

Schedule 147 to the Minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of Richmond City Council held on Monday, May 15, 2017 and Wednesday, May 17, 2017.

May 15, 2017

To Public Hearing
Date: <u>May 15, 2017</u>
Item # <u>7</u>
Re: <u>Bylaws 9706,</u> <u>9707, 9712, 9717</u>

Attn: Richmond City Councillors and Mayor

Re: **BYLAWS RELATED TO AGRICULTURALLY ZONED LAND**

The bylaw proposed, as amended by councillors, is completely unacceptable and not representational of the public consultation process. The real estate ads that we have seen for 12000 sq ft estate mansions built for "kings", marketed directly to the foreign buyer (see appendix a), will not be curbed by a slight reduction to 10,700 sq ft. To permit mansions of this size on farms larger than a mere 1/2 acre is in no way an improvement to the recognized problem. This bylaw merely condones and encourages further estate development, and a reduction to farming.

The Ministry of Agriculture Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas, herein after referred to as "the guidelines", states in Part 2 Page 16 "Bearing in mind that the priority use in the ALR is farming, permitted residential development should be no larger than that permitted in zones specifically set aside for residential development. The maximum farm residential footprint in the ALR should be LESS THAN or, at least, NOT more than that permitted in other zones of the community where the primary use is residential".

All of the small farms such as those along Blundell and Number 2 road, are very close to all the city services, schools, and parks. Farms such as these are the most vulnerable to exploitation as pointed out by the Ministry and recognized by Richmond city staff. These homes should not be any bigger than those in the nearby residential zones. 33 of the 47 building applications received in the last couple of months were for homes ranging from 13000 to 32660 sq ft. There are not 33 farmers, 33 families, or 33 large multigenerational families waiting for these homes to be built so they can purchase them for 15 million dollars, in order to make berry farming affordable. A one acre blueberry farm does not require farm help for harvest. These are being developed so that Richmond landowners can cash out and the investor won't have to pay tax. This is fraudulent activity. The reason the 15% foreign homebuyer tax doesn't apply to ALR land is because foreign investment is not supposed to happen on ALR, period. It isn't permitted at a price; it isn't permitted at all. If you are going to allow mansion development on small farms near the city centre you might as well take them out of the ALR so at least the owners will pay taxes; they are going to be useless for farming. This conflicts with Richmond's year 2041 Official Community Plan (OCP) which still shows those areas as reserved for farming.

One landowner stated that it wouldn't be fair to limit house sizes now, that if his neighbour is only allowed to build a 10000sq ft house next to his 20000sq ft house then we have homes of different sizes and it isn't visually appealing. If this were true, and varying home sizes were an issue, then how did we EVER allow these mansions to be built next to traditional farm homes and ranchers in the first place.?

(See Appendix B)

Councils inaction has created a divide and instability in our community, inevitably pitting one type of farmer against another, one resident against another. The owner of this farm said he is angry at city hall, not at the guy building the giant house. Even though it has blocked all of his morning light from his garden, that 100 ft of mature hedge was taken out, a loss of all privacy in his backyard. He said, "the city

allows it so of course he's going to build it." "Any developer is going to build the biggest house possible because they will get the most money. " It's up to City Hall to stop it, we cannot expect people to regulate themselves; development is fuelled by money and ALR is supposed to be protected from this.

One councillor stated she didn't feel it was the city's job to curb speculation. I have to tell you that it absolutely is your job. The Ministry of Agriculture expects you as local Government to be doing your job. See the guidelines Part 2 page 9, "The Minister's Bylaw Standards have been created to promote consistency among local governments in their treatment of farming activities and to minimize conflict around agricultural uses. All local governments are encouraged to incorporate these standards into their bylaws."

Section 2.4.6 page 14 - The purpose of the outlined criteria for regulating residential siting and size on farmland include:

"Minimizing the impact of residential uses on farm practices and farming potential in farming areas;
Minimizing loss and/or fragmentation of farmland due to residential uses; and
Minimizing the impact of residential uses on INCREASING COST of farmland."

It goes on to say (Section 2.4.6.5 Criteria) - "These criteria are recommended as the MINIMUM level of regulation by a local government. Local governments can choose to be MORE restrictive of residential uses in the ALR. Local Governments may choose to be less restrictive in areas outside of the ALR".

