

**Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency
Rural/Urban Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes for March 20, 2015
Queensbury Convention Centre - Salon 1
1700 Elphinstone Street, Regina, SK**

Urban Advisory Committee

Members Present:

Al Heron, Committee Chair, SAMA Board Member, Urban Sector
Neal Hardy (ex officio), SAMA Board Chair
Wade Murray, SAMA Board Member, City Sector
Myron Knafelc, SAMA Board Member
Sheryl Spence, City of Warman
John Enns-Wind, SUMA Town Representative
John Quinn, Resort Village of Candle Lake
Malcolm Eaton, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association
Barry Elderkin, Town of Maple Creek
Walter Streelasky, City of Melville
Brandon Danielson, Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers' Association

Observers:

Irwin Blank, CEO, SAMA
Kelly Munce, Ministry of Government Relations

Observers Absent:

Curt Van Parys, Saskatchewan School Boards Association
Rodney Audette, Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan
Laurent Mougeot, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, Executive Director

SAMA Administration:

Kevin Groat, Committee Secretary
Shaun Cooney, SAMA Administration
Todd Treslan, SAMA Administration

Members Absent

Barry Gunther, Resort Village of Sun Valley
Lois Smandych, Saskatchewan School Boards Association
Vern Noble, Provincial Association of Resort Communities of Saskatchewan

Guests

Karlo Simonson, SAMA Administration
Jim Bence, Saskatchewan Hotel Hospitality Association

Rural Advisory Committee

Members Present:

John Wagner, Committee Chair, SAMA Board Member
Neal Hardy (ex officio), SAMA Board Chairman
Jim Angus, SAMA Board Member
Murray Purcell, SAMA Board Member, Rural Sector
Doug Oleksyn, R.M. of Shellbrook, No. 493
Jeannie DeRochers, R.M. of South QuAppelle No. 157
David Popowich, R.M. of Good Lake, No. 274
Rod Wiens, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
Garry Dixon, Provincial Association of Resort Communities of Saskatchewan
Audrey Trombley, Saskatchewan School Boards Association
Roger Frey, Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers' Association

Observers:

Lori McDonald, Rural Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan
Brian Sych, Ministry of Government Relations
Irwin Blank, CEO, SAMA

Observers Absent:

Kim Gartner, Saskatchewan School Boards Association
Jay Meyer, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
Laurel Felton, Administration, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

SAMA Administration:

Steve Suchan, Committee Secretary

Members Absent:

Brent Evans, R.M. of Moose Jaw, No. 261
John Chavtur, R.M. of Frontier, No. 19
Gordon Meyer, R.M. of Progress, No. 351

Guests:

Jason Penner, Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Agenda Item:

Decision/Resolution:

1. Call to order
Co-Chairs John Wagner (Chair, Rural Advisory Committee) and Al Heron (Chair, Urban Advisory Committee) called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM.
2. Opening remarks
Rural Advisory Committee (RAC) Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
3. Introductions
Introductions by individuals present.
4. Approval of meeting agenda
MOTION by Roger Frey that the committees approve the Agenda as presented.
Carried
5. Minutes of the previous meeting held November 19, 2014
MOTION by Malcom Eaton that the minutes of the November 19, 2014 joint Rural and Urban Advisory Committees business meeting be adopted as circulated.
Carried
6. Business arising from the Joint Minutes
SAMA CEO: Provided the committees with a status update regarding the data file from the Ministry of the Economy which is used for the assessment of oil and gas wells (page 2 of the minutes). SAMA has prepared a minister's briefing note on the issue and just recently shared it with Keith Comstock and John Edwards with the Ministry of Government Relations. The briefing note clarifies the issues, concerns regarding the current situation as well as possible solutions. Ultimately SAMA needs a reliable standardized file from the Ministry of the Economy.

Item 7: SAMA Update

Item 7a: CEO Report

- Irwin Blank provided a Power Point presentation as his report.
- Clarification that for 2015, Provincial Government provides 60% of SAMA's overall operational funding. Government pays for 40% of the cost of providing assessment services, on behalf of Education, with the balance of the government's funding provided to cover the cost of SAMA's Governance responsibilities.
 - SAMA has received what was requested from Provincial Government for the 2015 budget. This information was released March 18 by provincial government. This includes the requested operational funding increase and capital funding for new technology. Irwin thanked the funding stakeholders and the provincial government for their support!

