

NO•FARMS•NO•FOOD

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Kiss Greenwich Goodbye --- Kiss Higher Taxes Hello

A report just passed by the Planning Advisory Committee of Kings County recommends that 380 acres in Greenwich, currently zoned for agriculture uses, be re-zoned for residential, commercial and industrial purposes.

These lands, owned by the Elderkins, Stirlings, Hennigars, Forsythes and Blomidon Nurseries, are located east of the access road to the 101 at Exit 11. They run along both sides of Highway 1, stretch all the way to the border of Wolfville, south to the Cornwallis River, and north to the 101 Highway. It's a large block of land containing farm fields, orchards, wooded areas, streams and ravines.

Kings County Council commissioned the report to move a development application on behalf of the 4 farmers forward. Blomidon Nurseries joined at a later date. The contract was awarded to EDM at a \$36,000 cost to taxpayers. It side-stepped a Secondary Planning Strategy promised to the Greenwich residents when their opposition halted a similar application in 2008. A number of concerned citizens, farmers and businesses plan to speak against the EDM recommendations when the report is presented to the public on Monday, June 7, at 7PM in Council Chambers.

According to NO•FARMS•NO•FOOD, a Kings County group that works to protect farmlands from development, the mandate provided to EDM has resulted in a final report strongly biased toward the residential, commercial and industrial development desired by the applicants. The development plans include a collector road that will link Skyway Drive in Wolfville to the Highway 101 access road at Exit 11 in Greenwich.

Estimates held by NO•FARMS•NO•FOOD show the cost of this highway will exceed \$14 million and that the 4 plus miles of sewage lines and related pumping stations, along with the expansion of sewage treatment facilities and lagoons, could cost taxpayers an additional \$20 to \$40 Million. The group is concerned about the \$54 million burden these plans would place on Kings County taxpayers. Members state there are already sufficient residential lots in Kings County for the foreseeable future, that in addition to these lots, land unsuitable for food production is readily available for development, and that with established commercial and industrial districts in Coldbrook and New Minas, there is no need to re-zone farmland for non-farm related purposes in nearby Greenwich.

Group member Dr. Marilyn Cameron, speaking as a parent of a child who will attend Horton in the years ahead, is gravely concerned about a proposed collector road included in the development plan. This road empties onto the access road that joins Highway 101 and Highway 1. Cameron says: "The EDM report bypasses the need for a Traffic Impact

Study with respect to the safety of over one thousand Horton High School students and teachers.”

Tom Cosman, bee farmer, and long-time resident of Greenwich wants the Kings County Federation of Agriculture to take a tougher stand on the loss of farmland. Cosman says: “It is sad and wrong that owners of agricultural land can decide that for their benefit alone the productivity of a farm can be destroyed forever.” Viewing farmland as a part of Nova Scotia’s common wealth, Cosman adds: “It is economically destructive to allow the loss of a resource capable of providing food and employment from generation to generation.”

Noggins Corner Farm, a neighbour to Cosman in Greenwich, also stands in strong opposition to the EDM report. Carolyn Bishop, a seventh generation farmer at Noggins says: “The current situation in Greenwich proves that we need stronger agricultural zoning rules capable of protecting farmlands from the whims of councillors and those individuals who want to use farm land for non-farm related purposes.”

Speaking as an active member of NO•FARMS•NO•FOOD, Peggy Hope-Simpson, a resident of Wolfville says: “The loss of 380 acres of agricultural land on the boundary of Wolfville will have severe repercussions for the area – the removal of fertile fields will decrease future food security while the disappearance of beautiful landscapes and the increase of traffic levels will have negative outcomes for residents and our tourist industry.”

A strategy meeting for all those opposed to this development is being hosted by Greenwich residents on Wednesday, June 16, 7PM, at the Greenwich Community Hall on Greenwich Road.

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