

Minimize effects of small lots on agriculture Nov 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008

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I am opposed to extending the ALR release condition for the Garden City lands. It has already been extended twice under the purchase agreement. The limit for extensions under the agreement has been reached, and an extension that goes beyond the limit is *not* acceptable.

**Re the Garden City Lands status update from Joe Erceg dated Nov 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008:**

In the update, I feel that section 3, "Minimize effects of small lots on Agriculture," is a ridiculous plan. The owners of the lots bordered by Westminster Highway, No. 5 Road, Francis Road and No. 4 Road should not be punished because the City of Richmond refuses to understand that keeping the Garden City Lands in the ALR is in the best interests of Richmond. I'll describe some of the problems:

1. The "**Pilot Project**" is a sham devised to appear to be saving agricultural land. It would instead create even more red tape to make farming more difficult.
2. Re "**Encourage lot consolidation with common ownership**," the City of Richmond is not in the real estate business and has no right to try to manipulate private ownership.
3. Re "**Leases for unconstructed roads**," if there are no road allowances, how are the farmers supposed to access their acreage? My parents live on Granville and use their unconstructed roadway all the time. They even have a large shop that faces it, and that shop would be inaccessible if the roadway gets leased to a farmer. Obviously the idea has not been thought through.
4. "**Registering a covenant on title**" for the purpose of preventing single lots being sold individually is completely unfair to the owners, many of whom are off-shore investors. This plan would be confusing to anybody but especially people who do not have English as their first language. This Big Brother plan is so over the top I can't believe it.

5. **“New road construction”** would ultimately divide the small parcels of land, which is contrary to your goal of increasing parcel sizes.
6. **Salary costs** of \$80,000 for each of the quarter sections to hire staff are another classic example of overspending. Spending almost a quarter of a million dollars a year to manage land that doesn’t cost anything to manage the way it is now is craziness. You have stated that there are “Few opportunities for cost recovery potential.” Obviously this is another really bad idea.
7. Re **“Discourage uses other than bona fide agricultural uses,”** when the owners of the properties bought their land, they had no reason to expect that bylaws created in the future would greatly inhibit the uses that they planned for their properties. This is like changing the rules in the middle of a game. I would suggest that these owners must be made aware of these potential changes and that a public hearing be required to inform them of this challenge to their rights and the ultimate effect on the property values of their homes.
8. Re **“Proposed maximum house size,”** this issue is far too complex to be reduced to a simple three-line chart. I would suggest a task force that would include all the stakeholders would be necessary. This must be studied, and owners of the “estate homes” need to be consulted on how they feel about new bylaws that limit their options. Developers and builders need to be involved as well, as they know this market segment best.
9. Re the location of **“Ancillary uses such as tennis courts, auto courts and septic fields,”** to be located where possible in the first 50 meters of the frontage is a very subjective idea that to me feels like *your* vision of what is acceptable. How can it be right to control individual house owners in such a restrictive vision? And the fact that you want to impose even “Greater controls” after a more thorough review will be frightening to a lot of home owners.
10. Finally, it seems to me completely unfair to punish home owners of modest size acreages because the City of Richmond thinks it will help the city with something completely different, the Garden City Lands application.

I suggest if you are going to create new bylaws to create more agricultural uses on private lots, then you could save everyone a lot of grief by just doing the right thing and leaving the Garden City Lands for agriculture and leaving the McClennan area alone. Moving forward with these preposterous ideas would take a lot of work and a lot of money and would accomplish nothing.

In section 7 you state that "removal of the Garden City Lands lands from the ALR is not supported by all members of council and has become an important public issue" and then later state that you "Could choose to place Richmond's share back into the Reserve." Why are you making this issue so complicated? If staff had taken half the time they wasted on this insane idea and used it to work with the federal government to have the land declared un-surplus and take back ownership, then we would be well on our way to acquiring the Garden City Lands.

Your conclusion states "Staff believes that council's endorsement of these initiatives will enhance the 'Block Application' to exclude the Garden City Lands for the ALR." Therefore, if you simply allow the purchase agreement to expire, none of these initiatives will be necessary.

The people of Richmond have made it abundantly clear they do not want the Garden City Lands removed from the ALR. It is time for Richmond Council to listen.

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