Agricultural Property Standards Working Group

Terms of Reference

Approved: October 21, 2025

1. Purpose

The Agricultural Property Standards Working Group is a special (Ad-hoc) committee of Council established to lead public consultation and make recommendations to Council regarding proposed amendments to the Property Standards By-law related to the agricultural exemption and the inclusion of reference to the Farm and Food Production Protection Act (FFPPA) in the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh (ACW).

The Working Group is not reviewing the full Property Standards By-law but is tasked specifically with consultation and recommendations pertaining to how the by-law applies to agricultural lands.

2. Mandate

The Working Group will:

- Plan and facilitate public consultation activities such as an agricultural roundtable, a public open house, and the collection of online and written feedback, as determined by the Committee.
- Provide clear and accessible information to residents and stakeholders, with staff support for logistics and communications.
- Gather, document, and consider feedback from all consultation activities.
- Summarize key themes, issues, and recommendations in a final report to Council.

The Working Group will operate for a limited term of approximately three to four months and will be dissolved upon submission of its final report to Council.

3. Values

The Working Group will:

- Function as a collective partnership, operating in a professional, non-judgmental manner.
- Respect individual rights and confidentiality, employing no fault discussions and reaching consensus. Consensus is defined as being able to live with and support a decision, which does not necessarily require total agreement.
- Operate within this terms of reference, policies and guidelines established and adopted by Council.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- o The Official Plan
- o The Zoning By-Law
- o The Communications Strategy
- o The Corporate Strategic Plan

- Understand that the final decision and authority regarding Property Standards regulation is with Council.

4. Municipal Resources

The Working Group will be supported in its mission with appropriate municipal resources.

Members of Council and citizen appointees will be paid according to the Township's Remuneration By-Law, including mileage. Staff support will be provided through regular working arrangements.

5. Organization

Governance

The Working Group shall be governed by applicable law including the Procedure By-Law, the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and this Terms of Reference.

Recommendations to Council shall be in writing via a motion and submitted in writing.

Agenda items shall be submitted to the Clerk's Office in writing by the Wednesday prior to the meeting. Agendas will be developed under the direction of the CAO and the Clerk and distributed at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

Membership Composition

The Working Group membership shall comprise of a total of seven (7) members:

- Three (3) Members of Council, and;
- Four (4) citizen appointments, selected and approved by Council, representing a balance of agricultural and non-agricultural perspectives.

The Mayor shall be an ex-officio member of the Committee, with the right to attend and participate in meetings and to vote if present. The Mayor is not required to attend and shall not be counted when determining a quorum unless otherwise appointed as a regular member.

The Working Group will elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair at its first meeting by a majority vote from its members. The Vice-Chair shall be appointed to act in the Chair's absence.

The Clerk's Department will be the secretariat. Staff liaison will be the Clerk or delegate. The CAO will also be in attendance. Other staff, as appropriate, will attend on an as-required topical basis and their attendance will be based on availability.

Term

The goal of the Working Group is to complete its mandate within a three to four-month period. To clarify, the final recommendation(s) are to be submitted and reviewed by Council at the first meeting in April 2026.

The group will be dissolved upon submission of its final report to Council. Council retains the authority to dissolve the Working Group or remove a member at any time if deemed necessary.

Meetings

Meetings will be held as required at the call of the Chair. Meetings shall take place in the Council Chambers at 4:30 pm unless otherwise decided upon by the Committee.

Meetings may be cancelled or rescheduled at the call of the Clerk in consultation with the Chair.

Delegations will be welcome at the request of the Working Group by majority vote.

Approved meeting minutes are circulated to Council for review.

Duties and Responsibilities

Working Group Chair

The Chair shall preside at all meetings, ensure decorum and adherence to procedures, provide leadership in fulfilling the mandate, and act as the spokesperson for the Working Group.

Vice Chair

The Vice-Chair acts in the Chair's absence.

All Members

All members shall contribute time, knowledge, and expertise toward achieving the Working Group's mandate, participate respectfully, and review background materials as required.

Should any member fail to attend three consecutive meetings without authorization, the Working Group may recommend that Council declare the seat vacant and appoint a replacement.

Privacy and Recordings

Meetings of the Working Group are public and will be recorded for posting on the Township's YouTube channel to ensure transparency. Members should be aware that their participation, comments, and any materials shared during meetings will form part of the public record. Members' names will also be part of the public record and may be disclosed upon request. Personal information that is not part of the public record will be protected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

6. Amendments to the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference may be reviewed as needed to ensure relevance. Proposed amendments must be approved by a majority of members present and subsequently approved by Council before taking effect.