

APPENDIX M

Re: Zone Change Application 11/19
Jackson Harvest Farms Ltd./IBI Group
1894-1922 Witmer Road

Good evening Mayor Armstrong and Councillors, especially my Ward 3 councillor, Barry Fisher,

I've lived in Baden with my husband for 31 years. We moved from Kitchener in 1991 with our two young sons and have never wanted to live anywhere else. We love the quiet countryside setting, the clean air and the wide open spaces.

Because of our positive experience in Wilmot, I want our township neighbours in Shingletown to continue to enjoy the quiet rural community that they have grown up in and thrived in, some for several generations. I do not believe that one wealthy businessman should have the privilege of coming along and buying a piece of prime farmland behind and beside their homes and turning their happy and peaceful lives into a living hell.

After over a two year licensing process, there are still many outstanding issues. I have chosen just three to comment on:

1) VIBRATIONS

The Cambridge Today newspaper reported on February 28th, 2022 that a Delovan Drive resident told Cambridge councillors that noise from a gravel crusher beside her house "regularly wakes her neighbourhood with vibrations... that night shift workers can't sleep during the day...and that dust from the Dance gravel pit is so bad they can't open their windows to let the fresh air in."

I can't find any mention of this problem of vibrations caused by gravel pits in either the Region's Final Comments report or the Wilmot Development Services Staff report. Why have vibrations, which not only cause cracks and damage homes but also have a negative effect on one's sleep and mental health, been totally ignored?

2) PROPERTY VALUES

The Wilmot Staff Report does not address the issue of decreased property values. Obviously, the market value of their farm and residential properties will decrease if there is a zone change from Agricultural to Extractive Industrial. It would be difficult to quantify the extent of the drop in market value but I don't think that anyone would suggest that the impact would be negligible.

3) REHABILITATION

Concerning land rehabilitation, the sad truth is that almost all the experts know that this gravel pit can never be returned back to prime agricultural condition. The Regional Staff report admits that:

"no scientific evidence is available to show that a "state of the art" soil rehabilitation process will result in meeting the test for soil rehabilitation to an "agricultural condition".

But the proponent's experts and peer reviewer state that the site WILL BE rehabilitated back to agricultural condition.

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) permits aggregate extraction in prime agricultural areas provided the site is rehabilitated back to an agricultural condition, meaning the same areas and average soil capability are restored.

So, how can the Wilmot Staff Report state, on page 3, that the applicant has demonstrated compliance with the PPS, when both the Regional and Wilmot staff acknowledge that the Hallman pit will likely never be compliant?

PROVINCIAL POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Wilmot Staff Report implies that Council's hands are tied by the province and that you are powerless to vote your conscience against this application.

There will be a provincial election on June 2nd and Premier Doug Ford, who would like to be re-elected, was quoted as saying this, about the proposed gravel pit in Campbellville:

"I'm not in favour of the Campbellville quarry. I believe in governing for the people. And when the people don't want something you don't do it. It's very simple. I know the Mayor doesn't want it, no one wants it. I don't want it. We are going to make sure it doesn't happen one way or another."

MZOs

Also, in this current election cycle, I suspect that it is increasingly less likely that Steve Clark, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in Ontario, would consider issuing a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) to the applicant, if our community is against it. Witness the turnaround in Cambridge when the Blair Village community fought against the Warehouse MZO and were successful. Steve Clark also rescinded MZOs in Stratford and in Pickering, as a result of community uproar and Council's backtracking.

ZONING BY-LAWS

I think that there should be a law to protect people from having their lives ruined by a gravel pit. Well, in fact, there is a law. It's called a zoning bylaw. That is one reason why we have zoning bylaws: to protect residential and farm communities from being destroyed by industrial noise, dust, vibrations and heavy traffic. Shingletown residents have done nothing to deserve such a dramatic downgrade in their quality of life. If you vote against rezoning the property, the law will continue to protect them, as it was designed to do.

NEED TO SHOW NEED

Finally, in response to the question: Why would we need an eighth pit, given that there are already seven existing gravel pits that are only operating at 10% capacity on Witmer Road? The Staff Report answers:

“the PPS (Provincial Policy Statement) specifically prohibits municipalities from requiring a demonstration of need or making a decision on the basis of availability, designation or licensing locally or elsewhere.”

As outdated as this policy is, I would like to suggest that the Province can NOT prohibit you from representing your constituents, who are depending on you to protect their quality of life, their mental and physical health, their farmland, their well water, and their property values.

Please, just listen to what this community, YOUR community, wants and vote accordingly. Thank you.