

**PUBLIC HEARING**

October 6, 2022

5:00 p.m.

Hearing Held in Council Chambers and via Electronic Communications

**Second Public Hearing for Bylaw 1597/22 Diversified Agriculture- Amendment to Land Use Bylaw 1385/17  
Agribusiness and Agritourism Review Recommendations Implementation**

# **RECORD OF SUBMISSIONS**

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**REGISTERED SPEAKERS**

	<b>NAME (please print)</b>	<b>In favour / opposed</b>
1.	<b>Ruby Chan</b>	<b>NOT IDENTIFIED</b>
2.	<b>Cheryl Gerlock</b>	<b>OPPOSED</b>
3.	<b>Fred Fibi</b>	<b>OPPOSED</b>
4.	<b>Lee Farris</b>	<b>OPPOSED</b>
5.	<b>Tam Andersen</b>	<b>OPPOSED</b>
6.	<b>Laurel Andersen</b>	<b>OPPOSED</b>
7.	<b>Patrick D. Tighe</b>	<b>OPPOSED</b>
8.	<b>Keleigh Cormier</b>	<b>OPPOSED</b>
9.	<b>Pierre Cormier</b>	<b>OPPOSED</b>
10.	<b>Launi Julio</b>	<b>IN FAVOUR</b>
11.	<b>Heather D. Swain</b>	<b>OPPOSED</b>
12.	<b>Bill Bertschy</b>	<b>OPPOSED</b>
13.	<b>Nora Nykipilo</b>	<b>OPPOSED</b>
14.	<b>Deborah Bortscher</b>	<b>OPPOSED</b>
15.	<b>Andre Lema</b>	<b>IN FAVOUR</b>

## PUBLIC HEARING

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### Second Public Hearing for Bylaw 1597/22 Diversified Agriculture- Amendment to Land Use Bylaw 1385/17 Agribusiness and Agritourism Review Recommendations Implementation

The following written submissions were received:

	NAME	DATE RECEIVED	IN FAVOUR / OPPOSED
1	Susan Eve Heschel, Director of Communications, Prairie Gardens Adventure & Farm	October 3, 2022	OPPOSED
2	Shelley Takacs, Copper Creek Barn	October 4, 2022	NOT IDENTIFIED
3	Taylor Aliq	October 4, 2022	OPPOSED
4	Paul Dubois	October 5, 2022	IN FAVOUR
5	Celes Davar, President, Earth Rhythms	October 5, 2022	IN FAVOUR
6	Bill Eaton	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
7	Gary Vander Waal, President, Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
8	Heather D. Swain	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
9	Katelyn Vanin	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
10	Susan Eve Heschel	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
11	Keegan Richardson	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
12	Lennie Purschke	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
13	Todd McCrae and Adam Herbert	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
14	Jordan and Caryn Gravelle	October 6, 2022	IN FAVOUR
15	Patricia and Louis Boucher	October 6, 2022	IN FAVOUR
16	Cheryl Gerlock and Fred Fibi	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
17	Frances Gagnon	October 6, 2022	NOT IDENTIFIED
18	Tam Andersen	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
19	Keleigh and Patrick Cormier	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
20	Kathy Larson	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
21	Serena Boone	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
22	Anthony Pedgerachny	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
23	Dave Pangle	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
24	Nora Nykipilo	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
25	Julianna Patry	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
26	Michelle Dubois	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
27	Korbin Dubois	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
28	Tom Spicer	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
29	Gilbert Pouliot	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED
30	Jacky Usher	October 6, 2022	OPPOSED

## Lisa Schovanek

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**From:**  
**Sent:** October 3, 2022 9:54 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services  
**Subject:** Vote Yes

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

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Dear Sturgeon County,

I grew up in a family business, founded by my Father and Mother.  
Schel Management Credit.

The soul purpose of our 30 year old company was to support small Alberta businesses so that they would sustain through the tough financial times, in order to grow and thrive.

My Father taught us something very important, he would say "Cash flow to a business is like blood flow to a body. Once you cut off the blood flow to a body the body dies. Once you cut off cash flow to a business it will go bankrupt and it dies.

This is a simple truth.

By placing restrictive measures that impede revenue streams rather than enhance revenue streams. Sturgeon County is cutting off the cash flow to the Anderson family farming business. Which in turn will have the same effect as blood flow to a body.  
If Sturgeon County implements these changes the end result will be the same.

