

Schedule 78 to the Minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of Richmond City Council held on Monday, May 15, 2017 and Wednesday, May 17, 2017.

Mayor and Councillors

From: De Whalen <de_whalen@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, 12 May 2017 10:59
To: CityClerk; Woo, Gavin; Crowe, Terry; Mayor and Councillors
Subject: Public Hearing-ALR house sizes
Attachments: Public Hearing_Mega houses on ALR May 15, 2017.docx

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

May 12, 2017

City of Richmond Staff and Council:

Please see attached my submission to the public hearing on May 15, 2017. Thank you for including it with Council's package. Please also add me to the speakers list, thanks,

De Whalen
604.230.3158

"Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can quietly become a power no government can suppress, a power that can transform the world." Howard Zinn, 2010



My name is Deirdre Whalen and I live at 13631 Blundell Road. I live on a small 1.3 acre property in the Agricultural Land Reserve. I would like to speak on the proposed bylaw 9706 concerning house sizes on various acreages in the Agricultural Land Reserve in Richmond.

I spoke on this issue in 2010 and again in January 2017. In 2010 I started seeing modest farmhouses being torn down in my neighbourhood and large houses being built on large acreages. They either ended up standing empty, were put up for sale immediately after construction, or were used to house small families with no intention of farming.

A few years later even bigger houses with coach houses on the same property started appearing. At that time I asked the Planning Department what was happening and was informed properties on all arterial roads were now able to build a coach house in addition to a main house. When I informed them that basically ALL roads in farmland are arterial roads, they seemed surprised. As a result, now you can have two residences on farmland where only one was allowed before the coach house rule was brought in. These ALR coach houses have no bus access and do not fill the need for affordable stock. But they do enhance the property value for speculation.

And so, here I am again speaking to you. In 2017 my ALR neighbourhood is filled with mega houses and coach houses where little to no farming is conducted. The proposed bylaw 9706 does nothing to encourage farming. But it does allow landowners to speculate on their properties and hope the ALR will no longer be an impediment to cashing in.

Each mega house that is built in the Richmond ALR ensures that the home plate at least, is effectively moved out of the ALR without going through the traditional channels under the Agricultural Land Commission. Add to this the exemption of ALR properties from the Foreign Buyers Tax and you have set up a perfect way for speculators to eliminate all the farmland in Richmond.

Finally, the proposed bylaw in effect doubles the BC Ministry of Agriculture guidelines that limits house sizes. I would hope that a Ministry's guideline was meant to guide municipalities not have municipalities ignore them. As well, the proposed bylaw gives landowners two more exceptions so they can increase house size even beyond the City's bylaw limits. The bylaw makes a mockery of the words 'guideline' and 'limit.' There is no guideline. There are no limits. This bylaw only means business as usual.

In closing, I would urge Richmond city Council to:

- Count coach houses as residences on farm home plates,
- Advocate to the provincial government to add ALR properties to the Foreign Buyers Tax,
- Enact a bylaw that is congruent with the BC Ministry of Agriculture guidelines, and
- Eliminate the exceptions criteria under the proposed bylaw.

Thank you

Deirdre Whalen
604.230.3158