Committee Comments

Rural Committee Chair: Clarification that the SAMA's \$4.9M capital funding component is only for the four year period of 2014-17 (\$1.25M/year), it is then removed from SAMA's budget.

Rural Committee Chair: Govern is our computer software provider. This new computer application being built for SAMA will also be used by their other clients throughout North America. SAMA is in effect helping Govern build this new application. In the end it will be a good product for SAMA as we can make sure it meets our needs as we are testing it. SAMA has a fixed price contract with Govern to do this work.

SUMA Representative: How do you get on the reinspection list?

SAMA Administration: Will look at various factors such as age of current inspection, appeals, potential issues etc. Process is to start discussions with your regional assessment office. May be able to target to fix specific problems outside a reinspection.

SAMA Board Chair: With the new technology, SAMA will increase its capacity to be able to do more inspections.

SUMA Representative: For future presentations, perhaps provide a larger slide as it is hard to see all of the smaller numbers on some slides.

SAMA Administration: Will provide a larger version.

SSBA Representative: Likes the idea of posting municipal files to a website. How far ahead are re-inspections planned?

SAMA Administration: We are just starting next year's plan.

SSBA Representative: If municipalities knew they were three or four years away from a re-inspection, they can plan better such as providing better annual lists for properties to review.

SUMA Representative: Is positive that this technology initiative is now in process and that provincial government is supporting SAMA to get the "money being left on the table".

SAMA Board Member: Need to remind everyone that the full potential of technology infrastructure program will not be realized until 2018.

SUMA Representative: Is there a way of monitoring SAMAView activity when there is a new inspection/revaluation. Can measure ratepayer interest between municipal walk-ins vs internet searches.

SAMA CEO: Can't really do this right now, we know where internet "hits" come from, but not what they are looking at. If there is an interest in this metric, we can look into developing it.

SARM Representative: Any new ideas regarding market data sources for places like regional parks? Seems to be a gap in obtaining market information in this area.

SAMA Administration: No one really manages this information, the only option we are aware of is to talk to the regional park administrator.

MOTION by Doug Oleksyn that the committees receive the CEO presentation.

Carried

Item 7b: Assessment Services
Division Report

Power Point presentation by Todd Treslan.

MOTION by Audrey Trombley that the committees receive the presentation.

Item 8: Current Developments

Shaun Cooney provided a PowerPoint presentation and report.

Item 8a. 2017 Revaluation - Publications

Committee Comments

SSBA Representative: Is a situation where a community pasture is located in two rural municipalities with a person observing that the property taxes for seeming similar parcels of land are different between the two municipalities. Was initially thought that the mill rates were different but this does not seem to be the case. Rather, the one parcel had land rated as waste. Why would the assessments be different?

SAMA Administration: Taxable assessment difference could be due to a tax class difference. As well municipalities could have been assessed by different staff at a different time period. Would need to look at the actual properties to determine the assessment differences. Ideally, if the land is similar, the assessments should be similar.

MOTION by Jeanie DeRochers that the committees receive the report and presentation.

Carried

Break for lunch at 11:50 AM. Resume at 12:45 PM

Item 8b: 2017 Revaluation Preparations - Planning and Trends

Shaun Cooney provided a PowerPoint presentation and report.

Committee Comments

SUMA Representative: They have seasonal properties in Candle Lake. They have relatively few sales in community, where do you obtain the data to prepare assessments?

SAMA Administration: May use a comparable neighbourhood or municipality if there are not enough sales within the community.

SUMA Representative: Is there a comparison made between seasonal property? What are the valuation practices for truly seasonal properties vs permanent residences?

SAMA Administration: Clarified that seasonal and residential are tax class related. For market valuation considerations, will look at the physical characteristics of the properties and account for this in the quality class, and other property characteristics. Location is an important consideration. Ultimately the assessment appraiser looks at the market.

PARCS Representative: He lives in his home full time yet it is classed as "seasonal", should he be not be in the "residential" tax class.

SAMA Administration: The municipal administrator/assessor needs to make the determination as to the property's tax class. At this time it is no issue as all three residential property classes (residential, seasonal and multi-family) have the same factor.

Rural Committee Chair: How are corporate share sales handled with regards to agricultural land sales.