The Anderson Family Farm will die.

Sturgeon County will decide whether it will be a slow struggling, painful death or quick, simple and quiet.

In my opinion regulations and laws are made to enhance our community so that our families and local businesses can prosper abundantly. Being penalized by the municipality because they grow and thrive is counter intuitive.

When municipal legislators do not work hand in hand with small businesses local businesses suffer. Community members become unemployed. Families struggle under financial distress. Addictions and intimate partner violence as well as incidents of suicide rise. This is a perfect storm brewing.

Is this what we the people of Sturgeon County voted for when we voted you in as Councillors and Mayor?

If you have a conscience I plead with you to consider working with small businesses whether it be farming, private charter schools or any small business that would enhance the wellbeing of Sturgeon County.

I am sure that together you will come up with a progressive plan that will be the envy of every other municipality. By doing this you not only save our jobs, you will be saving your own.  
We are all in the same boat. By voting it is up to you whether we all go down together or rise above and find higher ground.

I believe that as human beings we all strive to do better and to be better, we can only do that if we do it together.

Thank you for your time.

I pray that the seven sacred teachings guide your decision when you vote this evening. That wisdom will flow, that truth will prevail, that respect for the land and each and everyone of us as we are all connected. That compassion leads you. That humility melts the pride that blinds the heart of men and women to envision the greater good.

That you will be brave enough to stand alone and not be swayed and finally that each of you will be filled with courage to step into the unknown and become agents of change.

Peace be with you and your families,

Susan Eve Heschel

1. Vote Yes! I am in support of diversified agriculture activities on agricultural land. This allows farms to innovate to stay viable and sustainable in Sturgeon County. Times are changing. Farms and farmers on small family farms need to be able to adjust and innovate to remain viable. Value-added agricultural processing, selling agritourism experiences, and retail sales of agricultural and related products, farms selling commercially the experiences and events related to farming or farm life, such as farm table dinners or corn mazes are part of the solution to save family farms. My job is directly dependent on you allowing farms to diversify successfully. I ask you to vote in favour of these land use amendments and to reflect best practice in other jurisdictions.

2. I am concerned about the wording that farms permitted for Diversified Agriculture are "not allowed to hold commercial events that are not focused on agriculture – such as weddings, retreats, ceremonies, and corporate functions – on agricultural land". We ask that you revise the wording on this to something like: "would allow farms permitted for Diversified Agriculture to be able to "hold commercial events that are focused on agriculture – such as retreats, ceremonies, and corporate functions, or a limited number of small weddings (up to 10 per year) through value-adding farm food products or processes – on agricultural land."

If the purpose of this bylaw is to allow small family farms to remain sustainable with only "Minimal Site Visits" then surely they should be allowed to sell their experiences to clients who would appreciate the opportunity to support a family farm through group purchases of experiences. These activities are indeed agricultural in nature, as they would result in agri-cultural tours, education, and value-added of primary agriculture products. i.e. Examples could include: Corn on the cob at a corn roast, a campfire cookout using farm raised beef, or a farm picnic with locally raised berries.

It cannot be said as a blanket statement that weddings, retreats, ceremonies, or corporate functions are not focused on agriculture - if they indeed do add-value to primary agriculture products from the farm. Group experiences are more likely to come by bus or limo companies - which reduces vehicle visits and expands the positive visitor economy value chain in the region. It is a win-win-win!

Visiting a corn maze, or any other agri-tourism operation could be an ideal team building retreat, or company picnic. The positive economic impacts, jobs creation and agricultural educational opportunities are recognized by many other municipalities across BC and Ontario, where company picnics and retreats are allowed as part of the agri-tourism permitted land use definition, as are a limited number of weddings (up to 10) per season. There is no reason to believe that the municipality of Sturgeon County knows better than the Ministry of Agriculture in the provinces of BC and Ontario. Let's follow best practice already tried and true in other jurisdictions. Let's get it right! We can do better, Sturgeon County!

By eliminating these revenue generating opportunities of group purchases at local farms, this effectively limits the amount of returns that farmers could expect from their investments into diversification. Business to business transactions (like a group purchase) of a corn maze pass, a farm dinner, or a company picnic on a farm should not be regulated by Sturgeon County. The bylaw would not be enforceable, as it would require Diversified Agriculture businesses to share confidential client information with a third party - which is against the law in Canada. This should not be a part of this land use definition. Please vote to revise the word smithing on this to get it right!

