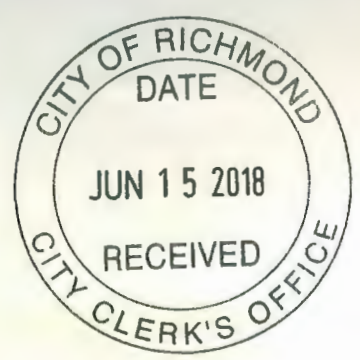


Schedule 12 to the Minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of Richmond City Council held on Monday, June 18, 2018.

# BRIEFING BOOKLET

# FUTURE OF FARMING





# RICHMOND FARMLAND

OWNERS ASSOCIATION

The Richmond Farmland Owners Association is made up of over 80 Member Families that own over 2500 acres of farm land in Richmond.

We are passionately dedicated to the agricultural integrity of the place we call home, and are dedicated to the sustainable and pragmatic stewardship of both Richmond's farmland, and its farmers.



Richmond Farmland Owners are currently growing their membership by bringing in a diverse group of people who support farmers and farming.

## BACKGROUND

In May 2017, the Richmond Farmland Owner's Association worked with City Council, Pioneer Farming Families and Local Community Groups to create new policies to reduce house sizes on our farmland.

After extensive and thorough consultation with the farming community, the City of Richmond adopted a policy to reduce the size of homes that can be built on farmland.

The policy set out of the following:

- On properties of up to 0.5 acres in size, homes of up to 5382 sqft may be built
- On properties sized greater than 0.5 acres, the maximum home size cannot exceed 10,763 sqft

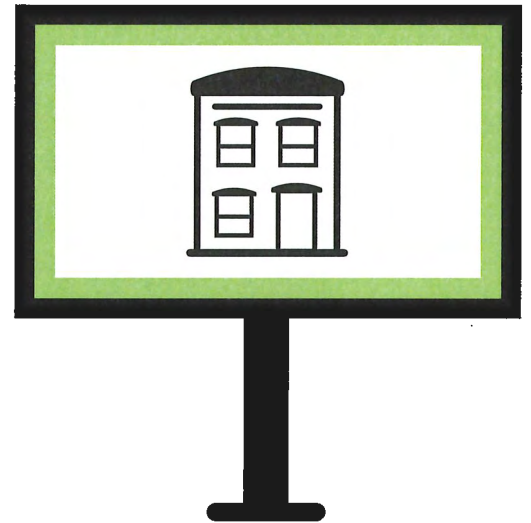
In February 2018, Council brought this issue back to impose further restrictions on house sizes without seeing the true effects of the existing by-law. The Richmond Farmland Owners Association then worked with the farming community and stakeholders to educate council and the public on modern day farming and the impact of any further restrictions.

Upon concluding their advocacy campaign, the Farmland Owners association with the support of some council members was able to keep the current by-law in place till it's true effects can be seen.

## ISSUE

Due to the results of the housing debate, many groups including certain councillors who advocated for further restrictions on house sizes on farmland have now brought up another issue with which they are trying to save face but the farmers are again the collateral damage - Further restrictions on Farm Structures and Buildings.

Council and Staff have dangerously expedited this issue while ignoring the farmer's right to farm, ignoring the recommendations of the City's Agricultural Advisory Committee and not consulting with experts and stakeholders who will be directly impacted by the proposed changes



## PROTECTING FARMERS RIGHTS

There is a long history of farming in this country, and we often cling to romanticized notions of simplicity, struggle, and sacrifice. In today's modern world, this idealized image of farming is no longer true, nor is it feasible.

By engaging in a defensive approach to law making which is not based on evidence, Council's actions are directly affecting farmers by creating economic uncertainty within the local farming community, and putting it's long-term sustainability at risk.

There are serious financial implications for Farmers if they are forced to go through a rezoning process. This process involves astronomic fees and months for the process to conclude from which the final decision might still be a refusal. This would make farmers jump through more unnecessary hoops at a very high cost to themselves and their businesses.

Council has ignored Right to Farm legislation. Council has ignored the recommendation of the AAC. Council has not consulted the ALC and the Richmond Farming Community.

By not consulting with experts that have first hand knowledge and will be directly impacted by these changes, council is making reckless decisions that will have very real negative impacts on Richmond's farming community.

This situation is creating economic uncertainty within the local farming community, and putting its long-term sustainability at risk.

## FUTURE OF FARMING

There is a long history of farming in this country, and we often cling to romanticized notions of simplicity, struggle, and sacrifice. In today's modern world, this idealized image of farming is no longer true, nor is it feasible.

Future farming is not exclusively soil-based and is increasingly automated and indoor.

Greenhouses and controlled environments provide a disease free environment which mitigates risk to the environment and provides year round and stable employment to their workforce

Greenhouses and controlled environments supported by modern farming technologies will ensure sustainable and year-round production of disease free food.





# GREENHOUSES - SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

The City of Richmond is attempting to regulate large farm buildings and greenhouses by prohibiting the use of concrete slab floors in agricultural buildings over 300 sqm and in greenhouses of any size.

We all believe (a) the future for many agricultural commodities is in greenhouses, (b) the most efficient and effective greenhouses are those with concrete floors and (c) imposing a ban on concrete will unfairly prejudice Richmond farmers and undermine the economic viability of their businesses, families, workers and local suppliers who serve them:



- Many large food distributors require concrete floors before they'll accept a farmer as a supplier
- Concrete floors provide a higher degree of worker safety than dirt or other surfaces
- They are the best form of flooring for bio-security, productivity and food safety reasons
- They do not require the same level of maintenance and repair as dirt or other surfaces
- Several regulatory bodies have made concrete floors mandatory for certain products
- Concrete floors reduce wear and tear on farm machinery
- Concrete contributes to water use efficiency through better rates of recapture
- Concrete prevents pesticides and herbicides from leaching into the soil.



This debate was sparked by concerns of food security and stability and we whole-heartedly support measures and policies that will increase food security and sustainability, especially with the current economic uncertainty that has been created with a looming trade-war with our biggest trading partner.

Greenhouses and other controlled environments supported by modern farming technologies will ensure sustainable and year-round production of disease free food, increasing food security and stability

## WHAT THE EXPERTS HAVE TO SAY

*"Canada is at the vanguard of an agricultural revolution. Farm of the future will be better for the environment "*

**-Evan Fraser of the Arrell Food Institute**

"The future of farming in Canada is high tech and low impact"

**- CBC News, November 2017**

"Greenhouses only take up 0.01% of BC's farmland, but produce 11% of BC's total agriculture production"

**- BC Greenhouse Growers' Association**

*"If food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world"*

**- Macleans Magazine, 2015**

"Technology and science will be the drivers to enhance our social licence and entice consumers to our food - Intensive farming reduces agriculture's overall footprint and allows for an increase in set-aside lands such as grasslands and forages that are huge carbon sequestrers."

**- Brenda Lee Schoepp, Former Director of Farm Credit Canada**

"Local greenhouses may be a viable answer to the problem of food accessibility in the north."

**- VICE News, 2017**



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