



Regular Council

Monday, May 14, 2018

Place: Council Chambers
Richmond City Hall

Present: Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie
Councillor Chak Au
Councillor Derek Dang
Councillor Carol Day
Councillor Ken Johnston
Councillor Alexa Loo
Councillor Bill McNulty
Councillor Linda McPhail
Councillor Harold Steves

Corporate Officer – David Weber

Call to Order: Mayor Brodie called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

RES NO. ITEM

MINUTES

R18/9-1 1. It was moved and seconded
That the minutes of the Regular Council meeting held on April 23, 2018, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED



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AGENDA ADDITIONS & DELETIONS

- R18/9-2 It was moved and seconded
That the Agenda be varied to consider Bylaws for Adoption prior to Committee of the Whole.

CARRIED

BYLAWS FOR ADOPTION

- R18/9-3 It was moved and seconded
That the following bylaws be adopted:
Annual Property Tax Rates (2018) Bylaw No. 9835
Development Cost Charges Imposition Bylaw No. 9499, Amendment Bylaw No. 9844
Richmond Zoning Bylaw No. 8500, Amendment Bylaw No. 9698

CARRIED

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

- R18/9-4 2. It was moved and seconded
That Council resolve into Committee of the Whole to hear delegations on agenda items (7:02 p.m.).

CARRIED

3. Delegations from the floor on Agenda items
Item No. 20 – Response to Referral: Additional Dwellings for Farm Workers and Direction on Limiting Residential Development in the AG1 Zone for Properties that are 0.2 Ha (0.5 Acres) or Larger

Brad Dore, 9051 Blundell Road, presented examples of agricultural lots in Richmond and spoke on the proposed regulations. He was of the opinion that the size of the farm home plate does not affect the active farming area; however he expressed concern that proposed setbacks may negatively impact the on-site circulation.



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John Baines, 11620 No. 4 Road, spoke in favour of endorsing Provincial guidelines for residential dwellings on agricultural land, and expressed concern that allowing large homes on farmland may encourage real estate speculation and therefore negatively affect farming activity.

Doug Kavanagh, Richmond resident, wished to see current regulations maintained and expressed concern with regard to misinformation in the community. Also, he was of the opinion that enforcement of current bylaws is required to address any illegal activities that may take place on agricultural land.

Michelle Li, Richmond resident, spoke on the proposed regulations and expressed concern with regard to the different regulations that apply to dwellings on residential and agricultural zones. Also, she commented on the liveability of a modest sized home and the potential loss of farmland if the farm home plate were to be expanded.

Niti Sharma, 11380 Kingfisher Drive, expressed concern with regard to the potential real estate speculation and loss of agricultural land stemming from the development of large dwellings on agricultural land. Also, she expressed that the development of modest sized homes should be encouraged and that any proposed secondary dwelling on agricultural land be considered through the rezoning process.

Marie Murtagh, 4771 Dumont Street, spoke against the development of large dwellings on agricultural land and expressed concern about the potential real estate speculation and loss of agricultural land.

Michael Isinger, 8711 Fairfax Crescent, spoke in favour of endorsing Provincial regulations for residential dwellings on agricultural land and expressed concern on the potential loss of agricultural land.

With the aid of a translator, Amy Sang, 16200 Westminster Highway, expressed support for retaining the current regulations. She noted that a large dwelling is required on her property to accommodate extended family and farm workers.



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With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file, City Clerk's Office), Judie Schneider, Richmond resident, spoke in favour of endorsing Provincial guidelines for residential dwellings on agricultural land, noting that property owners have the option to seek a variance if a larger dwelling is needed. Also, she expressed concern with regard to potential increased real estate speculation, particularly as it relates to the loss of agricultural land.

With the aid of a translator, Huaijun Chen, Richmond resident, spoke in favour of retaining current regulations and promoting farmers' interests and agricultural activities.

Jack Travato, 6331 Constable Drive, expressed concern with regard to the potential real estate speculation of agricultural land and in particular as it relates to food security. Also, he commented on the City's consultation process and encouraged that agricultural land be protected.

John Roston, 12262 Ewen Avenue, commented on farming opportunities for young farmers and the short-term nature of some farm leases. Also, he spoke in favour of limiting large dwellings on agricultural land, adding that property owners have the option to seek a variance if a larger dwelling is needed.

Glen Anderson, 10071 Dyke Road, commented on farm leases and supporting farming activities in the city. He expressed concern with regard to the potential real estate speculation and loss of agricultural land stemming from the development of large dwellings on agricultural land.

Peter Dhillon, Richmond resident, spoke in favour of retaining the current regulations and commented on investing in farming technology to improve farming capacity and efficiency.

Laura Gillanders, Richmond resident, commented on small scale farming and expressed concern with regard to the potential real estate speculation and the loss of agricultural land stemming from the development of large dwellings on such lands.

Jim Wright, 8300 Osgood Drive, expressed concern with regard to real estate speculation of agricultural land. He spoke in favour of limiting the size of dwellings on agricultural land, adding that property owners have the option to seek a variance if a larger dwelling is needed.



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Allan McBurney, 7171 Bridge Street, commented on the assessment of agricultural land and expressed support to retain existing regulations. He was of the opinion that further limitations on the size of dwellings on agricultural land could negatively affect the economic viability of farms.

Natasha Maraski, 8460 Granville Avenue, expressed concern with regard to the potential real estate speculation of agricultural land and illegal activity that may take place on such lands. She commented on small farm operations and taxation of agricultural land. Also, Ms. Maraski was of the opinion that foreign ownership of land contributes to speculative real estate activity.

Laura Stapleton, 3851 Blundell Road, spoke against permitting large dwellings on agricultural land and expressed concern with regard to the potential real estate speculation of such lands.

Paulo Leung, 9211 No. 3 Road, spoke in favour of retaining existing regulations and was of the opinion that reducing the allowable size of dwellings on agricultural land may not curb speculative real estate activity.

Michael Wolfe, 9731 Odlin Road, commented on food security and expressed support for measures that (i) encourage development of modest sized homes on agricultural land, (ii) include the septic field within the farm home plate, and (iii) implement a rezoning process for secondary dwellings.

Item No. 19 - Cannabis Bylaw Framework and Regulation of Agricultural Structures, and Item No. 20 – Response to Referral: Additional Dwellings for Farm Workers and Direction on Limiting Residential Development in the AG1 Zone for Properties that are 0.2 Ha (0.5 Acres) or Larger

Todd May, representing the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) and the Richmond Farmers' Institute, expressed concern with regard to the proposed regulations on the size of agricultural structures and the City's lack of consultation with the AAC on the matter. He noted that restrictions to accessory buildings such as barns may negatively impact the viability of farms. Mr. May then expressed support to retain existing regulations on the size of dwellings on agricultural land and was of the opinion that other factors such as infrastructure and accessibility can affect a farm's viability.



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Item No. 20 – Response to Referral: Additional Dwellings for Farm Workers and Direction on Limiting Residential Development in the AG1 Zone for Properties that are 0.2 Ha (0.5 Acres) or Larger

Gary Berar, 9571 No. 6 Road, spoke in favour of retaining existing regulations and expressed concern on the circulation of misinformation in the community. Also, he was of the opinion that real estate speculation occurs for all types of properties and that the proposed regulations may negatively affect a farm's economic viability.

Dale Badh, 2831 Westminster Highway, commented on (i) support for farmers, (ii) property assessment values compared to market values of agricultural land, and (iii) the taxation of agricultural land.

Humraj Kallu spoke in favour of retaining existing regulations and was of the opinion that further limitations on the size of dwellings on agricultural land may create economic uncertainty for farmers. Also, he commented on farming costs and noted that permitting a secondary dwelling on agricultural land benefits farm employees.

Ben Dhiman, 9360 Sidaway Road, commented on young farmers in the city and expressed support to retain the existing regulations. He was of the opinion that further restrictions on the size of dwellings on agricultural land may negatively affect the economic viability of farms. Also, he suggested that the City examine subdivision initiatives as reported in an article titled "Delta family finds creative housing solutions for two generations" from the May 4, 2018 edition of the *Vancouver Sun* (attached to and forming part of these minutes as Schedule 1).

Roland Hoegler, Richmond resident, commented on the history of the Agricultural Land Reserve and taxation of agricultural land. He expressed concern with regard to the on-going consideration of issues related to dwelling size on agricultural land and spoke on market values of agricultural land.