3. I am concerned about the onerous requirements and expensive burdens that will be placed upon small family farms in the application process. For example, to acquire an engineered traffic volume and routing plan will cost \$10,000 - \$25,000. Please consider ensuring small family farms can diversify without making it so expensive to do so, it won't be worthwhile. Please do not kill agritourism from the top down with barriers too large to allow for access for entry level or small farms. Keep it simple!

4. Transparency. I am concerned Sturgeon County is placing new restrictions on Intensive Agriculture, by limiting the number of customers to "Minimal Visits" per day. What is this number? I have learned that this mysterious number has been proven to be about 25 cars per day off any rural road in Sturgeon County. This is not a sustainable business model. Alberta Transportation uses an Average Annual Daily Total for car visits to be at 100 or less before triggering a turning lane requirement. It seems that the County Administration does not follow this protocol, insisting on using peak numbers. This is incorrect and should not be allowed.

5. Vision and leadership. Sturgeon County is the first municipality in Alberta to regulate Diversified Agriculture and Agritourism. There is a tremendous opportunity to be visionary and to create good policy. Complaint driven policy lacks just that. I am concerned that the Mayor of Sturgeon County said publicly at the council meeting where this public hearing was announced, that 100% of neighbors must be in support of an application for AG 2 operations, or the farmers need not apply, as the \$3000 development permit fees would be kept, and the application rejected. Sturgeon County has proven time and again that complaints are not verified or investigated, even though there is policy in place that would support that as a standard operating procedure. Nuisance complaints are not investigated or dismissed. This gives the undemocratic power of veto to one individual over an entire neighborhood, community or even the entire region as new policy is created. This is unfair and bad-faith business practice and should not be condoned by any municipality. I believe Sturgeon County can do better than this statement. A better path would be to create a process to resolve neighborly disputes through mediation. Let's get this right!

6. Treaty Six lands. I am concerned when I see "Ceremonies" listed as a "not allowed" activity on agricultural land. Governed by the Government of Canada - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, this would not seem to be appropriate or under municipal jurisdiction. See: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/committees/inan-jan-28-2021/inan-section-35-consitution-act-1982-background-jan-28-2021.html> Please support the federal government's Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. Please vote to remove this word from the "not allowed" Activities. Let's get it right!

7. Changes to the Intensive Agriculture Permit: It would seem that Council is attempting to push small family farms into applying for the Diversified Agriculture or Ag 2 designation, by further limiting what is allowed under the Intensive Agriculture designation. Changing the wording to reflect -- "minimal site visits, typically on a seasonal basis, to an agricultural parcel for customers for the purchasing of strictly onsite farm products." is not conducive to allowing for intensive agricultural growth on farms. Please vote to not include these amendments as written. How are these to be enforced? Will you have a retail product bylaw squad at each farm, banning items from being sold? This is an overreach. Please do not include this wordsmithing in this bylaw.

Yours truly,  
Susan Eve Heschel  
Director of Communications  
Prairie Gardens Adventure & Farm  
Direct line: (587)991-8111

**From:** [Shelley Takacs](#)  
**To:** [Legislative Services](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: 2nd Public Hearing for Diversified Agriculture Bylaw  
**Date:** October 4, 2022 3:03:10 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[doc\\_agribusiness\\_agritourism\\_review\\_flyer.pdf](#)

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Hello, I do not wish to present at the upcoming meeting, however I wanted to know if questions will be answered at this meeting? If you are taking written submissions, I would like to add the below question, unless this can already be answered in advance.

***What impact would rezoning to AG2 district have on our property taxes and will our entire property have to rezone or just the portion used as an event venue?***

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

Also, if I am unable to attend in person, because I work at the \_\_\_\_\_ and may not get to Morinville for 5pm, will the Teams link be sent out in advance? The last time this was discussed at a council meeting, I had tried to find a link on the calendar through the website and there wasn't one posted.

