

Mayor and Councillors

Schedule 26 to the Minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of Richmond City Council held on Monday, May 15, 2017 and Wednesday, May 17, 2017.

To Public Hearing
Date: MAY 15, 2017
Item # 7
Re: Bylaws 9706, 9707, 9712, 9717

From: Webgraphix
Sent: Monday, 8 May 2017 15:35
To: Mayor and Councillors
Subject: Send a Submission Online (response #1016)

Send a Submission Online (response #1016)

Survey Information

Site:	City Website
Page Title:	Send a Submission Online
URL:	http://cms.richmond.ca/Page1793.aspx
Submission Time/Date:	5/8/2017 3:36:50 PM

Survey Response

Your Name	Debra
Your Address	10900 No. 3 Road
Subject Property Address OR Bylaw Number	9000; 9706; 8500; 9707; 9717
Comments	<p>As a lifelong Richmond resident, I have taken a great deal of pride (and responsibility) in our "Island City by Nature". For five decades plus. It is "home" to me but recent changes have it feeling anything but. My voice is no longer heard it seems, but that needs to change. Growing up in Steveston, all we really knew was farming and fishing... two industries currently being threatened by the invasive nature of development and "change". Change isn't always for the better and I apply Joni Mitchell's Big Yellow Taxi... in particular, "you don't know what you've got till it's gone, they paved paradise..." part. I've always known what we've had here - it's unique, and needs protecting and preserving. Sustainability is a huge issue with our ever changing climate and we must have goals that protect our agricultural land. With that, "farming" is nothing to take for granted, nor exploit. People viewing farmland as a quick ticket to cash in and out with are a very real threat. Under the guise of "needing" to do this or that, they are lobbying to</p>



change things and destroy what is in the best interests of the farm. If farmland doesn't offer what is on their checklist, perhaps farming isn't for them? Farming involves a certain kind of lifestyle...you have to be in tune with the land and committed to protecting it. Some of what we're currently seeing is in direct contrast with that. Opportunity to buy farmland comes with a responsibility. The current drive to turn farmland into real estate is irresponsible and does NOT sit well with the locals or those who do value it. People arguing that this is their land to decide upon must recognize that owning land isn't a free pass to do as you like with it. There are rules of all sorts to consider when purchasing land. I want to have 25 bunnies in my condo, but there are reasons stating why I cannot. Some want to use their land as a junk pile to store old appliances on in the front yard...again, we have rules in place to prevent that. So farm land is not exempt from also having rules and guidelines in place and, with it, comes a responsibility to "use" the land AS farmland....not use the farm to build something different around. Why should farmland be any different than any other property that has bylaws and, by way of that, community interests at heart? Why are we making the rules to suit those buying property vs demanding that those buying property accept some rules as part of their purchase? A farmer does not "need" a 40 room mansion, no one really does. This is "want" we're looking at, not need. We're seeing palaces built on farmland...sprawling villas that are in stark contrast to actual farm houses of the past. We had a quaint, quiet community here once....but these mansions are intrusive and no longer offer a sense of knowing the neighbours or feeling at home any longer in Richmond. Large spiked gates that scream DO NOT ENTER. "PRIVATE CLUB" are different than long, gravel driveways that had people coming and going. Luxury cars are in place, not tractors. These fortresses fool no one. This isn't "farming". I say to those who claim a need for a 40 room home for "cultural, generational and family" reasons that perhaps farmland isn't suited for them? That their needs aren't about farming, first and foremost but are focused on other things? You don't change farming to meet the needs of the family...you assess whether the family is suited to farming (and living in a farmhouse). No family needs a theatre, tennis courts and bowling alley. That family needs a resort, not a farm. If ever there was a time of discontent, it is now. But you have the power to turn things around...to pull on the reins and make sure that every generational family is considered. Mine has been here for 4

generations, and that should count for something. We've managed just fine, despite living in small homes. For it makes a family closer. Don't bite the (agricultural) hand that feeds you or buckle to the demands of those who are putting farming lower on the list than it needs to be. After cultural, generational and other priorities that, in essence, prove that it isn't a farmhouse they're after...it's much different. In the event that you do give way to those screaming for farmhomes that sprawl across the land. please change the name of this city so we're no longer false advertising: "Island City by Development". I also implore that, in the event that you do buckle to the pressure you're facing (which is never reason alone to do so) that, at the very least, you ensure that records are submitted that prove that generational families are, in fact, living in their mansions to substantiate this "need" for them? I also suggest that we do away with property tax breaks for those families on farms valued in the millions. Because tax breaks aren't needed for those living in mansions. We'll expect that those things are in place to ensure "farm" mansions aren't enabling people to exploit benefits and support that is intended for farmers, not people living on farmland. Lastly, a "no resale" clause for these generational homes (that should play out as such...over generations). If we're going to cater to these demands, I'd want to know that these families are committed to farming the land for a contracted period of time to avoid speculation and flipping that strips us of this valuable land. Anyone in protest of that demonstrates an agenda that is likely different than the one their argument is based on.