

NO•FARMS•NO•FOOD

Council Quietly Approves Mackin Amendment at Special Meeting --- Reversing Earlier Promise to “Wait.”

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Again there is a solid reason for citizens of Kings County to brand their Municipal Council: “Dysfunctional.”

In June, 2010, a second reading of an amendment related Greg Mackin’s persistent bid to build a second house on his farmland in Canard was put on hold. Council put a motion on record to say they would defer second reading until the results of the Provincial Agricultural Review Study were released. Release of those results is still pending but expected soon.

Despite the commitment to the people by Kings County Council to wait, a Special Meeting of Council (unadvertised) was held on September 21st. With only Mackin and a few others present, the amendment was approved. It will now be sent to the Province for review and either approval or rejection. “It appears that no promise this Council makes will necessarily be kept,” says Marilyn Cameron, a founding member of No Farms No Food.

Citizens opposed to the proposed amendment had heaved a sigh of relief and were thankful for a pause in proceedings. Council had taken unprecedented actions in favour of Mackin’s application, including using taxpayers’ money to pay a consultant to ensure the amendment needed for Mackin to develop the farmland would not be blocked for a second time by the Department of Services Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

Nick De Graff, who farms 800 acres close to the land in question, says: “Along with other farmers in the immediate area, I remain strongly opposed to this amendment and I am dismayed that this council continues to support these kinds of encroachments in the agricultural district.”

No Farms No Food has on hand a written legal opinion by Jack Innes, of McInnes Cooper, on the related matter of an application to rezone 382 acres of agricultural land in Greenwich. That letter states council is dealing with Greenwich, “in a manner which is inconsistent with standard planning procedures.” Innes, takes this further, writing: “It may well be that any member or members of the public who feel adversely affected by this unusual procedure respecting the redevelopment of private property may have a cause to force the Municipality to proceed in accordance with its own rules of procedure.”

Cameron states: “It was a sad day for King County when some members of council were re-elected. They remain determined to undermine Council’s rules and their own Municipal Planning Strategy to satisfy the needs of a few of their constituents.”

Meanwhile, members of No Farms No Food continue to push their message to Council that: “The majority of Kings County citizens want to see agricultural land given all the protection the Kings County MPS can muster but instead council is offering us: motions of reconsideration that effectively reverse decisions favourable to farmland; special meetings that we know nothing about and therefore can’t attend; and broken promises.”

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