Thank you very much for your time,

**Shelley Takacs**  
Copper Creek Barn  
24415 TWP Rd 551  
Sturgeon County AB  
780-915-4672  
[www.coppercreekbarn.com](http://www.coppercreekbarn.com)

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Bonnie McInnis** <[bmcinnis@sturgeoncounty.ca](mailto:bmcinnis@sturgeoncounty.ca)>  
**Date:** Tue, Sep 27, 2022 at 11:57 AM  
**Subject:** 2nd Public Hearing for Diversified Agriculture Bylaw  
**To:**

You are receiving this e-mail notification because you presented or provided information to the Agribusiness Agritourism Task Force.

I'm sending out the attached flier to you, so you are aware that Sturgeon County is holding a Second Public Hearing (Oct 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00) on the Land Use Bylaw amendments being proposed that resulted from the Task Forces Recommendations. This flier is being distributed to all

property owners in the County, so you will likely see it in your mailbox as well.

The biggest change from what was presented at the First Public Hearing held on June 14<sup>th</sup>, is that Event Venues are proposed not be allowed in the AG District

Event Venue will be allowed as a discretionary use in the AG2 District.

Events Venues are defined as commercial operations where space is rented for a fee that allow for weddings, ceremonies, corporate functions etc.

The Diversified Agriculture use has been further clarified to state that Ag related events such as farm table dinners and events related to farming/agriculture will be allowed but has been clarified to state that this does not allow for commercial events that are not agriculturally related.

The Public Hearing will be held in County Council Chambers on October 6 at 5:00 PM. You can attend in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams. Contact Legislative Services at 780-939-8279 or [legislativeservices@sturgeoncounty.ca](mailto:legislativeservices@sturgeoncounty.ca) if you wish to register to speak at the Public Hearing.

Regards,

**Bonnie McInnis, RPP, MCIP, MEdes**

**MANAGER, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

p. 780-939-8375

c. 780-499-7468

[bmcinnisl@sturgeoncounty.ca](mailto:bmcinnisl@sturgeoncounty.ca)

[sturgeoncounty.ca](http://sturgeoncounty.ca)



9613 100 Street, Morinville, AB T8R 1L9



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**From:** [Taylor Alig](#)  
**To:** [Legislative Services](#)  
**Subject:** Prairie Gardens Adventure Farm  
**Date:** October 4, 2022 3:18:06 PM

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Hi my name is Taylor and this farm means a lot to my family and I as a place of employment, recreation and a place to make memories, have local healthy fresh produce , experience nature and the beauty of our seasons here in Alberta and more. I would like the people in charge to read this.

I am concerned about the wording that farms permitted for Diversified Agriculture are "not allowed to hold commercial events that are not focused on agriculture – such as weddings, retreats, ceremonies, and corporate functions – on agricultural land". We ask that you revise the wording on this to something like: "would allow farms permitted for Diversified Agriculture to be able to "hold commercial events that are focused on agriculture – such as retreats, ceremonies, and corporate functions, or a limited number of small weddings (up to 10 per year) through value-adding farm food products or processes – on agricultural land."

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It cannot be said as a blanket statement that weddings, retreats, ceremonies, or corporate functions are not focussed on agriculture - if they indeed do add-value to primary agriculture products from the farm. Group experiences are more likely to come by bus or limo companies - which reduces vehicle visits and expands the positive visitor economy value chain in the region. It is a win-win-win!

Visiting a corn maze, or any other agri-tourism operation could be an ideal team building retreat, or company picnic. The positive economic impacts, jobs creation and agricultural educational opportunities are recognized by many other municipalities across BC and Ontario, where company picnics and retreats are allowed as part of the agri-tourism permitted land use definition, as are a limited number of weddings (up to 10) per season. There is no reason to believe that the municipality of Sturgeon County knows better than the Ministry of Agriculture in the provinces of BC and Ontario. Let's follow best practice already tried and true in other jurisdictions. Let's get it right! We can do better, Sturgeon County!

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diversification. Business to business transactions (like a group purchase) of a corn maze pass, a farm dinner, or a company picnic on a farm should not be regulated by Sturgeon County. The bylaw would not be enforceable, as it would require Diversified Agriculture businesses to share confidential client information with a third party - which is against the law in Canada. This should not be a part of this land use definition. Please vote to revise the word smithing on this to get it right!