Kelly Greene, Richmond resident, expressed concern with regard to food security and the potential real estate speculation of agricultural land stemming from the development of large dwellings on such lands. Also, she commented on sustainable business models for farming, noting that property owners have the option to seek a variance if a larger dwelling is needed.



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Eddie Tan, Richmond resident, commented on (i) the costs of farming, (ii) support for local farms, (iii) land values in the city, and (iv) local stores sourcing produce locally.

Peng Ding, 6331 Buswell Street, spoke on the rising costs of farming and expressed concern that further reduction of the maximum dwelling size on agricultural land may negatively impact a farm's economic viability.

Tristan Tian, 4199 Magellan Place, commented on the costs of operating a farm, noting that larger dwellings and secondary dwellings may be required to accommodate extended family and farm employees.

Jeff Jiang, 3550 West 35th Avenue, Vancouver, stated that a large dwelling may be required to accommodate extended family and farm employees. He suggested that the City implement additional contribution requirements for farm developments that could be allocated for amenities and infrastructure in the city.

Doug Wright, 11540 No. 3 Road, spoke in favour of retaining current regulations and allowing home owners to determine the most suitable site for their septic field. He added that permitting a secondary dwelling would allow extended family to reside on site and increase the viability of the farm. Also, he noted that the proposed restrictions on the size the accessory agricultural structures may negatively affect farm operations.

Laura Leah Shaw, 12331 No. 3 Road, spoke on the preservation of agricultural land and its importance for food security. Also, she commented on new farmers' accessibility to agricultural land and suggested that the City implement requirements for longer-term farm leases.

Amar Singh, Richmond resident, expressed support for the farming community and encouraged the City to consider feedback from farmers. He added that he is in favour of retaining the current regulations and that a large dwelling on agricultural land accommodates extended family.



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Jora Bhullar, 6660 Sidaway Road, expressed support for retaining the existing regulations, noting that more time is required to evaluate their effectiveness. He added that since the adoption of the current regulations, the average size of dwellings on agricultural land has decreased and that enforcement of current bylaws is required to address any illegal activities that may take place on agricultural land.

Dustin Innes, [REDACTED] expressed concern that the proposed regulations may affect housing affordability and encouraged the City to support farmers.

- R18/9-5 4. It was moved and seconded
That Committee rise and report (10:47 p.m.).

CARRIED

CONSENT AGENDA

- R18/9-6 5. It was moved and seconded
That Items No. 6 through No. 17 be adopted by general consent.

CARRIED

6. **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

That the minutes of:

- (1) the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting held on April 24, 2018;*
 - (2) the General Purposes Committee meetings held on April 23, 2018 and May 7, 2018;*
 - (3) the Finance Committee meeting held on May 7, 2018; and*
 - (4) the Planning Committee meeting held on May 8, 2018;*
- be received for information.*

ADOPTED ON CONSENT



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7. MINORU CENTRE FOR ACTIVE LIVING INAUGURAL ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROJECT

(File Ref. No. 11-7000-09-20-204) (REDMS No. 5764707; 5692126)

That the concept proposal for the Minoru Centre for Active Living inaugural artist-in-residence project by artist Sylvia Grace Borda, as presented in the report titled "Minoru Centre for Active Living Inaugural Artist-in-Residence Project," dated April 4, 2018, from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services, be endorsed.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

8. ARTS UPDATE 2017

(File Ref. No. 11-7000-01) (REDMS No. 5791094)

- (1) That the staff report titled, "Arts Update 2017," dated April 5, 2018, from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services, be received for information;*
- (2) That the Arts Update 2017 be circulated to the Community Partners and Funders for their information;*
- (3) That the staff report titled "Arts update 2017" be forwarded to the next Council/School Board Liaison Committee for information; and*
- (4) That the Arts Update 2017 video be shown at the next Council meeting.*

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

9. HOSTING THE 2020 55+ BC GAMES

(File Ref. No. 11-7400-20-BCGA1) (REDMS No. 5802061 v. 10; 5807751)

- (1) That Richmond Sports Council's bid to host the 2020 55+ BC Games be endorsed;*
- (2) That \$60,000 from the Council Community Initiatives Account and a minimum of \$55,000 of in-kind services be committed to host the 2020 55+ BC Games should Richmond be awarded the event as detailed in the staff report, "Hosting the 2020 55+ BC Games," dated April 13, 2018 from the General Manager, Community Services; and*
- (3) That the Five Year Financial Plan (2018-2022) be amended accordingly.*

ADOPTED ON CONSENT



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10. **DRAFT COMMUNITY WELLNESS STRATEGY 2018–2023**
(File Ref. No. 01-0370-20-002) (REDMS No. 5784755 v. 9; 5792997 v. 2)

- (1) *That the Draft Community Wellness Strategy 2018-2023, included as Attachment 1 of the staff report titled “Draft Community Wellness Strategy 2018-2023,” dated April 5, 2018, from the General Manager, Community Services, be adopted for the purpose of seeking stakeholder and public validation of the strategy; and*
- (2) *That the Final Community Wellness Strategy 2018-2023, including the results of the stakeholder and public validation, be reported back to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee.*

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

11. **HOUSEKEEPING AMENDMENTS FOR TRAFFIC BYLAW NO. 5870; PARKING (OFF STREET) REGULATION BYLAW NO. 7403; NOTICE OF BYLAW VIOLATION DISPUTE ADJUDICATION BYLAW NO. 8122 AND CONSOLIDATED FEES BYLAW NO. 8636**
(File Ref. No.12-8060-20-009786/9787/9827/9829) (REDMS No. 5743877 v. 3; 5717774; 5713129; 5713137; 5716063)

That the following bylaws be introduced and given first, second and third readings:

- (1) *Traffic Bylaw No. 5870, Amendment Bylaw 9786;*
- (2) *Parking (Off-Street) Regulation Bylaw No. 7403, Amendment Bylaw No. 9787;*
- (3) *Consolidated Fees Bylaw No. 8636, Amendment Bylaw No. 9827; and*
- (4) *Notice of Bylaw Violation Dispute Adjudication Bylaw No. 8122, Amendment Bylaw No. 9829.*

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

12. **2017 CITY CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**
(File Ref. No. 03-1200-02) (REDMS No. 5804460; 5827301; 5693593)

That the City’s audited consolidated financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2017 be approved.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT



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13. **HOUSING AGREEMENT BYLAW NO. 9854 TO PERMIT THE CITY OF RICHMOND TO SECURE AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS AT 8511 CAPSTAN WAY AND 3360 NO. 3 ROAD (CONCORD PACIFIC)**
(File Ref. No. 12-8060-20-009854) (REDMS No. 5750265 v. 2; 5784969)

That Housing Agreement (8511 Capstan Way and 3360 No.3 Road) Bylaw No. 9854 be introduced and given first, second and third readings to permit the City to enter into a Housing Agreement substantially in the form attached hereto, in accordance with the requirements of section 483 of the Local Government Act, to secure the Affordable Housing Units required by the Rezoning Application RZ 17-769242.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

14. **APPLICATION BY THE RICHMOND HOSPITAL/HEALTHCARE AUXILIARY FOR A HERITAGE ALTERATION PERMIT AT 3711 AND 3731 CHATHAM STREET**
(File Ref. No. HA18-818536) (REDMS No. 5816205)

That a Heritage Alteration Permit, which would permit the construction of a new concrete foundation for the protected heritage building at 3711 and 3731 Chatham Street, be issued.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

15. **APPLICATION BY ORIS DEVELOPMENTS (HAMILTON) CORP. FOR REZONING AT 23200 GILLEY ROAD (PARCEL 1 HAMILTON VILLAGE) FROM “COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL (CC)” ZONE TO “RESIDENTIAL / LIMITED COMMERCIAL (ZMU35) – NEIGHBOURHOOD VILLAGE CENTRE (HAMILTON)” ZONE**
(File Ref. No. 12-8060-20-009764; RZ 16-754305) (REDMS No. 5811449 v. 3; 5787888; 5788221)

That Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 9764, to create the “Residential / Limited Commercial (ZMU35) – Neighbourhood Village Centre (Hamilton)” zone, and to rezone 23200 Gilley Road from “Community Commercial (CC)” to “Residential / Limited Commercial (ZMU35) – Neighbourhood Village Centre (Hamilton)”, be introduced and given first reading.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT



