

From:

Sent: Sunday, April 11, 2021 9:00 PM

To: Clerks Richmondhill <clerks@richmondhill.ca>

Subject: Council Meeting Agenda C#15-21 - Member Motion - Councillor Muench - Review of Farming and Agriculture in Richmond Hill

Dear Office of the Clerk,

As a current resident of Richmond Hill, with respect to the Council Meeting Agenda C#15-21, to be held on Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 9:30 a.m., Member Motion - Councillor Muench - Review of Farming and Agriculture in Richmond Hill as Moved by: Councillor Muench,

I am deeply concerned about this agenda item and the significant implications of 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.

From my understanding, this request has been made by the Leslie Stouffville Landowners Association (LSLA), with Paul Donor (a farmer) and his company representing a significant interest, who had taken out an advertisement in the online Chinese newspaper Sing Tao and initiated a petition (<https://www.change.org/p/council-of-the-city-of-richmond-hill-support-the-greenbelt-and-our-farmers?redirect=false>) that claims to support the Greenbelt and our farmers. However, the advertisement is misleading in that it states: *"Please support Richmond Hill Councillor Muench's motion by signing the petition below, sending a message to the Council of the City of Richmond Hill and York Region that you want to grow the Greenbelt, support our farmers and STOP any idea to cultivating Marijuana farms in our neighborhoods."* This is misleading in that the purpose of the motion is to support potential re-zoning of the development of the area of the Greenbelt, and has nothing to do with the cultivation of Marijuana farms or supporting the Greenbelt. In fact, it's the exact opposite in that this would re-develop the areas of the Greenbelt for potential industrial and residential uses. This is very concerning as it's been made clear that the LSLA is seeking to economically profit from the potential sale and redevelopment of these lands, and is garnering public support through misleading advertising techniques. Paul Donor, whose family is the primary farmer in this area has a significant vested interest in the sale of these lands and is seeking compensation in the form of development market value for his lands, and this is highly inappropriate as he knew the consequences and risks of the farming and agricultural business when the lands were purchased. Further details of his intentions are detailed in the MPLAN report here:

<https://yorkpublishing.escrimetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=18784>

As quoted in the above report, the LSLA states "If the government refuses to allow landowners to develop their lands, restricting the buyer base for these properties, then the only fair thing to do is for the government to purchase the land at the market value developers would have paid." Thus, it has been made clear that the sole purpose of this motion and this request is to seek economic profit, and not for the betterment of the City of Richmond Hill. The LSLA has claimed that the economic viability of their farming operations is threatened, but provides no financial statements nor complete financial information to support these statements. I hope that Councillors at the meeting consider this information when voting on these recommendations, and consider further investigation of the LSLA's farming operations on these lands rather than anecdotal statements made in the MPLAN report (linked above). Please think carefully as Paul Donor has made statements as "We are in favour of allowing development on these lands; despite the fact that it will force us to relocate our business out of this community." Would a farmer heavily invested in the City's best interests make a claim such as this? Paul Donor, in the report, even claims that the soil is still suitable for agriculture, yet is seeking to profit from increase in land value in the area. If anything, that only further supports that the land should continue to be used for agricultural purposes or potentially to create a Natural Linkage and/or Natural Core area to the Oak Ridges Moraine to support the vision and plans of the Province of Ontario.

Sincerely,

Stephen C.