

David Lodewyks

Millgrove Ontario

TO: The City of Hamilton

Mayor and All Members of Council

RE: 500 GARNER ROAD WEST / BOOK ROAD LANDS

I am writing to you to express my deep concerns with regards to the manner in which the recommendation to the province for the lands bordered by GARNER ROAD, SHAVER ROAD, BOOK ROAD and FIDDLERS GREEN have been recommended by the city for greenbelt designation after the majority of landowners have voiced their opposition to this.

I grew up at 500 Hwy 53 West (now Garner Road), I farm this land currently. My parents purchased this farm in 1965 and it has been worked by my family since that time. My father passed away 4 years ago and he worked his regular job at Stelco for 33 years, and he farmed as well. Many immigrants did this to get ahead. Working 60 plus hours a week was normal. This farm was a place to raise a family and provide for his family, which he did very well. It was also made clear as a child that this farm was an investment and that someday as Ancaster grew and the town would come to our door step it would be more valuable because of this location. My Father and Mother would be able to help their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren someday. This was to be the benefit of working hard in a great country. Real estate was seen as a good investment in a land that was a democracy such as Canada. If it did not get developed at minimum it would go up in value and leave a legacy for them.

Today when I work the fields at this farm I look to the East, West and North and I see new housing being built immediately across the road, a new Catholic school, a thriving industrial park to the West, a growing Catholic Cemetery and future Airport employment lands to the East. In my mind the day my father spoke of is very near.

Moving in our farm equipment to Garner Road has become dangerous. I travel from North Burlington to Ancaster to work land and plant crops. The home farm (as I call it) on Garner Road is a farm that is already in the City. We are surrounded. To run Garner Road with large farm equipment is dangerous. This spring I called 911 because an impatient driver decided to force me off the road because he felt that's where I should run my slow moving equipment. "City people" as I call them, don't understand farming. They are the same people that will complain when I spray or raise dust in the field or don't like the smell of spread manure. All this must be done with an intensified population right across the road?

Today we are literally farming in the City. It makes good sense that this land fronting Garner road and to the south be left as status quo at minimum and not moved to Greenbelt. It should be considered for future development. Ontario has over 13 million acres being farmed productively. With farm technology and growing size of farms this land is not appealing to the new and modern ways of farming. To make a living on a small 45 acre parcel is not feasible. To ask farmers to move equipment down Garner Road which is at over capacity is not fair to us or the people that travel it to get to their homes.

The only reason I have heard that the council largely based their decision on was one councillor's adamant expression that he does not want to see any more growth in his ward of Ancaster. This is what I heard repeatedly when attending

several meetings in council chambers. I currently live close to the town of Waterdown and I would like to see the growth stop there as well. Could I convince my councillor to speak the same words and it too will stop? To stop growth in Ancaster benefits only the existing homeowners, as you are now limiting the supply of homes in the area. These existing home values will surely rise faster as demand to live there is very strong and people want another option on the West end of the city. You are forcing people out of the city of Hamilton and choosing Brantford, Caledonia, St George, etc. There goes more potential tax revenue and less business for the local community. I am sorry to inform you but the reality is that not all people want to live in Elfrida.

Where are the people that are going to work in the new employment lands going to live? Caledonia? Brantford? Outside of Hamilton is a sure option when you don't give them any others. Let's see what will happen to the traffic congestion and carbon footprint as we send more people down the highway in their cars to commute to work. Instead you have a choice to plan for viable affordable housing close to jobs. Let's give this some more thought councillors, and not just follow the words of one man's interest for "his" ward. Please listen to good reason and common sense.

The facts are that the city commissioned Dillon Consulting, to look at this. I am sure this was an expensive bill that we paid for as taxpayers. In their final report they made the recommendation for these lands to be considered for future development to support the growth that is coming to Southern Ontario and we are just ignoring this and going backwards. Last December the committee with good reason did not recommend these lands go into the greenbelt, let's go back to those discussions and see why. Last fall you held open houses where numerous landowners came to voice their feelings on what should be done with "their" land and why. Why did you hold these meetings? Just to say you did or to actually listen to the landowner's voice and consider it.

I don't understand, why not at least just leave it alone. Why designate it greenbelt, to say we can just take it out in 10 years if needed is absolutely ridiculous. We all can see the cumbersome process this review has been and how once lands go in they will not easily come out. Why would the city want to lose some of the control they have over these lands and hand it over to another level of government?

People of Council please get in your cars and drive the area we are considering on changing, pick up the phone and return the calls of the landowners that have called you. I have yet to receive a return call from the councillors that I have called on this matter. It certainly feels like nobody cares what the people that have the most invested in this have to say. I am quickly losing faith in our democratic government.

Sincerely

David Lodewyks