**From:** [Paul Dubois](#)  
**To:** [Legislative Services](#)  
**Subject:** New Bylaw  
**Date:** October 5, 2022 12:29:35 PM

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Hi, my name is Paul Dubois and I wanted to show my support for the new proposed Bylaw to support Agribusiness and Agritourism. I am very glad that the county has heard our concerns about the initial bylaw and has removed the option of commercial events such as weddings and retreats etc. My property is next to a proposed facility that has not followed any of the county's rules for such things as Development Permits, Construction Permits or anything else. They just proceeded as if the rule of law didn't apply to them. Their total disregard for any rules or respect was very disappointing, on the few wedding venues that they did have, they trespassed onto our property to take photos of the wedding party etc trampling the crop in the process. Parking and noise were also a major concern. I am in full support of such activities that support the local farmers in an Agricultural way as outlined in your new proposed bylaw. Thank You for listening and hearing our concerns.

Paul Dubois

Sent from my iPhone

## Lisa Schovanek

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**From:** Earth Rhythms 2021 <celes@earthrhythms.ca>  
**Sent:** October 5, 2022 4:38 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services  
**Cc:** Reegan McCullough; Alanna Hnatiw  
**Subject:** Support to businesses and Agritourism for diversified agriculture

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Sturgeon County

Re Diversified Agricultural Land Use Amendment By-Law

Good afternoon,

I would like to offer my perspectives and support regarding the development of a by-law to support and grow diversified agricultural activities on agricultural lands.

My perspective comes as an Experiential Tourism operator living and working as a tourism operator collaborating with intensive agriculture operators within the Annapolis Valley food producing region of western Nova Scotia. There are some pretty rigorous rules here in western Nova Scotia to ensure that lands that are suitable for agriculture, remain in agriculture, and are not developed for residential housing.

My perspective has been informed by helping Travel Alberta over a five year period, to expand ways that farms can be ideal locations for visitor experiences, to help diversify the agricultural producers' revenues, and expand opportunities for value-add to farms, and to enable farms to become part of the visitor economy.

However, this area has become attractive for people who come to farm markets (both on and off-farm), year-round farm markets, market stands on farm properties, and a wide host of commercial and public events including weddings, dinners, bridal parties, retreats, ceremonies and corporate team building events that occur on farms, in orchards, at wineries, and many small farms.

Why do these add value to agricultural producers on land zoned for agriculture?

1. *It provides opportunities for the story of these agricultural producers to be valued commercially (return on investment for the story, not just the crop) in the same way that a crop is valued. That is, the story, and the life experience of the producer is now understood to have commercial value. By enabling farmers to have music events, corporate retreats, and a wide array of other visitor activities, farmers now understand how to create experiences that align with their agricultural story, heritage, and what they grow.*
2. *Because all of the weddings, retreats, dinners, corporate functions, and other unique on-farm experiences are designed to include the food directly produced on the farm, and the story of the producer, they are directly related to and focused on growing good food, and enable an up-sell for visitors. Visitors can take part in an experience, and purchase food, flowers, meat, or other things to take home. Greenhouses are used as event venues, when they are empty during the fall and winter months before spring. This is an appropriate use of unused infrastructure during specific seasons.*
3. *Because hurricanes, accelerated climate change, and other changing environmental conditions make farming even more challenging all over Canada (not just Nova Scotia), farmers are being given the opportunity to think*

creatively about value-adds. Value-add does not have to be just product enhancement of a particular commodity or a manufactured or traditional definitions about added-value ag processing. Value-add can be a visitor experience like a dinner in a greenhouse, dinner in a field, making a charcuterie board with a local wood artisan and having a farm dinner, a group event to harvest food in the field and cook with a chef on the farm using all local foods, or a special corporate event (with appropriate permits) to learn how to pair specific wines and ciders grown locally paired with local produce, meats and wild foods. This is the heart of terroir...understanding that the taste and quality of the food is directly related to the minerals, soil and climate of a local region.

4. Perhaps the most important aspect of having a wide range of visitor activities take place on-farm, is that the farm is now understood to be part of the visitor economy. Farms are hosting visitors to learn, be educated about farming, good food, agricultural practices and can buy direct from the farmer after they learn their story. This brings them good marketing exposure, new revenues, and new visitors.

As an Experiential Tourism operator and Coach working in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Alberta, four regions in Ontario, and here in Nova Scotia over the past fifteen years, I have seen and participated in a remarkable growth of farm tourism, not just ecotourism. But tourism that occurs on farms. Agricultural producers can be part of the visitor economy.

