

Schedule 53 to the Minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of Richmond City Council held on Monday, December 17, 2018.

ON TABLE ITEM

Date: December 17, 2018
Meeting: Public Hearing
Item: #5

Mayor and Councillors

From: Roland Hoegler <rolandalois137@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, 14 December 2018 16:50
To: Mayor and Councillors; City Clerk; Roland Hoegler; Weber, David; clerk@richmond.ca
Subject: Public Hearing Dec 17, 2018 : ALR HOUSE SIZE ISSUE

To Richmond Council

As a Richmond resident for almost 60 years, and an ALR property owner for over 20 years, I wish to submit the following comment, information etc. re: the ALR home size issue. I will further submit I have done a rather exhaustive research on the ALR, ironically inspired by the Garden City Lands issue, whereby what was THE largest ALR parcel in Richmond had the majority of Council of the day wishing to approve an ALR EXCLUSION application, yet denying other Richmond ALR property owners similar approval. This is why informed parties realize the ALR is simply a LAND BANK, whereby private property rights are oppressed without compensation, in a mode consistent with Communist Manifesto, ...with no evidence to the contrary as no other legal model best describes it.

The ALR existence is simply based on ignorance and mythology from the average citizen right up to various levels of Gov't which unfortunately is enough to buttress its existence. IF the general public even lifted up the ALR rug to a small degree, they would be outraged at how they have been deceived. The ALR exists solely because to admit any failure and defeat simply exposes various Gov'ts to massive compensation claims. THE END.

Since the ALR's inception, majority of ALR property owners feel via continued intimidation that they OWE society something ??? Perhaps a long overdue major awakening is on the horizon ?

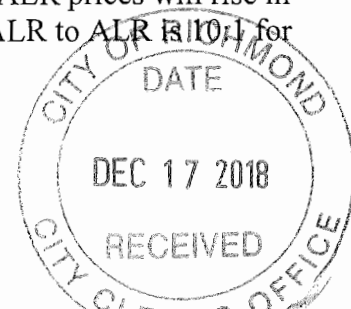
I feel this issue is one of many that has kept dividing and will continue to keep the Richmond community divided, with decisions based on emotion, lack of solid information, catering to lobby groups etc. Council has an obligation to make decisions that both benefit the community and treat all citizens equally having reviewed facts and relevant information and not hearsay, emotion and fairy tales.

It appears that initially a concern was voiced over "large homes built on ALR land". The impression was that these were somehow illegal, etc. when in fact they were built in compliance with existing City bylaws and regulations. Some parties objected to the large home but again, they were L-E-G-A-L homes.

The City then began to cater to these lobby groups in opposition to these L-E-G-A-L ALR homes. The alleged fact continually tabled was that large homes in ALR were driving up ALR land prices and depriving new farmers of the ability to secure farmland. This claim needs to be looked at with more objective scrutiny.

I had a conversation with a Richmond farmer whose family has farmed for decades. I asked him when he felt Richmond farmland prices began to become unaffordable for a new entry level farmer. He stated "that ship sailed" in the 1970's, (coincidentally, the same time ALR was established). Why?...well there is the concept of "lift" whereby as NON ALR prices rise...a rising tide raises all ships and ALR prices will rise in lock step. That is FACT. For sake of argument, I will submit this price ratio of NON ALR to ALR is 10:1 for bare land (excluding buildings).

EXAMPLES:



---Recall the 80 acre Gilmore Farms, after years on the market, was sold for \$20 Million to PMV (\$250,000 per acre)and I am not aware on any home being built? Actually this seguays into another issue...whereby ALR land has never been secure...as PMV can override City of Richmond and Province as to the future land use. Hence ALR landowners land values become depressed , part of a land bank..to be exploited later by those who can legally override the ALR and benefit from the zoning/price differential.

----The City of Richmond paid \$60 Million for the 136 acre Garden City Lands when the assessed value was approx. \$14 million.(approx. \$400,000 per acre). Why has this not been investigated, or why doesn't City of Richmond buy up ALR lands with 400+% premium?

----Backlands(properties in North and South McLennan)...no road access or city services...have approx. assessed value of \$250,000/acre..no chance of any structures being built.

The basic point, is, the free market decides what ALR prices are.

HOWEVER..lobby and special interest groups began to literally and figuratively attack ALR property owners and the existing ALR building bylaws. As a basic summary, after various hearings, council meetings etc.Richmond Council in mid 2018 believed the subjective rhetoric that if ALR house sizes were dramatically reduced then as a direct result ALR land prices would revert to some "affordable " level for new farmers. I recall the Council vote was 9-3 to approve new ALR house sizes, which appeared to be some sort of compromise which many ALR property owners felt addressed the issue, put it to rest, and we could all ,as a community, could move on.