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16. **APPLICATION BY BENE RICHMOND DEVELOPMENT LTD. FOR REZONING AT 6560, 6600, 6640 AND 6700 NO. 3 ROAD FROM "DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL (CDT1)" TO "HIGH DENSITY MIXED USE (ZMU36) – BRIGHOUSE VILLAGE (CITY CENTRE)"**
(File Ref. No. 12-8060-20-009855; RZ 15-694855) (REDMS No. 5794819; 5801777; 5800979; 5788219)

That Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 9855, to create the "High Density Mixed Use (ZMU36) – Brighthouse Village (City Centre)" zone, and to rezone 6560, 6600, 6640 and 6700 No. 3 Road from "Downtown Commercial (CDT1)" to "High Density Mixed Use (ZMU36) – Brighthouse Village (City Centre)", be introduced and given first reading.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

17. **SECONDARY SUITES IN DUPLEXES**
(File Ref. No. 12-8060-20-009865; 08-4100-01) (REDMS No. 5627478 v. 2; 5678222; 5807390; 5806977)

- (1) *That Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 9865, to allow secondary suites as a permitted use in standard two-unit dwelling (duplex) zones, be introduced and given first reading;*
- (2) *That Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 9000, Amendment Bylaw 9864, to allow secondary suites as a permitted use in arterial road duplexes, be introduced and given first reading;*
- (3) *That Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 9000, Amendment Bylaw 9864, having been considered in conjunction with:*
 - (a) *the City's Financial Plan and Capital Program; and*
 - (b) *the Greater Vancouver Regional District Solid Waste and Liquid Waste Management Plans;*

is hereby found to be consistent with the said programs and plans, in accordance with Section 477(3)(a) of the Local Government Act;

- (4) *That Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 9000, Amendment Bylaw 9864, having been considered in accordance with Section 475 of the Local Government Act and the City's Official Community Plan Bylaw Preparation Consultation Policy 5043, is found not to require further consultation;*



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- (5) *That upon submission of a Building Permit application for construction of a secondary suite in a two-unit dwelling (duplex), staff is authorized to discharge any restrictive covenants on title limiting the use of the property to a maximum of two dwelling units; and*
- (6) *That Council Policy 5042 “Rezoning Applications for Two-Family Housing Districts – Involving Existing Non-Conforming Two-family Dwellings” adopted March 29, 2005, be amended to remove the requirement for the registration of a legal agreement limiting the use of the property to a maximum of two dwelling units.*

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

R18/9-7

It was moved and seconded
That the Council meeting of May 14, 2018 proceed past 11:00 p.m.

CARRIED

NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

**PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE –
Councillor Harold Steves, Chair**

- 18. **GILBERT ROAD GREENWAY PUBLIC ART CONCEPT**
(File Ref. No. 11-7000-09-20-225) (REDMS No. 5754558)

R18/9-8

It was moved and seconded
That the concept proposal and installation for the Gilbert Road Greenway public artwork “Wind Flowers” by the artist team Atelier Anonymous, as presented in the report titled “Gilbert Road Greenway Public Art Concept,” dated April 4, 2018, from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services, be endorsed.

The question on the motion was not called as discussion ensued with regard to the design and cost of the proposed artwork.



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The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED** with Cllrs. Au, Day and Steves opposed.

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE –
Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair**

19. **CANNABIS BYLAW FRAMEWORK AND REGULATION OF AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURES**
(File Ref. No. 08-4430-03-10; 12-8060-20-009861) (REDMS No. 5773205 v. 8; 5751212; 5772552; 5792017; 5757245)

R18/9-9

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *To implement the City's framework to regulate cannabis retailing, medical and non-medical (recreational) cannabis production, cannabis research and development and cannabis distribution in advance of the Federal legalization of cannabis:*
- (a) *That Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw 9000, Amendment Bylaw 9837, to revise and update the City's land use regulations and strategic management of cannabis related activities city-wide in Section 3.6.5 to Schedule 1 of the OCP, be introduced and given first reading;*
 - (b) *That Bylaw 9837, having been considered in conjunction with:*
 - (i) *the City's Financial Plan and Capital Program; and*
 - (ii) *the Greater Vancouver Regional District Solid Waste and Liquid Waste and Management Plans;**is hereby found to be consistent with the said programs and plans, in accordance with Section 477(3)(a) of the Local Government Act;*
 - (c) *That Bylaw 9837, having been considered in accordance with OCP Bylaw Preparation Consultation Policy 5043, is hereby found not to require further consultation;*



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- (d) *That Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 9838, proposing revisions to existing medical cannabis related regulations, new regulations for non-medical cannabis activities and other changes for cannabis related activities, be introduced and given first reading; and*
- (e) *That Consolidated Fees Bylaw 8636, Amendment Bylaw 9840, to add development application fees specific to cannabis related land use proposals, be introduced and given first reading;*
- (2) *That the costs and resources arising from the municipal response to the Federal legalization of cannabis contained in the report, dated April 18, 2018 from the Manager, Policy Planning and Manager, Community Bylaws and Licensing, be received for information and that staff be directed to pursue all Federal and Provincial cannabis related funding resources available and update Council as needed;*
- (3) *To protect the long-term viability of soil-based agriculture:*
 - (a) *That Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 9861, to regulate large agricultural buildings and greenhouses, be introduced and given first reading;*
 - (b) *Whereas Section 463 of the Local Government Act allows the withholding of building permits that conflict with bylaws in preparation;*

Whereas Council has granted first reading to a bylaw to preserve high-quality agricultural soils, through the regulation of construction methods for agricultural buildings and greenhouses;

Therefore be it resolved that staff bring all building permit applications for agricultural buildings and greenhouses in the Agriculture (AG1) zone, received more than 7 days after the date of first reading, forward to Council to determine whether such applications are in conflict with the proposed bylaw to preserve high-quality agricultural soils, through the regulation of construction methods for agricultural buildings and greenhouses; and



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- (c) *That a letter be sent to the Premier of BC, the BC Minister of Agriculture, and the BC Minister of Finance, with copies to all Richmond Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Third Party, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and the Chair of the BC Agricultural Land Commission requesting that the province impose a temporary moratorium on the use of lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve for cannabis production;*
- (4) *That a letter be sent to the Federal Minister of Health, Premier, Solicitor General, BC Minister of Health, BC Minister of Agriculture, and BC Minister of Finance, with copies to local Members of Parliament, Leaders of the Opposition Parties, Leader of the 3rd Party, and local MLAs, urging the need to define cannabis related revenues for the City; and*
- (5) *That the staff report be forwarded to the Agricultural Advisory Committee for their input prior to the June Public Hearing.*

The question on the motion was not called as discussion ensued with regard to (i) the City's regulations that limit the retail sale and production of cannabis, (ii) the potential conversion of greenhouses for cannabis production, (iii) consultation with the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) and other stakeholders regarding the use of accessory buildings on farmland, (iv) the proposed restrictions on accessory building size that may negatively impact a farm's economic viability, and (v) the timely introduction of regulations in order to respond to senior levels of governments' legislation on cannabis.

As a result of the discussion, staff were directed to consult with the AAC, other stakeholders and experts in the field of construction on the proposed agricultural building regulations.

In reply to queries from Committee, staff noted that should the proposed regulations proceed to first reading, staff would consult with the AAC and review the proposed regulations prior to their consideration at the Public Hearing scheduled for June 18, 2018.

As a result of the discussion, the following **referral motion** was introduced:

R18/9-10

It was moved and seconded

That Part (3) which reads as follows:

“(3) To protect the long-term viability of soil-based agriculture:



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- (a) *That Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 9861, to regulate large agricultural buildings and greenhouses, be introduced and given first reading;*
- (b) *Whereas Section 463 of the Local Government Act allows the withholding of building permits that conflict with bylaws in preparation;*

Whereas Council has granted first reading to a bylaw to preserve high-quality agricultural soils, through the regulation of construction methods for agricultural buildings and greenhouses;

Therefore be it resolved that staff bring all building permit applications for agricultural buildings and greenhouses in the Agriculture (AGI) zone, received more than 7 days after the date of first reading, forward to Council to determine whether such applications are in conflict with the proposed bylaw to preserve high-quality agricultural soils, through the regulation of construction methods for agricultural buildings and greenhouses; and

- (c) *That a letter be sent to the Premier of BC, the BC Minister of Agriculture, and the BC Minister of Finance, with copies to all Richmond Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Third Party, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and the Chair of the BC Agricultural Land Commission requesting that the province impose a temporary moratorium on the use of lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve for cannabis production;"*

be referred to staff to report back prior to the Public Hearing scheduled for June 18, 2018.

