

From: Trevor Herrle-Braun
Sent: February 26, 2024 9:57 AM
To: Andrew Martin; Harold O'Krafka
Subject: Wilby Road application

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Good Morning Andrew and Harold Just thought I would keep both of you in the loop of a letter I just emailed to Council regarding some of the research I did the last week

February 26th, 2024

Good afternoon Mayor Salonen and Members of Wilmot Township Council:

My name is Trevor Herrle-Braun and I reside at 1264 Erb's Road. The north end of our farm touches Wilby Road with the property outlined in ZCA-01-24, 1276 Wilby Inc. / The Planning Partnership, 1276 Wilby Road.

I wish to note that I have no concerns with bringing in new agriculture opportunities to the Township. I do though have a number of concerns and questions related to this specific proposed agriculture operation.

My questions for which I would appreciate some answers are: How is this form of agri-business viable in this part of south western Ontario? How do the owners plan to deal with the climate and soil challenges? What is the motivation behind this application?

The idea of there being a need for significant migrant worker bunk housing should raise some red flags that require further justification. The timing seems to be suspect, along with the amount needed, and the question why now in Wilmot Township and not in Woolwich, where much of their operation currently is?

I have contacted some members of the farming community in Woolwich, along with some influential and experienced Niagara tender fruit farming community members (who our family deals with daily in-season), whom I consider dear friends. Most have no knowledge of this family-run business. I showed them the promotional video for the property in Niagara and I was told that the property was just purchased from the Falk family recently. I believe this fact calls into question the validity of the Prica's family's statements in the video.

Also, another professional friend who owns a reputable distillery locally, did a search of this family and there are no Provincial or Federal licenses for them doing any type of distilling, which are required by law.

While not directly related to the application, I wish to bring up that when I was completing web research it was interesting to find that the Township of Woolwich incurred significant legal costs related to a dispute with this family concerning their property they purchased in the Conestogo area, see https://issuu.com/observerextra/docs/observer_-_august_13_2020_-_online article.

Since allegedly the family has an established operation in Woolwich, I would respectfully ask Council and staff to check with their colleagues in Woolwich as part of completing their own due diligence on the application before Wilmot Council.

In summary, and as noted above, an operation such as this raised many red flags to me as a longtime resident, business owner, and fruit and vegetable farmer. The logistics related to the proposed steps in this application for the housing component are respectfully premature at best. The proposed number of workers needed for the size and scale of the operation at this time is excessive.

In talking with other tender fruit growers, the family is 5-7 years away from when they would need anywhere near the amount they are hoping to house.

I urge Council and staff to take your time, ask the necessary questions, be careful, and as part of the process communicate and collaborate with Woolwich staff and Council.

I applaud Councillor Cressman for his actions the other night in raising some concerns. I was surprised that the member of the Prica family didn't address any of the questions. On a side note, I spoke to Vineland Growers and there are no such varieties of plum trees available for planting in Ontario.

I just caution you not to be surprised or swayed by smoke and mirrors and to protect the integrity of agriculture in Wilmot Township.

If you would like to further discuss my comments, please feel free to contact me, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Thankyou

Trevor Herrle-Braun