UNFORTUNATELY...the ALR zealots and their cult- like belief system were still not satisfied, and chose to open old wounds, revisit the issue and make it an election issue. After Oct 20 elections, we had 2 new Councillors. However, no sooner had they been sworn in, than the very next day the new Council UNANIMOUSLY announced an intent to revisit the ALR house size issue. What happened.???.... besides a credibility shift ? Several Councillors who had previously voted in favour of the existing ALR house size bylaws in mid 2018 have now waffled and did a 180 degree turn? Whats changed???...seriously. Some new facts and objective information we , the ALR property owners are not privileged to see?????OR, as has been circulating in the ALR community, a cowardly deference and capitulation by the new Council to these ALR zealots and their " voting block " literally setting up for the next civic election...aka lets get those 2nd/3rd/4th class Richmond ALR citizens out of our hair for the next 4 years so they will ST*U ?

THEN, another veteran Councillor (who was part of the 9-3 vote noted earlier).did a 180 degree turn and further stabbed Richmond ALR property owners in the back,without any consultation of ALR property owners, tabling a motion to even further reduce ALR house size beyond even provincial guidelines which the majority of the new Richmond Council again approved, and being tabled for upcoming Dec. 17, 2018 Public Hearing.

HIDDEN RACISM ?

As a first generation Canadian of European descent, I feel there is enough evidence to suggest veiled racism in this matter. My extended family, as post WW2 refugees, initially supported themselves working on farms, and a few did established themselves as Richmond farmers.That was then..this is now.

The logistics and demographics have shifted to whereby many of our current farmers are from the South Asian community. Simply drive through the farming areas throughout the season and observe this. I've talked to many of them. I don't think the existing ALR home size limits are unreasonable, taking into account the cultural norms. HOWEVER.. If you continue to pull the rug out from Richmond ALR property owners and create uncertainty, does Richmond Council have a substitute group to pick up the slack ? Please advise.

OR..long term Richmond farmers may wish to sell into what was a "free market"...are they going to be deprived OF FAIR MARKET VALUE?.....or dare I say "compensated ".....or even worse.....have we unwittingly uncovered a plot/agenda to bankrupt ALR property owners whereby the Gov't takes ownership by forfeiture. You leave yourselves vulnerable to such comments.

FARM STATUS (and MEDIA = clueless ???)

From a lot of experience, I find the majority of the media a combination of ill- informed, borderline clueless and in mortal fear of truly reporting facts re ALR, especially FARM STATUS(and reduced taxes). Even reporters I respect believe ALL ALR property owners have little if any property taxes to pay. Huh? We see headlines of ALR land assessed at \$90,000 sold for MILLIONS..which the public feels is some sort of corruption is occurring. Personally speaking...and having reviewed the relevant FARM STATUS legislation, talking the BC Assessment staff, and applying the formula, and reviewing City's AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY STRATEGY...there is absolutely no way my ALR parcel can achieve farm status. hence I pay full City taxes. There are numerous other Richmond ALR property owners in same situation.

In addition, those parties that do build large homes in ALR do pay the improvement taxes for the home,no different than any other homeowner... Farm Status on the land is calculated differently. Duly noted is the City first attacked "less than 1/2 acre parcels" FIRST cutting us off at the knees. Under the existing guidelines, I have calculate that if my property (approx. 19,000 sq ft) was only 2,000 sq ft more in size, I could build a home 100% bigger than what is currently permitted, even though the ALC realizes that properties less than 2 acres are exempt from ALC Act. In other words, we have the least viable "farm", yet penalized the most. This seguays to an email I submitted to ALC staff regarding WHY ARE LESS THAN 2 ACRE PARCELS EVEN IN THE ALR ????.to which they replied simply for sake of convenience in creating smoother ALR boundaries as opposed to dog's breakfast of boundaries resembling abstract art. In addition,your own AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY STRATEGY duly note buffer areas for higher density on NON ALR parcels adjacent(across arterial roads) to ALR parcels. Where are these promised buffers ?

Since ALR's creation Richmond's population and NON ALR density has increased dramatically.
Does the City feel this does not have some direct impact on farming and its viability?

QUESTION: Has Council and Staff done similar research ?

RE: FARM PLATE and septic fields.

Concern is voiced re: septic fields, and ALR House size . It is my understanding that as City policy, the City exempts ALR properties from sewer connections. ALC Act allows for ONE home per ALR parcel. Of course, this leaves septic fields as the only option, which of course will irrefutably pollute "sacred ALR Land" . If the City is so concerned re: ALR land, why don't they allow access to City Sewer infrastructure in order to mitigate, if not eliminate, such pollution ?

CONCLUSION / SUMMARY:

Richmond is a community that , for sake of clarity and discussion, has (2) classes of property owners
(i) ALR
(ii) NON ALR.

---ALR was created by a short term Gov't in the early 1970's.

---People assume it exist on merit, when overwhelming evidence show it was expeditious, without consultation of property owners, Proof of this is within the ALC Act and the "less than 2 acres" exemption provision.

---ALR exists because of subjective ideology, which lathers up the ill-informed public like it is some sort of sacred cow, as well as the fact that the ALR must exist in perpetuity as to do otherwise would result in massive lawsuits.