As such, I support the new by-law. From my experience, as long as the proper permits are in place, farms should be encouraged to diversify into (and not be restricted) a wide range of visitor activities. The only caveat I would recommend is that if an activity occurs on the farm, the farm operator be required to serve foods produced on-farm, collaborate with others in the community to help deliver these foods as experiences, and align the wedding, retreat, corporate functions to be mandated to use foods from the farm providing these visitor experiences.

Visitors' expectations have changed. Covid, climate change, and a yearning to know more about where food comes from are driving these changes. Having these kinds of visitors come to on-farm experiences and events adds value to the farm. Contrary to these being any kind of detriment, it creates consumer advocacy for our agricultural producers here in Canada.

Thank you kindly for the opportunity to offer these perspectives. If you are interested, and would like examples of other on-farm experiences that we have been coaching and developing for the past fifteen years all over Canada in agricultural regions, I would be happy to provide information, support and assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Celes Davar, President  
Earth Rhythms, Inc.

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**Earth Rhythms** Canadian operations are located in the Gaspereau Valley of Nova Scotia. We craft custom experiences for travellers and groups. *Our east coast focus integrates a blend of culinary, music, nature, and cultural experiences that feature Nova Scotia landscapes, stories, and hands-on activities in new ways all year long.* Personalized guiding services, itinerary planning, and "guide for hire" are our specialties.

For Canadian tourism industry partners, we provide personalized experiential tourism training and coaching services, presentations, and community training workshops to assist in developing new tourism experiences and building community capacity and collaboration practices.

I acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional and unceded territories of the Mi'kmaq people and that I will strive to honour the relationship defined in the Peace and Friendship Treaties. We are all treaty people. (Thank you to Amanda Peters, Glooscap First Nation, Nova Scotia for providing this wording.)



**Celes Davar, Earth Rhythms, Inc.**

**He/Him/His**

**448 West Brooklyn Mountain Road, RR#3, West Brooklyn, NS. B4P 2R3**  
**Between Maqapskejijk (Avonport) and Sikunme'katik (Gaspereau River), and northwest of Kluskap (Horton)**

[www.earthrhythms.ca](http://www.earthrhythms.ca)

*Fostering travel conversations and custom immersive experiences with creative people.*

**Email:** [celes.davar@earthrhythms.ca](mailto:celes.davar@earthrhythms.ca)

**Tel/Text:** 1.204.867.7152

**Facebook:** @earthrhythms

**Twitter:** @earthrhythms

**Instagram:** @earthrhythms

**LinkedIn:** <https://ca.linkedin.com/in/celesdavar>

## **Lisa Schovanek**

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**From:** Bill Eaton  
**Sent:** October 6, 2022 11:10 AM  
**To:** Legislative Services  
**Cc:** Bill Eaton  
**Subject:** To be read out loud at hearings today.

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

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### **PUBLIC HEARING - Diversified Agriculture Amendment to Land Use Bylaw 1385/17(Bylaw 1597/22)**

#### ***PLEASE READ THIS OUT LOUD-***

Morning,

My name is Bill Eaton, an Edmontonian, married with two daughters and business owner in a variety of industries.

Over 15 years ago, I was a parent helper at my daughter's school for a field trip to Prairie Gardens in Sturgeon County.

That morning outing, a mere four hours, has forever changed our lives in so many positive ways.

This was an educational excursion; children were introduced to various types of animals and basic farming techniques. It was a beautiful fall day and the kids left enthused and tired from interactions, learnings and participating in activities.

That night our supper table was filled with questions such as:

- Where do vegetables come from?
- Where does meat come from?
- How do they grow vegetables?
- And so on

My wife and I have always tried to be solid role models for our two daughters.

Personally, I had a ton of fun. What has ensued is a 15 year tradition whereby every fall we head to Bon Accord, grab an ice cream some fuel and then head to Prairie Gardens to partake in the festivities.

Our front steps always have pumpkins from there. We have egg laying chickens, part of an expanded hen program in Edmonton, which originated from interest from those early days at Prairie Gardens.

We grow vegetables, again because of our daughter's interest in healthy food and where it originates.