CARRIED
Opposed: Cllr. Day



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The question on the main motion, which now reads:

- (1) *To implement the City's framework to regulate cannabis retailing, medical and non-medical (recreational) cannabis production, cannabis research and development and cannabis distribution in advance of the Federal legalization of cannabis:*
 - (a) *That Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw 9000, Amendment Bylaw 9837, to revise and update the City's land use regulations and strategic management of cannabis related activities city-wide in Section 3.6.5 to Schedule 1 of the OCP, be introduced and given first reading;*
 - (b) *That Bylaw 9837, having been considered in conjunction with:*
 - (iii) *the City's Financial Plan and Capital Program; and*
 - (iv) *the Greater Vancouver Regional District Solid Waste and Liquid Waste and Management Plans;**is hereby found to be consistent with the said programs and plans, in accordance with Section 477(3)(a) of the Local Government Act;*
 - (c) *That Bylaw 9837, having been considered in accordance with OCP Bylaw Preparation Consultation Policy 5043, is hereby found not to require further consultation;*
 - (d) *That Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 9838, proposing revisions to existing medical cannabis related regulations, new regulations for non-medical cannabis activities and other changes for cannabis related activities, be introduced and given first reading; and*
 - (e) *That Consolidated Fees Bylaw 8636, Amendment Bylaw 9840, to add development application fees specific to cannabis related land use proposals, be introduced and given first reading;*
- (2) *That the costs and resources arising from the municipal response to the Federal legalization of cannabis contained in the report, dated April 18, 2018 from the Manager, Policy Planning and Manager, Community Bylaws and Licensing, be received for information and that staff be directed to pursue all Federal and Provincial cannabis related funding resources available and update Council as needed;*



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- (3) *[Referred back]*
- (4) *That a letter be sent to the Federal Minister of Health, Premier, Solicitor General, BC Minister of Health, BC Minister of Agriculture, and BC Minister of Finance, with copies to local Members of Parliament, Leaders of the Opposition Parties, Leader of the 3rd Party, and local MLAs, urging the need to define cannabis related revenues for the City; and*
- (5) *That the staff report be forwarded to the Agricultural Advisory Committee for their input prior to the June Public Hearing.*

was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

20. **RESPONSE TO REFERRAL: ADDITIONAL DWELLINGS FOR FARM WORKERS AND DIRECTION ON LIMITING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE AG1 ZONE FOR PROPERTIES THAT ARE 0.2 HA (0.5 ACRES) OR LARGER**

(File Ref. No. 08-4057-10; 084430-03-07; 12-8060-20-009848/9869/9870) (REDMS No. 5801334 v. 5; 5839434; 5840192; 5839803; 5838497; 5818289; 5818337; 5766488; 5770355; 5762445)

Materials regarding home size on agricultural land were distributed (attached to and forming part of these minutes as Schedule 2).

R18/9-11

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *That the staff report titled “Response to Referral: Additional Dwellings for Farm Workers and Direction on Limiting Residential Development in the AG1 Zone for Properties that are 0.2 ha (0.5 acres) or Larger” dated May 2, 2018 from the Manager, Policy Planning, and the staff report titled “Agriculturally Zoned Land: Summary of Public Consultation on Limiting Residential Development in the AG1 Zone for Properties that are 0.2 ha (0.5 acres) or Larger” dated March 13, 2018 from the Manager of Policy Planning (Attachment 6) be received for information;*



**Regular Council
Monday, May 14, 2018**

- (2) *That staff be directed to prepare a bylaw for the May 14, 2018 Regular Council Meeting based on Option 5A for revising the limits to residential development in the Agriculture (AG1) zone, with septic field outside the farm home plate in the report “Agriculturally Zoned Land: Summary of Public Consultation on Limiting Residential Development in the AG1 Zone for Properties that are 0.2 ha (0.5 acres) or Larger” dated March 13, 2018 from the Manager, Policy Planning;*
- (3) *That Official Community Plan Bylaw 9000, Amendment 9869, to amend the 2041 Official Community Plan policy to require an application for more than one (1) additional dwelling unit on agriculturally zoned land to go through a rezoning process, be introduced and given first reading; and that Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 9870, to allow one (1) additional dwelling in the Agriculture (AG1) zone with septic field outside the additional farm home plate, be introduced and given first reading;*
- (4) *That a letter be sent to the Premier of BC, the BC Minister of Agriculture, and the BC Minister of Finance, with copies to all Richmond Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Third Party, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and the Chair of the BC Agricultural Land Commission requesting that the Province review their policies on foreign ownership, taxation, providing greater financial incentives for farmers, and strengthening the Agricultural Land Commission’s enforcement actions for non-farm uses;*
- (5) *Whereas Section 463 of the Local Government Act allows the withholding of building permits that conflict with bylaws in preparation; and*
Whereas Council has directed staff to further review options on reducing house size and farm home plate area, determining septic field location in relation to the farm home plate, and establishing a house footprint regulation for all lots in the AG1 Zone on lots larger than 0.2 ha (0.5 acres):



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Therefore be it resolved that staff bring forward all building permit applications for residential development in the Agriculture (AG1) zone on properties 0.2 ha (0.5 acres) or larger, received more than 7 days after the passage of this resolution, to determine whether such applications are in conflict with the proposed bylaw to limit house size, farm home plate area, septic field location in relation to the farm home plate, and house footprint for properties zoned AG1 that are 0.2 ha (0.5 acres) or larger; and

- (6) *That the staff report and above recommendations be forwarded to the Agricultural Advisory Committee for their input prior to the June Public Hearing.*

The question on the motion was not called as discussion ensued with regard to (i) the current regulations related to dwellings on agricultural land, (ii) the use of a secondary dwelling in generational farms, (iii) a review of farm dwelling size regulations in other municipalities, (iv) the incorporation of Provincial guidelines on dwellings on agricultural land into the proposed regulations, (v) food security and the preservation of agricultural land, and (vi) the effect of the current regulations on the average size of dwellings on agricultural land.

There was agreement to consider Parts (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), and (6) separately.

The question on Part (2) of Resolution R18/9-11 was then called and it was **DEFEATED**.

The following **motion** was then introduced:

R18/9-12

It was moved and seconded

That Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 9848, including appropriate amendments, be introduced and given first reading, in order to revise the limits to residential development in the Agriculture (AG1) zone, with septic field outside the farm home plate in accordance with Option (1) in the report "Agriculturally Zoned Land: Summary of Public Consultation on Limiting Residential Development in the AG1 Zone for Properties that are 0.2 ha (0.5 acres) or Larger" dated March 13, 2018 from the Manager, Policy Planning, which limits house size to 500m² and a 60% maximum house foot print in accordance with Ministry of Agriculture guidelines.



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The question on the motion was not called as discussion ensued with regard to potential measures that may curb real estate speculation on farmland and instead encourage farming.

The question on Resolution R18/9-12 was then called and it was **DEFEATED** with Cllrs. Au, Dang, Johnston, Loo, McPhail and McNulty opposed.

The question on Part (1) of Resolution R18/9-11 was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

Discussion then ensued with regard to adjusting the proposed regulations to include non-contiguous provisions for secondary dwellings on farmland.

As a result, the following **amendment motion** to Part (3) was introduced:

R18/9-13

It was moved and seconded

That Official Community Plan Bylaw 9000, Amendment 9869, to amend the 2041 Official Community Plan policy to require an application for more than one (1) additional non-contiguous dwelling unit with a home plate which is not contiguous to the main dwelling home plate on agriculturally zoned land to go through a rezoning process, be introduced and given first reading; and that Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 9870, to allow one (1) additional dwelling in the Agriculture (AG1) zone with septic field outside the additional farm home plate, be introduced and given first reading.

CARRIED

Opposed: Mayor Brodie
Cllrs. Day
Steves

The question on Part (3) of Resolution R18/9-11, as amended, was then called and it was **CARRIED** with Mayor Brodie and Cllrs. Day and Steves opposed.

R18/9-14

It was moved and seconded

That Part (4) be amended to request that the Province review their policies on house size.

CARRIED



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The question on Part (4) of Resolution R18/9-11, as amended, which now reads:

- (4) *That a letter be sent to the Premier of BC, the BC Minister of Agriculture, and the BC Minister of Finance, with copies to all Richmond Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Third Party, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and the Chair of the BC Agricultural Land Commission requesting that the Province review their policies on house size, foreign ownership, taxation, providing greater financial incentives for farmers, and strengthening the Agricultural Land Commission's enforcement actions for non-farm uses;*

was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

Mayor Brodie noted that since the motion to consider Part (2) of Resolution R18/9-11 was **DEFEATED**, consideration of Part (5) of Resolution R18/9-11 was no longer required.

