

March 9, 2021

RE: Minister's Zoning Orders (MZO's)

Please be advised that the Council of the Municipality of Grey Highlands, at its meeting held March 3, 2021, passed the following resolution:

**2021-159**

**Moved by Cathy Little - Aakash Desai**

**Whereas the COVID-19 crisis has shown the residents of the Municipality of Grey Highlands how important natural lands, farmland and water sources in and around Grey Highlands are to their health and well-being and their economic livelihood; and**

**Whereas residents are rightly concerned with addressing the economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis and are looking at new types of development that create new homes and businesses, jobs and economic activity in ways that are cost effective to residents and municipalities; and**

**Whereas there is development that creates jobs, new affordable homes and economic activity while protecting and preserving existing natural areas, farmland and water sources and meeting the needs of residents and municipalities; and**

**Whereas Minister's Zoning Orders (MZOs) are a tool that should not be used to fast-track development proposals, bypass important public consultations and override laws and policies designed to protect the environment; and**

**Whereas in 2020 the Ontario government has issued over 30 MZOs to fast-track development, many of them in natural areas, farmland and/or important water sources; and**

**Whereas Ontario residents would benefit financially, physically and socially from development that does not take place in natural areas, farmland, and water sources and from permanently protecting these lands instead;**

**Now therefore be it resolved that Council commit to not requesting a MZO to fast-track development on natural areas, farmland and/or water resources because they bypass public consultations and**

**existing policies and procedures designed to promote environmental protection; and**

**That Council request the Premier and Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to stop using Minister's Zoning Orders and urges the Provincial Government to move forward with COVID recovery actions that promote development that simultaneously protects natural areas, farmland and water sources while creating affordable homes and new jobs and in a way that is cost effective to residents and the municipality; and**

**That Council endorse the efforts of Blue Mountain Watershed Trust and the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance to bring more natural areas, farmland and water sources under the protection of laws like the Greenbelt Act; and**

**That this resolution be circulated to Premier Ford; Minister Clark, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; MPP Bill Walker; and Ontario municipalities.**

**CARRIED.**

As per the above resolution, please accept a copy of this correspondence for your information and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jerri-Lynn Levitt  
Deputy Clerk  
Council and Legislative Services  
Municipality of Grey Highlands



February 16, 2021

Mayor Brian Saunderson, Town of Collingwood [bsaunderson@collingwood.ca](mailto:bsaunderson@collingwood.ca)

Mayor Alar Soever, The Blue Mountains [mayor@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:mayor@thebluemountains.ca)

Mayor Doug Measures, Township of Clearview [dmeasures@clearview.ca](mailto:dmeasures@clearview.ca)

Mayor Paul McQueen, Municipality of Grey Highlands [mayormcqueen@greyhighlands.ca](mailto:mayormcqueen@greyhighlands.ca)

Warden Selwyn Hicks, County of Grey [Selwyn.hicks@grey.ca](mailto:Selwyn.hicks@grey.ca)

Warden George Cornell, County of Simcoe [George.cornell@simcoe.ca](mailto:George.cornell@simcoe.ca)

We hope you and your loved ones are well. Thank you for all your efforts over the past months to help get us through this terrible COVID-19 crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how important natural spaces are to our wellbeing. We rely on these areas for our mental and physical health, and on farmland for the local food that keeps us healthy and our farmers employed. These lands are also critical to conserving biodiversity and enhancing community resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Some local governments in the GTA have ignored this reality and have tried to get permission to have protected Greenbelt land used for sprawl-style development. As well, some are working to secure Minister's Zoning Orders to bypass important environmental protections and local planning rules. Others, however, have expressed growing concerns about the provincial government's inappropriate use of this tool and we hope this number grows.

In addition, just recently, the Province has passed regressive changes to the Conservation Authorities Act to remove powers to protect natural areas and to protect us from the impacts of floods and toxic soil dumping.

As a result we are making two specific requests:

Please resist the use of MZOs and tell the Province you oppose the recent changes to the Conservation Authorities Act because both of these actions fast-track sprawl-style development, sidestep public consultation and override policies intended to protect Ontario's natural areas, water sources and farmland. Please also consider asking the province to add farmland and natural areas in your region to the Greenbelt to increase their protection.

Please pass a Council resolution that includes the above points and forward it to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

As an environmental advocacy group established for over 25 years, we are calling on you and the entire Council to commit to resisting the misuse of MZOs, oppose implementation of the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act, stop sprawl and seek growth of the Greenbelt as part of a Green and Just

Recovery.

Yours sincerely,

Norman Wingrove, Acting President BMWTF

C: BMWTF Board of Directors

BMWTF Watershed Action Committee

MZO Letter to Municipalities 2021-02-09