SAMA Administration: They may be filtered out if they are atypical, agricultural land sales are not closely verified. If the shares are sold and the company name does not change on the ISC title, SAMA would not be aware of the transaction as there would be no ISC transfer reported.

MOTION by David Popowich that the committees receive the report and presentation.

Carried

Item 8c: 2017 Revaluation -
Quality Coordination

Shaun Cooney provided a PowerPoint presentation and report.

PARCS Representative: Had noticed that the City of Regina is concerned about the base date. Resort property owners may have a problem on Qu'Appelle Valley chain due to land slumping issues. Is there anything SAMA is doing amend assessments of affected properties. Further to this issue properties don't sell and thus no market data.

SAMA Administration: SAMA can go out and look that these properties, it is difficult to identify these property and then to estimate appropriate obsolescence. Need to review each property on a case by case basis. This kind of work was done in communities affected by flooding and slumping issues.

PARC Representative: There could be hundreds of properties.

SUMA Representative: How do non-compliance situations apply? Eg. house located on the lot line or on the road allowance.

SAMA Administration: Would need to be shown the examples. Ultimately the property would still need to be assessed.

MOTION by Barry Elderkin that the committees receive the presentation.

Carried

Item 9: Future Developments

Item 9a: 2021 Revaluation
Suggestions for the next
reevaluation

Steve Suchan provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Committee Comments

PARCS Representative: Assessment of ski hills and golf courses, where is that going?

SAMA Administration: Most ski hills are in Regional Parks, but could still be assessed.

SARM Representative: What is the difference between a decommissioned pipeline vs an abandoned pipeline?

SAMA Administration: Currently no difference between the two. If a pipeline is not in use, it is take off the assessment roll. To assess an abandoned pipeline that is still in the ground would take a legislative amendment.

SARM Representative: Are underground gas caverns assessed?

SAMA Administration: No.

SARM Representative: Are solar power developments and wind turbines assessed?

SAMA Administration: Only structures and land related to these kinds of developments are assessed. Any equipment relating to the generation of power is not assessed; this would take a legislative change to make equipment of this nature assessable.

SAMA Board Member: Yesterday advisory committee meeting brought up a question on assessment of power lines and phone lines. There has also discussion at the Board level on regulating residential properties.

SUMA Representative: Would like to know what the situation is with the delay in Saskatchewan Municipal Board (SMB) assessment appeal decisions. Is there something SUMA/SARM or this committee can do to express dissatisfaction with the delay?

SAMA Administration: If the appeal is precedent setting it may affect more than the appealed property. SAMA has raised this issue with the Ministry as well as the Municipal Board and is currently monitoring the situation. SUMA or SARM could bring their concerns to the Ministry of Government Relations. The SMB revamped their processes a year ago to help address the delays in the appeal process. One issue they have currently is a number of position vacancies that should be filled to increase their capacity to catch up and keep up with appeals. Any support the SMB could receive to assist them in filling those vacant positions would be helpful in addressing the current backlog.

SSBA Representative: Reinforced that these appeal decision delays can cause municipalities losses especially if the decision affects other properties other than the appealed property.

SAMA Administration: We are currently conducting market analysis work for the next revaluation. If a precedent setting appeal decision that impacts many other properties or entire municipalities is not forthcoming until later this year when we have already completed the majority of our market analysis, it can also mean we have to redo parts of our 2017 market analysis if we find something we have been relying on is inaccurate.

MOTION by John Enns-Wind that the committees receive the presentation.

Carried

Item 10: Other Business

Item 10a: SAMA 2015 Annual General Meeting - Resolutions, notice of meeting date and agenda

Steve Suchan provided a handout.

- No regular resolutions have been received.
- Emergent resolutions can now be brought forward.
- Was noted that there are some changes to voting including administrators can now be delegates and can vote.

MOTION by Garry Dixon that the committees receive the report.

Carried

Item 10b: Next scheduled urban/rural advisory committee meeting

Feedback from the committee members indicated there was good support for having this meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 18, 2015 at the Sandman Inn.

MOTION by Doug Oleksyn that the meeting be adjourned.

Carried

Meeting adjourned at 1:50 PM.

Steve Suchan,
Rural Advisory Committee Secretary

Kevin Groat,
Urban Advisory Committee Secretary