The question on Part (6) of Resolution R18/9-11 was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

21. GARDEN CITY LANDS PROJECT TIPPING FEES REVENUES – UPDATE

(File Ref. No. 06-2345-20-GCIT1) (REDMS No. 5781999 v. 7; 5348746; 5569401; 5790429; 5753254; 5348746; 5754728; 5787328; 5784805; 5474546; 5784808; 5784034; 5558017; 5554086; 5550066; 5595695; 5599772; 5695380; 5695383;)

R18/9-15

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *That the Chief Administrative Officer and General Manager, Community Services be authorized to enter into soil deposit agreements with private contractors for placement of soil required for the development and completion of the area currently licensed to Kwantlen Polytechnic University on the Garden City Lands (the "Lands") as detailed in the staff report titled "Garden City Lands Project Importation Fees Revenues - Update," dated April 20, 2018 from the General Manager, Community Services and provided the following:*



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- (a) That the protocols and quality control measures developed by the City and approved by the Agricultural Land Commission be implemented including testing at the source site, placement of top soil over subsoil and screening before placement on the lands to ensure that only the highest quality, uncontaminated material suitable for soil-based agricultural production be placed on the Lands;*
- (b) That the soil is sourced, to the greatest extent possible, from Richmond, Delta and Surrey; and:*
- (c) That importation fees charged to suppliers closely reflect current market values and are regularly updated;*
- (2) That all net revenues generated through tipping fees on the Lands be reinvested into the Lands for future project costs that are not eligible for Development Cost Charge funding, as detailed in the staff report titled "Garden City Lands Project Importation Fees Revenues - Update," dated April 20, 2018 from the General Manager, Community Services; and*
- (3) That staff work with Kwantlen Polytechnic University and others to explore alternate farming methods such as paludiculture and windrows for future farming on the Garden City Lands.*

The question on the motion was not called as discussion ensued with regard to alternative systems of planting such as those that utilize top soil or less fill.

Images depicting alternative farming methods were distributed (attached to and forming part of these minutes as Schedule 3).

In reply to queries from Council, staff noted that the exploration of alternate farming methods does not affect the overall Garden City Lands Master Plan.

The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED**.



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PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Brodie announced that the name “Lynas Lane” has been selected for the extension of the north-south road connecting Granville Avenue to Lynnwood Drive and the name “Lynnwood Drive” has been selected for the new road extensions that will connect the existing sections of Lynnwood Drive.

Mayor Brodie noted a Special Council meeting has been scheduled on Thursday, May 17, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. on the proposed modular supportive housing project at 7300 Elmbridge Way.

BYLAWS FOR ADOPTION

Please see Page 2 for action on this matter.

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT PANEL

- R18/9-16 22. It was moved and seconded
- (1) *That the minutes of the Development Permit Panel meeting held on April 25, 2018, and the Chair’s report for the Development Permit Panel meetings held on January 17, 2018 and January 31, 2018, be received for information; and*
 - (2) *That the recommendation of the Panel to authorize the issuance of a Development Permit (DP 17-774155) for the property at 11991 Steveston Highway be endorsed, and the Permit so issued.*

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

- R18/<#> It was moved and seconded
That the meeting adjourn (12:26 a.m.).

CARRIED



Regular Council
Monday, May 14, 2018

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Regular meeting of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Monday, May 14, 2018.

Mayor (Malcolm D. Brodie)

Corporate Officer (David Weber)

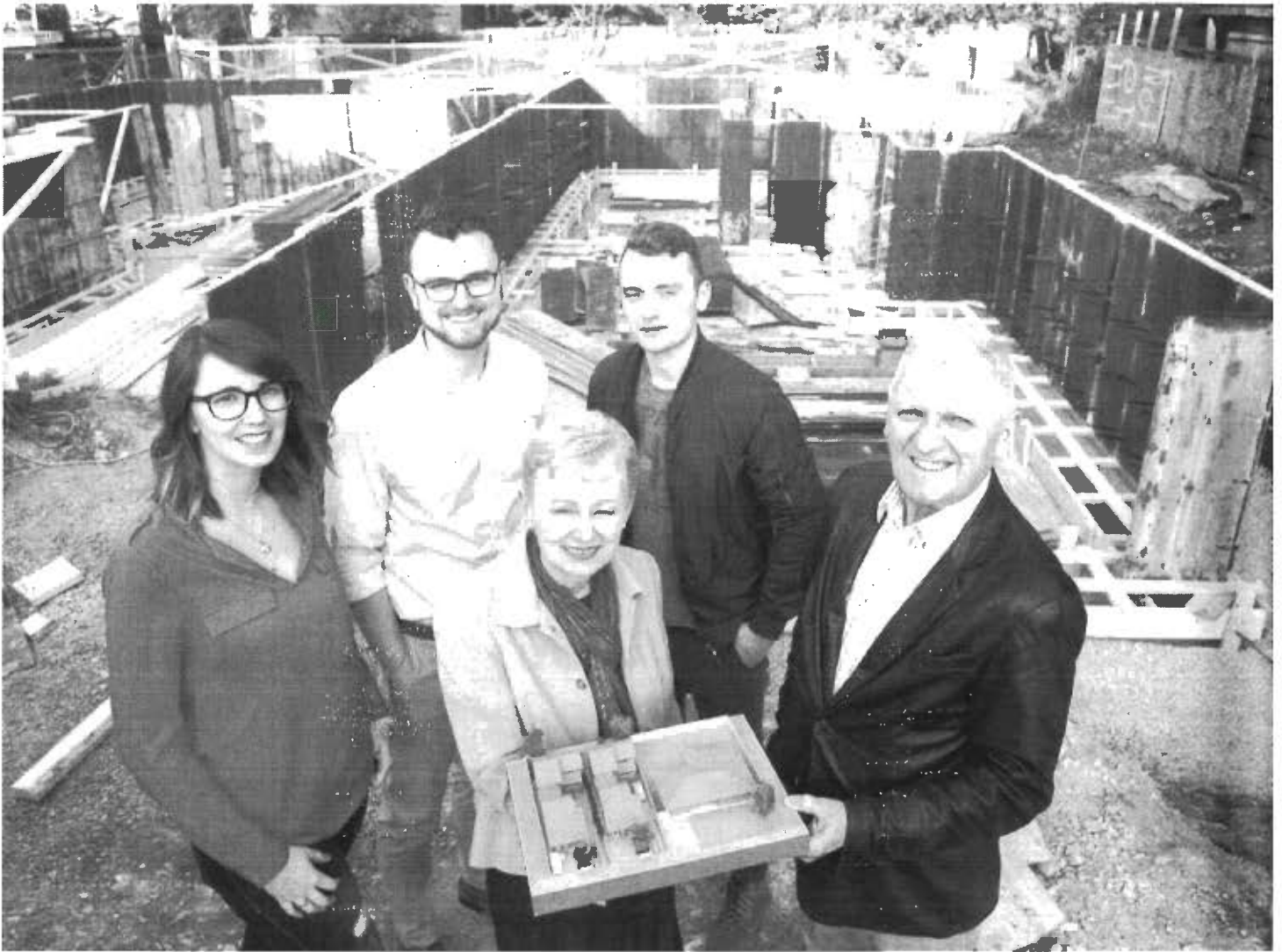
Delta family finds creative housing solutions for two generations



JOANNE LEE-YOUNG

[More from Joanne Lee-Young](http://vancouver.sun.com/author/joanneleeyoungsun) ([HTTP://VANCOUVERSUN.COM/AUTHOR/JOANNELEEYOUNGSUN](http://vancouver.sun.com/author/joanneleeyoungsun))

Published on: May 4, 2018 | Last Updated: May 4, 2018 3:45 PM PDT



John and Kathleen Higgins, parents of Patrick (back right) and James (back centre) with his wife Caitlin (left), at the former family property they are developing into four homes in Delta. GERRY KAHRMANN / PNG

Kathleen and John Higgins stand in front of a building site in North Delta with a cardboard model of the four homes their family is creating on the same single-family, suburban lot they have called home for three decades.

The 1970s rancher in which the couple raised their family has been demolished and the foundation is being poured for two new duplexes with a total of four units, each with its own land title.

