

Janet and Don Worthington

September 13, 2024

It's time for our councillors to speak out now and support the farmers and citizens in Wilmot Township – the people who voted you in.

At the council meeting last Monday, September 9, 2024, there was more discussion and questions raised by our councillors about a proposed new development at 12 Shephard Place and concern about the effects it will have on residents, than has ever been raised about our 770 acres of prime farmland that is being threatened by expropriation.

One has to wonder why there is more alarm over the proposed development at 12 Shephard Place than over the threat hanging over six families of losing their homes, farms, and livelihoods. Why is that? Even if that proposed development goes ahead, no one is losing their home or livelihood.

It was noted in The Record that the Waterloo Regional Council is going to take up the fight to save a safe consumption and treatment site (CTS) in Kitchener after the province announced plans to defund the program.

Why can't and why won't Wilmot Council take up the fight and demand the Region of Waterloo stop the threat of expropriation of the 770 acres of prime farmland. As for the purchase of the 160 acres and loss of the corn crop, I suggest the Region own up to their mistake, swallow their pride, and put the land up for sale. Since the province has reimbursed the Region, no monies will be lost to the Region or hopefully, the taxpayers of Waterloo Region.

As it stands right now, no one in the Wilmot Township Council or regional government is supporting our farmers. They are being left in limbo. Their crops have been harvested and while they would usually fertilize their land and plant a cover crop, with this big threat hanging over them, they are at a standstill and their lives are faced with uncertainty.

Will you speak out now on their behalf and finally give them some peace of mind, at least knowing their own council supports them? Have you any idea of the stress and emotional impact you have caused these families since March? No one should have to go through this for an unknown entity. Please choose another site to be shovel ready. There is lots of Class 7 – 9 land to choose from instead of our prime farmland.

In Toronto, the people who have recently lost their homes on Pape Avenue to expropriation, was because of the new Ontario line. At least there was a substantial reason for the loss of their homes and businesses, that being for an infrastructure project, which is usually the reason for an expropriation. Here in Wilmot Township, there is no substantial reason, no infrastructure project anticipated. Expropriation is supposed to be fair, sound and reasonably necessary to proceed under the Expropriation Act. Nothing about the process to date has been fair, sound, reasonable, or transparent. With an expropriation process, there are usually public notices, newspaper notices and public meetings for the purpose of discussing a proposed project. A separate government approval, with its own public process, may be required for an infrastructure project. Nothing to date has been public and there is no anticipated infrastructure project, only a “shovel ready” status. Look at Vaughn’s Block 41. It’s been “shovel ready” for eight years and nothing has developed. Let this not happen to our 770 acres. Let it continue to be farmed, as it was meant to be.

May I submit that Wilmot Council and the Region consider the land along Highway 7 between Nafziger and Hamilton Road which has been undeveloped for years. If the Region has money, why doesn’t it buy that land and make it “shovel ready.” It would bring in thousands of jobs if it were developed, and not disrupt the lives of farmers or homeowners. There are so many better options than what the Region has chosen to do at this time Please show some chutzpah and tell the Region “enough is enough”. Please stand up and speak out for your citizens.

A concerned Wilmot citizen,

Janet and Don Worthington