

4.1 (xiv)

Fruitland-Winona-Stoney Creek Community Association Inc.
243 Fruitland Road
Stoney Creek, Ontario
Fruitland, Ontario
L8E 5J8

December 2, 2015

To The City of Hamilton Planning Committee

Re: Greenbelt Boundary Review Project

We are an incorporated community association with an interest in your Greenbelt Boundary Review Project which relate to the provinces review of the following Plans:

- The Greenbelt Plan
- The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- The Niagara Escarpment Plan

The following comments are being submitted on behalf of the Fruitland-Winona-Stoney Creek Community Association Inc. We are an incorporated association whose articles of incorporation include the protection of and advocacy for the proper use of lands within the Stoney Creek, Fruitland and Winona areas.

Our association is very supportive of efforts the Ontario Government is making to protect our agricultural resources and the greenbelt. A major area that we are concerned with is the micro climate that exists between Fruitland Road and Fifty Road, Lake Ontario and the Escarpment in Fruitland-Winona. As you know, this area contains precious fertile lands that enable tender fruit farming and that are a very unique resource.

While we believe the legislation and policies that the Ontario Government has in place to protect the greenbelt, agricultural lands and other natural resources are admirable and appropriate, one of our major concerns is why our City would not recognize and embrace these policies and pieces of legislation instead of trying to work against them. We should be embracing the uniqueness, beauty and vitality of our lands, instead of being pressured to develop on them and lose them forever. We need to take a longer range look at our planning principles and take into account that we have other areas in our city that can be redeveloped and improved instead of creating issues through urban sprawl.

A case in point are the lands that are bordered by Fruitland Rd to Fifty Road, and Highway #8 to Barton Street in Winona On. These lands were identified by the Ontario Government as viable lands to be preserved and protected under the Greenbelt. However, the City of Hamilton took the province to the OMB to have these lands removed for development, despite these lands being agricultural lands and having a precious micro climate.

There is also a concern around the notion of releasing a particular parcel of land (between Glover Road to McNeilly and Hwy #8 to Barton). This parcel of land is nestled between the Niagara Escarpment and Lake Ontario, thus making its soil and location ideal for tender fruit growing and other agricultural purposes.

For over 130 years these lands have produced some of the best fruit in all of Canada, under the name of E.D. Smith. The soil is rich and the area's ideal micro-climate is one in only two in all of Canada. That is certainly reason enough to protect these lands.

The Province managed to protect these lands from the Stoney Creek Urban Expansion when the City of Hamilton applied to have these lands and all the land east of Fruitland Road for development. Although the Province was not successful to protect all the lands at the OMB, they did manage to protect the ED Smith agricultural lands by placing it under the Greenbelt.

In 2009, hundreds of fruit trees were removed and the lands levelled, so the owner could apply to have his lands removed from the greenbelt and sell it the land to the developers. Members of our Association believe that this parcel of land should continue to fall within the protection of the Greenbelt and be used for agricultural or greenspace purposes for this community and to preserve its prime soil and ideal growing conditions for future food sources.

As stated on other meetings and through correspondence, at a point in time, the City of Hamilton, the community and all stakeholders were in agreement to a secondary plan for the community that we represent. That previously agreed to plan struck the right balance between allowing for development while protecting the interests of our natural and agricultural resources and of the community. It was designed consistent with a collegially developed vision statement that recognised our natural fruit lands and country characteristics; hence our name, Fruitland, Ontario. It was the result of over 5 years of work. However, without any notice or consultation the city changed the plan and did a complete turnabout and changed the agreed to plan dramatically. This new plan, which the community appealed to OMB, before being bullied out of the process, fails to protect the agricultural lands and the aforementioned precious micro climate. Moreover, it seems to be the result of the city catering to the interests of a select group of stakeholders whose sole interests appear to be maximising their profits. A petition bearing over 830 signatures, protesting the city's new direction was duly submitted to the city. Sadly, it was ignored.

Our concern remains in the protection of these unique and precious lands, and the protection of our land resources for future needs. We are also concerned that our area is becoming over populated, and no plans are in place to address the effects that over development has a community, such as health, safety and traffic. We are concerned that our precious natural resource and a very unique micro climate will be lost forever.

We are asking the City to protect the interests of their rate payers and plan responsibly and with a vision for our future needs and that of our children.

We believe the Ontario government has a responsibility for the protection of our land and our future, and need to grow our own food. And we believe that our municipality has an equal responsibility to do the same.

We strongly encourage this committee to intervene and take a better look at the lands that you are petitioning the province to remove out of the greenbelt for development purposes. We are asking this committee to be innovative leaders and look at growth and prosperity as a city through redevelopment as opposed to new development. The benefits far outweigh the consequences of protecting our greenspace under the Greenbelt.

We ask you to take the city's vision statement into mind when deciding if we should be a city that continues to sprawl and erode our greenspace, while at the same time allow our inner city to be ignored and deteriorate. Or, are you willing to live up to the vision statement and truly be the Best place to raise a child, by making responsible decisions in preserving our greenspace? Are you capable of looking a child in the face and say that I am not approving a plan that will benefit your future, your health, safety and resources? We can take this one step further and be a city that grows its own food and attracts tourism to explore our unique city with one of only two micro-climates in all of Canada, nestled between an escarpment and Lake. We have the potential to market Hamilton like no other city in the Province of Ontario and perhaps all of Canada.

This is your chance to make a difference in how our city grows. Please think with your minds, hearts and not with the influence of a select few.

Teresa DiFalco
President of the Fruitland-Winona-Stoney Creek Community Association Inc.