Kathleen and John, who are in their 60s, will live in one unit, allowing them to stay in their neighbourhood instead of moving to a townhouse or condo elsewhere. Their sons, James and Patrick, who are in their 20s and facing the full brunt of the housing affordability crisis, will each own a unit. The couple also have a daughter who may be ready to own the fourth unit by the time the homes are finished next year.

“We saw that (the options for all family members were) either million-dollar houses or townhomes and condos with strata fees,” says Kathleen. “This is a new way.”

The City of Delta gave the Higgins family a unanimous green light to start the project in July 2016. Councillor Jeannie Kanakos said council’s decision to approve the proposal was based in large part on the Higginses being a family that had raised children in the community.

ADVERTISEMENT



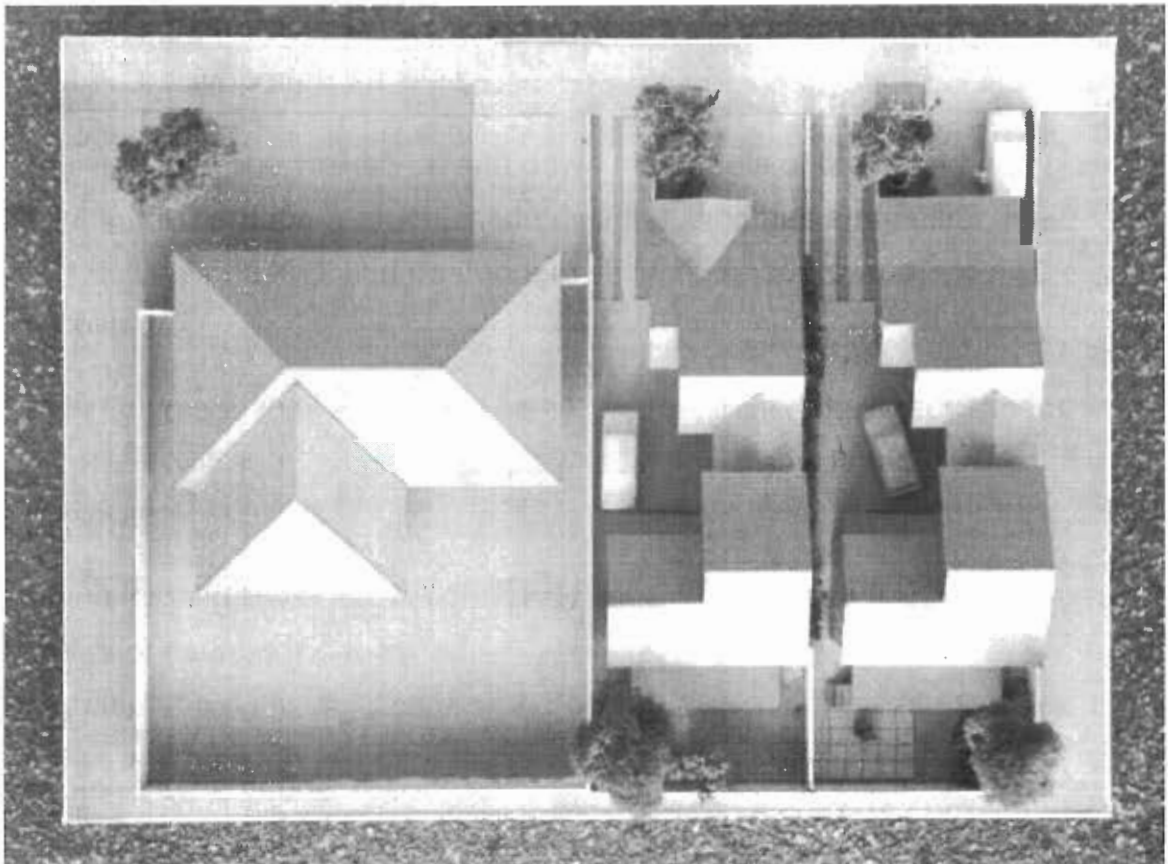
“I’m open to creative approaches to housing, especially given the housing market and housing costs for the next generation,” she says. “That was the thrust of their proposal.”

“But neighbourhood context is so important. Each application would have to be reviewed individually.”

Another significant factor in council’s decision to approve the project was that neighbours supported the plan.

Kathleen says she walked up and down the streets of the neighbourhood, carrying the cardboard model made by John, who has a master’s degree in architecture. She knocked on doors to show neighbours what they were proposing.

“They could see that ours would be 8.1 metres in height, versus the height of one big house at 9.5 metres. People liked it. They saw it had a lower profile,” she says.



The new homes are on the right of this model. The original home is on the left. GERRY KAHRMANN / PNG

The design of the project was key, says Kanakos.

“It’s very mindful of the impact. It’s not a massive construction, but a more modest development. We are hearing more complaints about (lack of) parking from people living in secondary suites,” she says. “All of these are issues when increasing density, but they were able to address them.”

After the project was approved, Kathleen and John’s first step was to add sons James and Patrick to their original land title.

“They had been living in rental basement suites and had never owned property,” says Kathleen.

The next step was to divide their single-family lot into two 33-x-100-foot lots. Each lot will have a duplex with two units — an 840-square-foot front unit and a 1,500-square-foot back unit — and two parking spots for each unit.

B.C. Assessment’s July 2017 figure for the property with its old ranch house was \$580,000. The bank’s appraisal for two lots with the two duplexes is just under \$900,000.

Each of the four units will have its own address and property tax bill. They will be registered in a strata, but there will be no monthly maintenance fees because the design of the project minimizes common property.

A close-knit family in which the different generations get along is key to the concept, and Kathleen says they “have built privacy into the plan that is more than what it might be in a townhome.”

Asked if he and his wife, Caitlin, have any concerns about the reality of living so close to his parents, James, 27, says: “It really hasn’t crossed my mind because I think we will benefit more by being close to them than they will from being close to us.

“We can go over for lunch,” he says with a chuckle. “I know. I am adult now. But we do get along.”

He sees many upsides in the arrangement.

“It means a whole lot, getting to stay and be part of the community. You can

make a home anywhere, but (it's about) getting to be with friends and family in close contact and having something that is my own to care for, compared to moving farther out or renting.”

The only issue, he says, is other people's perceptions about the downside of living so close to his parents.

“It's more just that we have to explain the situation. Even (for) my wife. She has to explain that, ‘Yes, I'll be living next door to my in-laws,’ but actually she's really fine with it.

“It's tough to say what our other options would be. Currently, it would be looking at (a townhome in) Maple Ridge or Abbotsford. ... When you look at prices going up, where you can afford (to live) keeps going further out.”

Although being a family was key to getting this project approved, Kathleen explains there are no restrictions if any of them should want to sell a unit. “It can be sold to an unrelated buyer, just like any other property.”

She says she asked provincial and federal government agencies to create tax credits to help cover pre-construction costs for projects like this, based on a stipulation that the builders keep the homes as their principal residences for at least 10 years. So far, she hasn't been successful.

There are other policies that she would like to see changed. Because they are building more than three units, the family had to pay a five-per-cent park fee of \$39,000 and a development cost charge of \$27,000. But because they are building fewer than five units, they can't qualify for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation seed funding that is available to developers of larger projects.

She asked CMHC if they would consider changing the requirement, but they refused.

With 10 months to a year until the project is completed, Kathleen says these have been the “pilot project pains. But the house (we had) was a 44-year-old rancher that would have needed to be extensively renovated. Or you can do

something like this.”

Patrick Condon, chair of urban design at the University of B.C.’s School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, who is a proponent of a so-called “missing middle” form of housing, says this is “exactly the right idea.”

“We have over a million individual parcels in the region, each one of them a candidate for gentle density without land assembly,” says Condon. “Family sizes are getting smaller too, so parcels that once had a family of six now have a family of two. It’s a good idea to get the population on each parcel back to what it was in the ’60s.”

Kathleen is keen to talk about her family’s experience because she believes it could be a template for others.

“There are acres of land with older people living in large, old homes,” she says.

She imagines a “registry of older people who have one big house who could connect with first-time buyers to work on a product that, in the end, is superior to a townhome or condo development.”

jlee-young@postmedia.com (mailto:jlee-young@postmedia.com)

TRENDING STORIES



Ω

Deranged man arrested and charged with... Downtown Vanco

A Vancouver man has been arrested and charged with...

