



14 September 2016

City of Hamilton
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5

Attention: Mayor and Members of City Council

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of Hamilton City Council,

RE: Coordinated Provincial Plan Review – City of Hamilton
Comments on May 2016 Draft Plans (PED15078(b))

and

Famous PEOPLE Players
Application for Arts and Agricultural Learning Centre
Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment

Our File: 06590

We are the planners retained by Famous PEOPLE Players (“FPP”) with respect to its official plan and zoning by-law amendment applications to permit an Arts and Agricultural Learning Centre at 450 Book Road West in the former Town of Ancaster (now part of the City of Hamilton). The applications were filed in March, 2007, and remain open.

The FPP land holdings comprise 34.8 hectares (86 acres) that currently operate as a tree farm operated by Braun Nurseries. FPP intends to establish the Arts and Agricultural Learning Centre (“AALC”) on a small portion of the property (approximately 2.4 hectare (5.9 acre) or 7% of the total site area), closest to Book Road. It is intended that the balance of the property will continue to operate unhindered as a tree farm.

The AALC proposal is intended to become the new and permanent home of FPP, which, as explained in greater detail below, is a world renowned theatrical performance troupe currently based out of Toronto. It will include two outdoor classroom pavilions located throughout the grounds, as well as interactive gardens, interconnected by unpaved, naturalized walkways. A dinner and theatre building will be the centerpiece of the Arts and Agricultural Learning Centre (AALC), and will comprise 2,381 square metres (25,630 square feet) of new floor space. When combined with the existing residence and carpentry shop on the site, the total floor area of all the buildings will be 2,991 square metres (32,196 square feet).

About FPP

Famous PEOPLE Players was founded in 1974 as a theatrical performance company by its founder, Diane Dupuy, who continues to run the organization today. The troupe grew to fame and acclaims through its unique performances which utilized black (ultraviolet) lighting to perform vibrant and colourful puppets shows, and to hide the actual performers, who are “invisible” in their black clothing.

What is most unique about Famous People Players, beyond the actual performances, and quality of the show, is that most of the performers are developmentally challenged individuals. Through their involvement in the productions, these individuals are taught invaluable life skills and independence. This unique aspect of the Famous PEOPLE Players has resulted in countless endorsements by well-known entertainment figures, including, among many, Paul Newman, Tom Cruise, Phil Collins, and the late Liberace.

In 1994, the group’s success led to the establishment of a Performance and Dinner Theatre in downtown Toronto, which subsequently was relocated to 343 Evans Avenue in west Toronto when its original Queen West location was redeveloped. Today, there are two performance groups: one which performs at the Dinner Theatre and another that travels and performs across Canada and worldwide.

While the Evans Avenue location serves the current needs of FPP, they remain intent on establishing for themselves a new home in Hamilton, at 450 Book Road, based on an expanded mandate that will broaden beyond the arts, and include agricultural and environmental learning opportunities for both the performers, and audiences.

Hamilton’s Comments on the Greenbelt Plan Review

We have reviewed the staff report dated September 6, 2016, and the accompanying staff presentation, which was presented to Planning Committee on September 6th, and are aware of the decision of Planning Committee with regard to requesting the Province to add the “Book Road Lands” to the Greenbelt, which would include 450 Book Road West.

Given FPP’s existing applications, and its intent to establish the AALC at 450 Book Road West, we have significant concerns with respect to the decision of Planning Committee to support the addition of these lands to the Greenbelt.

The addition of these lands to the Greenbelt will have significant negative implications on FPP’s long term plans for this site as it could have the effect of precluding the development of the AALC given the highly restrictive policy framework of the Greenbelt Plan. It also would have significant negative implications for the City of Hamilton which would potentially lose out on the opportunity to host this extremely unique facility, which FPP has been planning since at least 2006, and which has been well received by members of Council.


Given the foregoing, **the purpose of this letter is to ask that Council reconsider the decision of Planning Committee and adopt the recommendations of staff as expressed in Recommendation (g)(ii)** which would defer any decisions on potential changes to Greenbelt Plan boundaries in Hamilton to allow the

City to complete a municipal comprehensive review that would include a full assessment of the future growth needs of the City, especially in light of the new Growth Plan intensification and Greenfield density targets (which Planning Committee opposes) and which – if approved – will require the City to accommodate significantly more intense growth on its existing land base both in and outside of the current urban envelope. We would note that if the Book Road lands are included in the Greenbelt they will become ineligible for future urban growth, thereby further decreasing the future land base on which the City will be able to develop, which in turn will require even more growth in built up areas in the future, which is the current reality in the City of Burlington.

We thank Council for considering the above noted request. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the author.

Yours very truly,

WND associates
planning + urban design



Andrew Ferancik, MCIP, RPP
Principal

Cc: Diane Dupuy, President and Founder, Famous PEOPLE Players
Patrick Anderson, Director and Secretary, Famous PEOPLE Players,