---Another creation, ICBC, does not exist on merit, it exists based on the private sector feeling gun shy as they were bit once, twice shy and cannot trust gov't.

---The ALR qualifies as a platform of the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, ie confiscation of private property rights .

---Gov'ts at all levels are quantifiably in mortal fear of treating ALR property owners with anything resembling fair and objective treatment, and in order to save their own political necks, capitulate to the ever increasing demands of the mob mentality. Continually catering to such mobs and their ever increasing demands will ultimately and inevitably expose Gov'ts to possible class action lawsuits, etc. aka something will collapse under the stress.

HISTORICAL ATTACKS against Rural/Farmland Owners

Refer to HOLOMODOR and KULAKS.

In the Bolshevik(communist) Revolution...those in the rural farming sector of Ukraine "Kulaks"were attacked by the provisional gov't based on the facts they were independent, self reliant and independent thinkers. The other classes of citizens of the day were brainwashed that the farmers were elites,wealthy, too independent and should have ALL their property rights confiscated..for the good of the rest of society.(Collectivism) This resulted in state confiscation of even basic food..which resulted in mass starvation of almost 10 million Ukrainians....absolute power corrupts absolutely.

CURRENT INTERPRETATION:

WHAT IS RICHMOND COUNCILS MESSAGE TO RICHMOND ALR PROPERTY OWNERS AND FUTURE INVESTORS IN RICHMOND ?

---Up until recently, some purchasers of ALR properties chose to build homes based on the current rules. regulations and bylaws. Whether these homes are considered by some as too large, etc is irrelevant. We could debate why mega homes and McMansion are allowed in NON ALR areas, or higher density...lets not open that bigger can of worms.

---As noted earlier, ALR property prices experience "lift", and there is a direct realtion to NON ALR property prices. Want to suppress ALR property prices...then first impact NON ALR property prices(ie suppress them).
THE END

---Last Richmond Council capitulated to the mob mentality, and in mid 2018 chose to compromise and impact ALR property owners as some sort of burnt offering/sacrifice to this ALR mob . Regardless,with a 9-3 vote, many felt the issue was dealt with and we could all move on. IN ADDITION, I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY OF THE ALR MOB, NOR A-N-Y...I REPEAT A-NY RICHMOND COUNCILLOR OWING ANY RICHMOND ALR LAND.

---Unfortunately within 24 hours of the new Council being sworn in, the issue was not only revisited, but soon after a new motion to further reduce ALR home sizes across the board. I am not aware of any study that can correlate ALR home size of SIZE"X" to ALR affordability for farmers..as outlined earlier, " that ship sailed " decades ago. Again, unless NON ALR property prices collapse, ALR affordability will remain out of reach. Council didn't even allow the current ALR house size limits to feel out the free market. What objective science is this ? No, instead , at the first go within 24 hours, Council was UNANIMOUS with sticking it to Richmond ALR property owner asap. We expect and deserve better.

--- As cited earlier re: ICBC and the private sector being gun shy....what if one was in discussion with a potential Richmond Investor, it would be fair comment to suggest "caution"...as to inform the potential

investor re Richmond Council has already set precedent to re-visit a land use/land zoning issue several times with a given year, with the irrefutable goal of catering to the mob mentality and
LEGISLATIVELY DEPRECIATING THE PROPERTY VALUE OF A CERTAIN CLASS OF PROPERTY ZONING. The fact it is ALR is irrelevant, because like ICBC, a line has been crossed once,...as precedent has been set...it can be crossed again and carry over to other property zonings. What is a Richmond ALR property owner to expect next...further home size reductions till we are left with a portable lean-to and an outhouse ?

---Richmond Council has made a very ill-advised move to re-visit this issue, as the all- important credibility appears to have withered away with the issue even being revisited and tabled , only to be exacerbated if Council does not have some 11th hour epiphany on DEC 17, 2018 Public Hearing and at minimum delay the ALR home size matter to a future date and at minimum have some objective data to work with and some legal opinion that the City may be exposed to litigation which it would undoubtedly LOSE.

---Further to this ill-advised attack there is a multiplier effect, whereby you, Council and Staff, via ripple effect, attack not only ALR property owners, but their families etc. as well. Concurrently, don't we have every right to defend ourselves from this attack.

--- To our new Councillors.

I will respectfully submit you have made a serious error in judgement as to have worked towards a goal of representing the citizens but having credibility shot within 24 hours of being elected is not a very wise move. Feel free to contact me as there is still hope for redemption prior to Dec 17.(BTW same invitation open to all Richmond Council.....even the "ALR Godfather".)

Richmond ALR property owners deserve and are owed better from City Hall and Council, otherwise we have effectively, undeniably and irrefutably established 2 classes of citizens and property owners. ie the (i) HAVES and the (ii) CONTINUALLY EXPLOITED ALR.

History has repeatedly shown that does not result in a healthy community.

Your call Council.

Otherwise...see you Dec 17.

Regards..

Roland Hoegler