Information Distributed to Mayor
and Council by Councillor
Carol Day

Mayor and Councillors

From: Hopkins, John
Sent: Friday, 1 December 2017 11:15
To: Mayor and Councillors
Subject: FW: Letter from Cambie

Schedule 2 to the Minutes of the Regular meeting of Richmond City Council held on Monday, May 14, 2018.

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: - TO: MAYOR & EACH COUNCILLOR / FROM: CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

November 30, 2017

Mayor Malcolm Brodie and Council

City of Richmond,

Richmond, BC

Dear Mayor and Council,

Re: House Sizes on Farmland

As you are aware, East Richmond has a very strong farming base and heritage. At our last meeting held on November 28, 2017, the Board of Directors of East Richmond Community Association (ERCA) raised the topic of fairly big houses being built on very productive farmland in Richmond. ERCA Board is very concerned about this development. After a thorough discussion on this subject, the following resolution was passed unanimously:

East Richmond Community Association (ERCA) is very concerned about the large houses being built on Richmond's productive farmland. ERCA would like to urge Mayor Malcolm Brodie and the City Council to set the house size limits being built or proposed to be built on farmland to a maximum size of 5,381 square feet consistent with the ALR regulations/ guidelines.

Will you please take this into consideration when making a decision in this regard?

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Balwant Sanghera

President

Copy to Councillor Chak Au



MLA calls for provincial action on ALR home sizes

Alyse Kotyk / Richmond News

MAY 10, 2018 09:19 AM



Minister of Agriculture Lana Popham during question period.

Earlier this week, an MLA from Vancouver Island called upon the provincial government to put an end to mega-homes on the agricultural land reserve.

Sonia Furstenuau, MLA for Cowichan Valley, asked during Tuesday’s question period for the government to take at least one measure to halt construction.

“Our agricultural land has been left unprotected from the forces of speculation and foreign capital. Monster homes are being built on prime farmland and farm prices are soaring well beyond the reach of our local farmers,” Furstenuau said.

“There are a number of tools this government could use immediately to put a stop to that speculation on ALR land and protect the future for young farmers in B.C.”

Furstenuau listed several of these potential tools including restricting foreign ownership of ALR land, applying for a speculation tax and foreign buyer tax for the ALR and creating “legally binding house-size limits to stop mega-mansions being built on prime farmland.”

Here in Richmond, council is expected to make a decision next week on home size restrictions on the ALR, after a general purposes committee voted to not only keep the maximum farmhouse size at the current 10,764 sq. ft., but also to allow an additional house to be built on the land without rezoning, at the general committee meeting.

Letter: Support food security for all in Richmond

Richmond News

MAY 12, 2017 10:42 AM



Anita Georgy, executive director of Richmond Food Security Society

Dear Editor,

Richmond Food Security Society is working to inspire a robust Richmond food system through education, advocacy, and community building initiatives.

As such we support strong regulations to limit the size of homes and the farm home plate on Richmond's ALR, and ensure farmland is used to produce food.

The City of Richmond recently endorsed the Richmond Food Charter, which was created through years of public engagement with hundreds of Richmond residents and community organizations. The Charter says that as a community we will use policy and regulations to strengthen the city's food security, work with all members of our community to ensure a food secure future, and preserve and strengthen land resources that support food production.

The bylaw amendments currently under consideration go against our city's commitment to food security. It will allow homes to be built on agricultural land that are more than twice as large as Ministry of Agriculture guidelines for Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) land. This will weaken Richmond's agricultural land base, contribute to increasing land costs, and set a precedent for neighboring communities to allow more residential development on agricultural lands.

For anyone concerned about this issue, please attend the public hearing on May 15 at 7 p.m. and make your concerns heard

Anita Georgy

Richmond Food Security Society

Metro Vancouver recommends B.C. limit house sizes on agricultural land



JENNIFER SALTMAN

[More from Jennifer Saltman](#)

Published on: April 6, 2018 | Last Updated: April 6, 2018 5:15 PM PDT

.MARK VAN MANEN / PNG

Metro Vancouver has recommended that the province restrict house sizes and residential footprints on agricultural land, in an effort to protect the region's dwindling supply of farm land.

The regional district has drafted a [list of guiding principles and priority actions](#) that, pending board of directors approval, will be sent to an advisory committee that is looking at how to revitalize the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). The committee is receiving feedback until April 30.

"I'm quite happy with the report because they've really put the onus where it belongs — on the province," said Harold Steves, a Richmond city councillor who is a director on the board and one of the founders of the ALR.

Limiting house sizes and residential footprints on farm land has been an ongoing concern in the Lower Mainland — particularly in Richmond, where last month council spent hours debating whether to further restrict house sizes.

Steves said leaving each municipality to put restrictions on the size of homes and footprints leads to complicated debate and inconsistent policies.

"I think it's the first problem the province should be dealing with," Steves said. "If a firm ALR rule is put in it will save us a lot of grief at the local government level."

The Metro recommendation, that has been made twice before, is to enact provincial regulations that put restrictions on the "home plate," which is the portion of a lot that includes the principal and any other residences, along with residential facilities. The restrictions would address house size, residential footprint location and size "to discourage the use of agricultural land for residential and commercial purposes."

Metro's report also suggests reforming the farm property tax policy to adjust the method for valuing agricultural land that is not used for farming, so that non-farm residential and commercial activities on ALR are paying similar taxes to those in urban areas.

"That loophole has to be fixed as well," Steves said.

The Metro submission says that the system currently "provides a financial incentive to locate a non-farm residential or business activity in the ALR."

Other recommendations include developing a two-tier farm classification benefits system that confers two different levels of tax benefits based on gross farm income, developing better legislation to deal with commercial uses on agricultural land, and maintaining ecological services on agricultural land using covenants.

The recommendations will go before Metro's board on April 27.

jensaltman@postmedia.com
twitter.com/jensaltman

On B.C.'s farmland, mega-mansions and speculators reap the rewards of lucrative tax breaks

Investors and speculators are taking prime agricultural land out of production – and sometimes erecting palatial mega-mansions on the landscape – as the B.C. government's outdated tax system allows them to exploit incentives intended only for those who farm. Kathy Tomlinson reports

KATHY TOMLINSON

RICHMOND, B.C.

PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 18, 2016 UPDATED NOVEMBER 12, 2017

Photography by Ben Nelms for The Globe and Mail

Bob Fisher shakes his head as he looks over at the palatial new building next door to his beekeeping operation. It was supposed to be a single-family farmhouse – approved as such by city hall – built on some of Canada's best farmland, in this suburb south of Vancouver.

Instead, it's a 23,000-square-foot mega-mansion – with Roman columns, a grand marble entrance and luxurious guest suites. It sits empty, on what used to be a blueberry farm, partially hidden by a hedge, waiting to receive guests.

"They took out an acre and a half from the original [9.9-acre] farm in order to accommodate that building," Mr. Fisher says.

"The government says we have to preserve farmland – and we are not preserving anything," he adds. "People are skirting around it, getting through the loopholes. I don't know how they are doing it – but they are."

Dozens of huge new mansions – some sitting empty – are changing the landscape of prime farmland in suburban Vancouver. Some are among the 122 agricultural properties in the area that changed hands for more than \$2-million – apiece – between August, 2015, and last July.

These farms sold for a total of \$449-million, while the province pegs their taxable value at just over one-tenth of that: \$52-million. That is because, under provincial law, the value of farmland is judged by how good the soil is, not what an investor will pay for it.

As part of its ongoing investigation into the real-estate market in B.C.'s Lower Mainland, The Globe and Mail has conducted a detailed analysis of those properties – their sales, tax, mortgage and ownership records. The results show that speculators and investors, not farmers, were behind at least 73 – almost 60 per cent – of the purchases.

The investigation also shows that those buyers enjoy huge tax breaks that are intended to support farming but, in effect, encourage speculation instead.

British Columbia law stipulates that agricultural properties with more than two acres can keep their farm status – and all their tax breaks – as long as they sell just \$2,500 worth of farm products a year. That can include Christmas trees or hay to the neighbours. A recent report shows that a quarter of farms in suburban Vancouver meet only those minimum requirements.

The day The Globe visited Mr. Fisher, no one was around next door, except a heavy-equipment operator ripping out blueberry bushes. The property is owned by Wenli Shan and Liqiu Leng, an investor couple from China, who paid \$3.4-million for it six years ago. No one responded when The Globe attempted to reach them.

