



MEMBER MOTION

Section 5.4.4(b) of Procedure By-law

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| Meeting: | Council ✓ |
| Meeting Date: | Wednesday April 14, 2021 |
| Subject/Title: | Review of Farming and Agriculture in Richmond Hill |
| Submitted by: | Councillor Tom Muench |

Whereas, the Province of Ontario is asking for input into the greenbelt expansion and needs (CONSULTATION ON GROWING THE SIZE OF THE GREENBELT) by April 19, 2021;

Whereas, the farming community has encountered significant challenges to continuing its agricultural businesses in Richmond Hill's northeast sector as a result of the approval of the urban West Gormley and North Leslie Secondary Plans resulting in:

- a. development that is encroaching into, and surrounded, farmland;
- b. York Region's road widening and urbanization of Leslie Street and its proposed realignment that has created traffic congestion which has made the operation of farming machinery on local roads a SAFETY CONCERN;
- c. the creation of two new GO Stations with significant infrastructure investment driving further urbanization of the area;
- d. light pollution from urban uses causing substantive challenges to ongoing farming operations; and
- e. the loss of the economic support system for the area farms and the agricultural industry in the area with very little support for these farming operations as it did 20 years ago; and

Whereas, there is very little cropland and innovative production farming is no longer economically viable, with only a few actual farms remaining in the area; and

Whereas, the soil conditions in the area are poor for farming and the lands are not "prime agricultural lands" as the Region and Province have indicated; and

Whereas, the arbitrary sterilization of lands through the current **Countryside** designation restricts the opportunity for the farming operations to relocate to other more viable jurisdictions to carry on the industry and family farming businesses elsewhere in the Region and Province; and

Whereas, farming and the agriculture business across all areas of York Region and the Province are not the same and a “one size fits all” policy is entirely inappropriate; and

Whereas, soils, urbanization, economic viability, traffic, safety concerns and good long term planning should be taken into account here for the long-term use of farm land and considerations should be made to engage with direct consultation of farmland owners when land policies and land designations are being asserted;

Therefore, be it resolved that the City of Richmond Hill;

1. **Support** the future of **traditional farming** by evaluating the current farming situation in the Northeast area of the City through its Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) **by studying** the re-designation of Oak Ridges Moraine **Countryside** lands around and including the Gormley GO Station MTSA;
2. **Request** that York Region do the same **evaluation** during its current Municipal Comprehensive Review; and
3. **Provide input** to the Province related to the Provincial Consultation on Growing the Greenbelt by requesting that the Province study the re-designation of Oak Ridges Moraine **Countryside** lands to Oak Ridges Moraine **Settlement Area** and where appropriate **Natural Linkage** and/or **Natural Core**; and
4. **Encourage** the Province of Ontario take the input from these MCR’s and carry out a proper evaluation of the Greenbelt Policies as provided for in its Question 6 related to “Other priorities that should be considered.”
5. **Ask** the Province of Ontario to assist wherever possible to link designations and **consider collaborative approaches** including creating a provincial park to create a linear park system within the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt.
6. Send a copy of this resolution to York Regional Council, Members of Provincial Parliament (M.P.P.s) in York Region, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Transportation.

Moved by: Councillor Tom Muench

Seconded by: