

**ON TABLE ITEM**

Date: December 17, 2018  
Meeting: PUBLIC HEARING  
Item: 5

Schedule 40 to the Minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of Richmond City Council held on Monday, December 17, 2018.

**MayorandCouncillors**

**From:** Greene, Kelly  
**Sent:** Monday, 17 December 2018 12:47  
**To:** Steve Bridger  
**Cc:** MayorandCouncillors  
**Subject:** Re: House size on Farmland

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

Hi Steve,

Thank you very much for your well researched and thoughtful letter. I'm not sure if it was distributed to the entire council for their consideration prior to tonight's public hearing, so I've CC-ed the council's mailbox to be sure.

Thanks for being an active and engaged citizen!

Best regards,

Kelly

Kelly Greene  
Richmond City Councillor

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On Dec 17, 2018, at 9:49 AM, Steve Bridger <[steve.bridger@telus.net](mailto:steve.bridger@telus.net)> wrote:

Dear Councillor Greene,

The remaining rich alluvial soil within our city is so scarce, so valuable, and so important to the future of all of us that I am urging you to vote in favour of the smallest residential incursion on farmland, the 400 m<sup>2</sup> (over 4300 sq ft) house size option.

That this is the best produce-growing land in BC, and possibly in Canada, is beyond doubt. It was also obvious to the early settlers of Richmond 136 years ago. I quoted them to the *News*, with passages written by knowledgeable Richmondites for the 1882 BC Directory. They wrote, "It is perhaps to the cultivation of root crops that these delta lands are specially adapted. Even with comparatively careless cultivation enormous yields are realized." They wrote of "advantages of situation, with a soil wonderfully fertile and practically inexhaustible."

But the *News* did not include other interesting statements about this farmland. I am including what I sent them at the bottom of this email, if you feel like seeing the opinion of record in 1882.

**Why do Richmondites care about this?**

Common sense. People just drive by ridiculously large palatial estates on farmland and common sense tells them there's something wrong with the picture. That is why so many Richmond voters have woken up to how wrong the free-for-all on our farmland has been.

People increasingly know again what was known 130 years ago, that wonderful and affordable local produce is here because of the soil of Richmond. They know that the best restaurants in Metro Vancouver rely on the bounty of this soil. They know that the future and the quality of produce imported from afar are very limited.

### **How just is it to place restrictions on house size?**

Preserving BC's farmland was not a decision of a group of farmland owners large or small, but of the whole electorate of BC. The preservation policy was enacted by a BC government decades ago but all governments have chosen to keep it in place, most notably the Campbell and Clark BC Liberal governments who explicitly endorsed farmland preservation and kept the ALR. They knew that the vast majority of BC'ers want the long-term food security that farmland preservation gives us.

The policy of recognizing the value of this soil and so keeping as much of it as possible available for farming, letting as little as possible go under residential construction, is comparable to other government actions for the general good. The radio wave spectrum for instance was not left up to free-for-all uses. Air space is controlled on behalf of all of us. Road safety is maintained by restrictions on individual drivers, including license and insurance requirements. Financial probity is enforced by government regulations. And general security of property and persons means government has to enforce many laws via the policing and justice system. Likewise there is every reason to look out for the country's long-term food security and to guard against the loss of the country's richest soil.

It is essential that Richmond takes this step to be seen as a leader in farmland preservation, no longer bowing to developer and real estate interests. There is no need to allow all ALR land owners to build a mansion, as bonafide farmers have always had the option to apply for a larger home through the Agricultural Land Commission.

### **What about the house size?**

The newly-proposed house size limit is and has always been the appropriate farmhouse size for Richmond to reduce speculation on agricultural land and to divert residential uses to city lots, as it is in line with the maximum house sizes on Richmond's city lots.

Please keep in mind what is at stake here and vote for the 400 m<sup>2</sup> house size.

Steve Bridger

Richmond

### **For added interest: from the BC Directory 136 years ago:**

...It is perhaps to the cultivation of root crops that these delta lands are specially adapted. Even with comparatively careless cultivation enormous yields are realized, and an accurate statement of what this land will do in this respect, would sound like romance.

...The cost of thoroughly dyking a farm on these lands would be much less than the cost of clearing a farm in the "bush."

... The municipality of Richmond has all the ordinary municipal machinery in full working order. Taxation is light and the revenue about \$2000 per annum is expended on local improvements.

...Being an island settlement the residents depend almost entirely upon the river for their means of intercommunication and the river is also their main highway.

...The municipality also boasts, so far, of a cheese factory and one public building, a Town Hall (used also as the public school) which is a centrally situated on the north shore of Lulu Island.

The resident population is a little under 200. The general character of the settlement is an enviable one. Its people are eminently peaceful and law-abiding and have a reputation for hospitality, neighborliness and unanimity in public matters. ...After harvest, in the stubble fields and on the north or Mainland shore of the river, deer and grouse are tolerably plentiful, and bear and panthers [i.e., cougars in 2018 terms] are to be met with occasionally. There, too, rabbits are becoming quite numerous. Perhaps no district in British Columbia has been more uniformly or steadily prosperous than this. It would be easy to make quite a list of names of settlers who, beginning with little capital, are now in comfortable, or more than comfortable circumstances. Situated within an easy distance, by water, of New Westminster, Burrard Inlet and Nanaimo, the settlers have always a market for their produce. With such advantages of situation, with a soil wonderfully fertile and practically inexhaustible, and an equable and health-giving climate, it is easy to foretell a prosperous future for the North Arm settlement.

—from the British Columbia Directory for 1882-83