Mr. Fisher says he has been inside the opulent building and talked to the contractors. He describes it as essentially a private luxury hotel where, he was told, the businessman owner will send special guests.

"He can say to his clients all around the world, 'You want to come to Vancouver? Here is a place to stay.'"

ASTONISHING TAX ADVANTAGES

Prices for suburban farm properties have soared in tandem with Vancouver's residential real-estate market, but without the public outcry. The Globe analysis shows that foreign and local buyers paid an average of \$3.7-million for each of the 122 parcels. They are property managers, realtors, developers and wealthy business people, including a tech entrepreneur and the owner of a car dealership.

Several are holding the land and leasing it out – for piecemeal farming – while, in some cases, applying to have it rezoned or taken out of B.C.'s Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), where it is protected from development. Others are building luxury mansions, then either not farming or keeping it to a minimum.

Metro Vancouver now estimates fully half of its agricultural land – ostensibly protected as such – is not being farmed at all. Half of that has rich, high-yield soil cherished by those who work the land. Even though B.C.'s Lower Mainland is heavily populated, the mild climate, quality soil and abundant precipitation make it one of the best places to farm in Canada.

The 122 properties have historically been used for fruit, vegetable, grain and livestock farming. Most of the land is in the ALR, where land use is severely restricted and taxes kept deliberately low.

As a result, the tax advantages the new investors enjoy are astonishing. The Globe discovered significant discrepancies between market prices for properties and the assessments set by a provincial agency that determines how much tax owners pay.

Taxing just these 122 properties at full residential rates, based on their sales prices, would put roughly another \$2-million in municipal coffers each year. Effectively, wealthy investors and speculators are receiving millions in tax breaks not meant for them.

Builders consulted by The Globe estimate that the facility next to Mr. Fisher's bee farm likely cost as much as \$8-million to construct – which, added to the \$3.4-million purchase price, would make the property worth an estimated \$12-million. But the land's assessed value – excluding the mansion – is just \$44,000. This year, the new building increased the tax bill to \$11,000, but a property worth the same amount in an urban neighbourhood would pay five times that.

Back in July, a B.C. numbered company linked to a Hong Kong firm registered in the Cayman Islands snapped up a piece of vacant farmland in suburban Maple Ridge for \$6-million – 33 times what the government pegs its value at. Five years ago, the same land sold for just \$15,200.

The company has Tony Cai, son of a politically connected billionaire from China, as its director, and this year will pay about \$5,300 in property tax, which includes a standard 50-per-cent break on school levies. By contrast, the tax bill for a residential property in the same municipality with the same market value would be roughly \$77,000.

The Globe found dozens of similar examples. In another startling case, a local company, Rosemary Developments, paid \$16.7-million for 10 acres of farmland east of Richmond in Surrey. Its tax bill this year: \$400. If the tax were on its full market value, the levy would be 196 times that. The property has been bought and sold several times in recent years. Previous investors include a foreign student.

In addition, agricultural land around Vancouver has just become even more attractive to overseas investors. That's because the province's new 15-per-cent real-estate tax on foreign buyers applies only to the selling price of the farmhouse; the land is tax-free. B.C. is also the only Western province that, like Ontario, doesn't restrict the amount of farmland foreign investors can buy. By contrast, Saskatchewan limits such purchases to 10 acres.

Guo Tai Shi is the type of investor who stands to benefit. He has built two mega-mansions on seven acres of farmland he owns in Richmond. One is 22,000 square feet and has five luxury suites. The other is half that size and still under construction. It will feature eight bathrooms, and at the rear, the rich soil is being removed to make room for a swimming pool.

Mr. Shi spends much of his time in China, but also owns companies in B.C., including Wonderful Hotel and Resort Management and Wonderful International Travel. Between 2009 and 2014, he spent \$17.5-million on real estate in the province, including two downtown penthouses, coastal land on West Vancouver's pricey Abode Island and Fox Island on the Sunshine Coast, as well as the two farmland parcels. The value of Mr. Shi's 13 properties, which have no mortgages, shot up by millions more during Vancouver's recent market frenzy.

Wendy Liang, who runs his travel agency, says that Mr. Shi's 22,000-square-foot Richmond mansion has five large suites, with "massage Jacuzzis"; three of the suites, she says, are currently rented out. Next summer, Ms. Liang plans to market the luxury accommodations to visitors from China, who will be invited to pick blueberries from the bushes that remain.

"It will be a boutique hotel. It will provide accommodations in luxury for the guests – agriculture tourism," she says. "People from China will like the authentic community experience. They want more about Canadian culture. It could be a special place for them to stay."

One of investor Guo Tai Shi's two mansions in Richmond. Wendy Liang, who runs Mr. Shi's travel agency, says she plans to market the luxury accommodations next summer to visitors from China.



Vancouver's recent market frenzy has boosted value of Mr. Shi's 13 properties, which have no mortgages.

The smaller of Mr. Shi's mansions is still under construction. He has invested millions to attract luxury agricultural tourism for visitors from China.

COMPLAINTS BUT NO FINES

This is happening despite the fact that land-use bylaws don't allow hotels on agricultural land. Mr. Shi's facility was recently inspected by bylaw officers, who suspected the suites were being rented out, which is illegal. When they arrived – after giving their standard, 24-hour notice – they found no tenants, so the owner faced no penalty.

Richmond councillor Carol Day says the city has received complaints about illegal suites at several addresses, but has yet to issue any fines because owners have promised to comply with the bylaw. Ms. Day says the new single-family farmhouses – large as they are – were approved solely as residences for owners and their families.

"There is no licence for having a hotel on farmland. It's not allowed. Period," she insists. "You have to be on land that is zoned for it. So you are never going to get a licence for a hotel on farmland. Not going to happen."

Mr. Shi's last tax bill for the property where he's building the eight-bathroom mansion was just \$4,867. That land has no crops whatsoever. Under provincial law, owners of unfarmed land located in municipalities are supposed to pay taxes based on market values. Even these tax bills remain low, however, because the province considers land in protected agricultural areas of low value.

"The system is broken," Ms. Day says. "It is not reflective of the market and, because of that, it is biased and unfair. You get [unpicked] blueberry bushes that are 12 feet tall. Cranberry fields that are not being maintained. This is good soil; it should be farmed."

By the numbers: Farmland sales in Metro Vancouver

Total for all open-market sales*

2005-06: \$81,233,526

2015-16: \$185,472,225

Average sale price

2005-06: \$369,243

2015-16: \$936,728

Lowest assessed property value

2015-16: \$34

Sale price: \$313,800

Highest assessed property value

2015-16: \$1,864,384

Sale price: \$3,680,000

***Excludes the roughly one-third of all transactions that are made for negligible amounts (\$1 or less), often between family members.*

Source: Landcor Data Corporation

Even on farms considered active, homes are supposed to be assessed on the basis of market value if they're in a municipality. However, the 23,000-square-foot mansion next door to Mr. Fisher is officially valued at just \$2.9-million, less than half of what it cost to build. Mr. Shi's blueberry farm "hotel" is also assessed at under \$3-million – far below its value.

The agency that does property assessments has indicated to The Globe that those taxes will likely be higher next year, now that construction is finished.

"The regulatory process seems very lazy," says Tsur Somerville, a real-estate analyst at UBC's Sauder School of Business who has studied the issue. "Everybody gets mad when rich people aren't paying their fair share. If we are screaming about money for education, this is money for education, left on the table."

Emily Liu and her husband, a home builder, invested \$3.38-million in a five-acre blueberry farm last year. The couple also has a multimillion-dollar Vancouver property whose taxes are \$8,071. Ms. Liu says they plan to build on the farmland – and the \$1,073 tax bill was a key attraction.

Mr. Bullock also supports tax reform, but says he'd rather see the province throw cold water on speculative investment altogether, by simply banning development on farmable land, unless it's required for public use.

"It needs serious updating," he says. "Somebody in government has got to stand up and say, 'When you buy farmland, that is what you are buying.'"

Kathy Tomlinson is a member of The Globe and Mail's investigative team, and prepared this report with files from freelance writer Xiao Xu.

Follow Kathy Tomlinson on Twitter: [@KathyTGlobe](#)

MORE FROM THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Schedule 3 to the Minutes of the Regular meeting of Richmond City Council held on Monday, May 14, 2018.



FINN ROAD BLUEBERRY FARM:

1 A well designed blueberry farm on Finn Road has been... 34



3. A water pump automatically pumps the water out of the field when it rains and the water level is too high. Berms keep the water from running back in.