

NO•FARMS•NO•FOOD

Kings County Council votes 6 to 5 to develop 167.5 acres of farm land

Kentville, July 7, 2010

“Like an unstoppable force for development --- a group of six pro-development councillors voted last night in favour of a development plan that sees prime farm land taken out of Kings County’s agricultural district,” says Robin Whidden, a Port Williams resident.

According to Whidden, who served on the Secondary Planning Strategy Committee for the village: “These councillors cannot say they have a mandate from Port Williams or the broader Kings County community to amend the Kings County Municipal Planning Strategy in this way.” Whidden also finds it, “extremely disturbing that concerns based on sound science brought forward by citizens as to how the area’s water supply could be impacted by changes have been ignored.”

The Councillor for District 2, Janet Newton, lives in and represents the Village of Port Williams. Newton has played a pivotal role in moving the application of two developers forward with the result that 167.5 acres of prime farm land is now cleared by Kings County Council for development. Newton claims that because community support for the Secondary Planning Strategy was not evident at the Public Participation Meeting held in April, she decided to use her influence on the County’s Planning Advisory Committee and Municipal Council to give the Village Commission what it wanted... more farm land for development. The Secondary Planning Strategy Committee with a vote of 5 to 3 had recommended extension of the Village of Port Williams onto significantly less farmland (91.5 acres) but that did not attract much approval from Kings County residents.

Pauline Raven, one of No Farms No Food’s spokespersons, says that: “Democratic processes received a severe blow last night.” Raven is highlighting a number of indications that this decision contradicts what villagers, other Kings County residents and Nova Scotians want.

1. In the 2008 Municipal elections, District 2 was hotly contested on the issue of farm land protection by local farmer Patricia Bishop. Newton squeaked by with an overall lead of 7 votes (431 to 424). However, Newton lost in the sub district of 2A where Port Williams is located by 37 votes.
2. At both the Public Participation Meeting (April 2010) and the Public Hearing (June 2010) where amendments were discussed, the vast majority of attendees spoke against the expansion of Port Williams onto farm land.
3. Many Port Williams residents, Kings County residents, and Nova Scotians are currently using an on-line petition to show their opposition to any further loss of Nova Scotia’s agricultural land.

Audrey Haig-Stewart, a resident of Greenwich where another 380 acres of prime farmland is being processed by Kings County for residential, commercial and/or industrial development, says, “Last night’s vote shows a Council divided between the Warden and Deputy Warden’s leadership.” Haig-Stewart expects Deputy Warden Brothers will contest Warden Whalen’s leadership this fall and she questions, “Is Kings County Council making crucial decisions about our future based on the public good or internal disputes and power struggles?”

In early 2010, consultant Dimitri Pojidaeff conducted a review of this council. Pojidaeff found the “severity of issues” within Kings County “atypical” of municipal governments he had worked with elsewhere. The report labelled Kings County Council dysfunctional; pointed to the negative impact of councillors’ individual agendas on the ability of council to work effectively; and noted that representation was being provided to a few residents versus the population in general.

No Farms No Food will now direct its efforts to Ramona Jennex, Minister of Services Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and John MacDonnell, Minister of Agriculture. Under the Municipal Government Act an amendment passed by a Municipal Council can be denied, particularly if it is seen to contradict Provincial Interests.

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Tables are attached that show:

1. Results of the vote for District 2 in Kings County at the 2008 Municipal Election;
2. The recorded vote on the farmland amendment at the July 6, Municipality of the County of Kings Council Meeting.

For more information about this media release contact: Robin Whidden 902-542-7490; Pauline Raven, 902-582-3145 or 902-670-2949; Audrey Haig-Stewart 902-542-7786

For more information about No Farms No Food visit: www.nofarmsnofood.ca

To view the No Farms No Food Petition, Protection of Nova Scotia’s Agricultural Land visit: <http://www.PetitionOnline.com/p4n3s2a1/petition.html>

Email No Farms No Food at: nofarmsnofood@gmail.com

District 2

Candidate	Advance	2A	2B					Total
Patricia Bishop	33	272	118					423
Janet Newton ELECTED	36	235	160					431
Total Votes	69	507	278					854
Eligible Voters		1124	1686					2810
% Voted		45%	16%					30%

In favour of rezoning 167.5 acres of farmland for residential development	Opposed to rezoning 167.5 acres of farmland for residential development
1. Diana Brothers (Deputy Warden)	1. Fred Whalen (Warden)
2. Mike Ennis, 3. Dick Killam, 4. Dale Lloyd, 5. Janet Newton, 6. Chris Parker.	2. Wayne Atwater, 3. Basil Hall, 4. Eric Smith, 5. Jim Taylor.