Curbing speculation, land affordability, farming viability - YES your job. This is what is expected of you by your taxpayers, your residents, your future farmers, your children, your provincial government, and your neighbouring municipalities. It is certainly not the councillors job to keep land values as inflated as possible to benefit a handful of people, who don't even pay taxes, to the detriment of everyone else's future. Agricultural land is a resource protected for all of us. Maximum house size is essential for keeping farmland affordable.

Another councillor stated he didn't understand the argument that we need the land to grow food when we import most of our food anyway. See guidelines part 1 page 5, "Currently BC produces the equivalent of about one-half of the province's food requirements. There is a tremendous potential to expand the Province's agricultural output so that it plays a greater role in feeding British Columbians and in enhancing the prosperity of farm families and communities across the Province".

The National Farmers Union of Canada produced a document to fight downgrading of ALR. It states "As British Columbia's, Canada's and the world's population grows and becomes increasingly urbanized, protecting farmland is more important than ever. Small and medium-sized farms are more efficient than large industrialized farms in terms of food produced per acre, and still grow and raise well over half of the world's food. In BC 98% of farms are family farms.

" BC has a rich heritage of farming and a vibrant culture of agriculture. Many young people in BC aspire to make farming their life's work and if there is accessible, affordable land, they will grow healthy,

nutritious food to feed BC's -- and Canada's -- future residents. All of these values and aspirations depend on ensuring that the continuing existence of BC's farmland is a top priority."

We are growing a lot of food on small farms and we have the ability to grow more if we keep farmland affordable. An agricultural expert from UBC on CKNW radio two weeks ago shared that in order to feed the population of the world by 2050 we have to increase our global food production by 70%. DO NOT minimize the value of even the smallest parcel of ALR land!

The people of Richmond, your taxpayers, choose to live in Richmond because of its many wonderful qualities. For some of us it is the history of farming and a beautiful farming landscape and the hope of being a farmer one day. 74.1 % of your residents wanted size limitations on farmland similar to neighbouring communities and the guidelines.

Your "made in Richmond" solution was presented by City Staff after their thorough consultation with the public, the guidelines, and all of the factors analyzed that make Richmond unique and special. That should have been it at 5382 sq ft as it represented what Richmond wanted as well as aligned with Provincial regulations and Richmond's OCP. Council doubling the recommendations for house size and changing setback and septic requirements on the fly, was a move that seemed driven by merely a desire to keep a few influential people happy, and not at all to the benefit of the community or farming as a whole. This is not how sound policy is made. We expect more of you, and urge you to accept the work done by city staff and the Ministry of Agriculture. To do anything else is a vote against farming, and sends a message to other municipalities to do the same. The rules are there for the intention of all local Governments to follow. We don't have the right to make up our own rules for agricultural land.

Purchasing agricultural land has restrictions, and the primary purpose of the parcel is farming. The benefit to the farmer for the hard work of providing food is a reduction in taxes. We do not owe it to the farmer to cash out for development; that is not the intention of ALR land. The mistakes and leniencies of the past cannot continue to shape our future. We need you to enforce the Minister's MINIMUM limit of 500m² or 5382sq ft for farms UNDER 20 ACRES and MAXIMUM setbacks of 60m, as per the guidelines. We demand appropriate, sustainable farm house sizes to retain our land for future generations of farmers and food production for our citizens and the world.

Laura Gillanders

Appendix A



6571 NO 7 Road, Richmond, British Columbia V6W1E8

\$2,770,000

MLS® Number: C8012023

Property Type	Land Size
Agriculture	173630

Description

Don't miss this chance to build a real mansion 25 min from Richmond Downtown. This quiet and secluded around 4 acre parcel is waiting to be developed into an estate proper for a king. Building plans for a 12,000 sq ft English mansion have been approved by the city before bylaws were changed to curb large homes on ALR land. The house boasts a 6 car garage, a 24 seat theatre, and 9 bedrooms, 10 bathrooms, 22' ceilings, and large glass windows looking out into the 1000 feet long back yard. Set up your own private driving range, build a swimming pool, a cabana, or a tennis court if's all permitted on ALR land. Subdivide potential. "DOUBLE EXPOSURE, ALSO AVAILABLE AS RED, #R2160773"

Details

Farm Type	Zoning Description
Other	ALR

Data provided by Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, 2422 Spence Street, Vancouver British Columbia V6H 4C8

All information displayed is believed to be accurate but is not guaranteed and should be independently verified. No warranties or representations are made of any kind.



Appendix B



