

Sunday, September 11th, 2016

Re: September 6th City of Hamilton Planning Meeting and September 14th City of Hamilton Council Meeting,

Dear Mayor and Members of City Council,

We are appalled, angry and frustrated by what happened at the City of Hamilton Planning Committee meeting of September 6th, 2016. While not all of us were in attendance, we were able to see a video and watch as we were insulted, stripped of our rights, and dismissed as unimportant by the very person elected and paid by us to fairly and thoughtfully represent us.

The Book Road area is made up of families, farmers and small businesses, who own their own land, and in some cases, have done so for generations. We have worked hard all our lives, supporting our community. Our land is who we are and what we have to offer our children, and you are effectively devaluing it and limiting our use of it - with no just cause.

Our group made a detailed presentation of our concerns to the previous meeting of the Planning Committee, we saw the subsequent City staff report being submitted for approval at this Planning Committee meeting, and thus we were feeling confident that staff and Councillors had NOT changed their position of December 2015, which was to NOT include our lands in the Greenbelt. And then, suddenly, Councillor Lloyd Ferguson, who isn't even a member of the Planning committee, walks in, without warning, and gets most of you to vote to freeze our lands! You all knew full well that our lands were mistakenly put in the Greenbelt by the Province, that it went against the official position of Council and the recommendation of staff, and that it was not something the people who live and work here want. Yet, somehow you let this travesty happen!

There was no technical, scientific or planning argument presented, just the opinion of one Councillor who cavalierly wrote us off as people who "won the lottery" and therefore should not have any rights. This is a total misrepresentation of our families, and the arrogance and callousness are beyond belief. The behaviour of this Councillor is so far beyond what one expects in a democratic and civilized jurisdiction.

What are people to think about the sudden and extreme force of this Committee to reverse a previous decision of Council, and put the lands owned by many families into the Greenbelt, while at the same time vigorously supporting the removal of two pieces of land in Lower Stoney Creek, owned by a few interests, including the rare tender fruit lands of ED Smith? Who could possibly benefit from this - besides those who want to develop other lands, which were already chosen for protection and are already in the Greenbelt, but now want out?

Why should our land be frozen? It's not special. And freezing our land will have a negative impact on our property values and, as such, your tax revenue. It will limit future growth options. A lot of people are moving to Hamilton. People will want to come to Ancaster, but without any land available, development will create higher density and more tall buildings. Is that what Councillor Ferguson and the people of Ancaster want?

We have always been aware that the zoning of our lands may not change for a long time, but we beg you not to rob us of our right to continue to use our land in accordance with the present zoning, and future uses decided through due process. We urge you to carefully read the letters of those people we have had to hire to represent us in this matter, and we urge you to stop this damaging and unwarranted action.

Your sincerely,

The families and businesses of the Book Road West Lands,