Our oldest is enrolled in the dietetics program at The U of A and is seeking a professional career in basically what and why we eat food.

I was devastated to read an article that showed up one day in my news feed about how Prairie Gardens had to close for some zoning issues. Told my kids and they asked why? How? Where will we get pumpkins? They were sad about the lost spent time together. Instantly thought about municipality over reach, collusion in politics and how thankfully we live in Alberta with a UCP government which is looking to cut red tape.



Cut the darn tape, all this is nonsense. Prairie Gardens is good for the local economy, it has put Bon Accord on the map as a drive through destination and huge hirer of locals.

More importantly, this little oasis, transforms lives. We should celebrate and encourage businesses like this not throw down impossible obstacles.

Shame on you all hopefully common sense prevails.

Bill Eaton

Edmonton, Alberta

T5N-2A6

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

## Lisa Schovanek

---

**From:** AFFPA Administrator <admin@albertafarmfresh.com>  
**Sent:** October 6, 2022 1:21 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services  
**Subject:** Letter of Concern  
**Attachments:** AFFPA letter to Sturgeon County .pdf  
  
**Categories:** Lisa

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Hello Legislative Services,

Please find attached a Letter of Concern regarding changes to your Land Use By-Laws.

Please reach out with any questions regarding this email.

Thank you,

Chelsea for Gary Vander Waal

--

Chelsea Wall  
Administrator  
Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association



October 5, 2022

Sturgeon County

9613-100 Street, Morinville, Alberta T8R 1L9

legislativeservices@sturgeoncounty.ca

Dear Legislative Services at Sturgeon County,

Re: Land Use By-Law

As an advocate for the farm to garden to market producers in Alberta, it has been brought to our attention that the municipality would like to change the Land Use By-Law's for local producers.

Changes to the Intensive Agriculture Permit could push small family farms that grow u-pick, market garden crops into applying for the Diversified Agriculture or Ag 2 designation, further limiting what is allowed under the Intensive Agriculture designation. This change could result in the closure of these family farms due to limiting their ability and or access to provide the consumer with on farm products.

By eliminating the revenue generating opportunities of group purchases at local farms, this effectively limits the amount of returns that farmers could expect from their investments into diversification. Business to business transactions (like a group purchase) of a corn maze pass, a farm dinner, or a company picnic on a farm should not be regulated by Sturgeon County. The bylaw would not be enforceable, as it would require Diversified Agriculture businesses to share confidential client information with a third party – which we believe may impede privacy and FOIP acts.

Some farms may not be able to withstand the expensive burdens that will be placed upon small family farms in the application process. Please consider ensuring small family farms can diversify without making it so expensive to do so, our communities rely on these family farms and their relationships to thrive. Please do not kill agritourism from the top down with barriers too large to allow for access for entry level or small farms.

Please accept this letter as support for the farm to market consumers in your jurisdiction.

If you would like to speak with us further about how these changes may impact the members we support please schedule a meeting by calling our Administrative office at 403-964-3276

Thank you,

Gary Vander Waal, President

Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association

Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Vander Waal".

Box 781 Station M Calgary, AB T2P 2J6

**Lisa Schovanek**

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**From:** heather  
**Sent:** October 6, 2022 2:15 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services  
**Cc:** heather  
**Subject:** Letter for submission for OCT 6th meeting  
**Attachments:** Letter from Heather D. Swain Oct 6th 2022.doc

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Hello Sturgeon County, Attached is my letter regarding Oct 6<sup>th</sup> 2022 meeting. I have been approved to read my letter at the meeting and plan to attend today. Thank you for your attention to this matter and have a wonderful gorgeous fall day,  
Heather D. Swain

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Heather D. Swain

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**RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments**

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is Heather D. Swain. I work at Prairie Gardens and I look forward to working there for years to come.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

Passing this bylaw as amended will stop me from earning of an income from Prairie Gardens where I have worked for the past 15 years.

With kindness and respect,

Heather D. Swain

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**From:** Katelyn Vanin  
**Sent:** October 6, 2022 2:41 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services

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**RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22**  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is Katelyn

I currently am employed at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County. A business who has supported local farmers, small businesses, and diversity in agriculture.

My job will be lost, please take this into consideration.

Yours truly,

Katelyn Vanin

**Lisa Schovanek**

---

**From:** Office Prairie Gardens <Office@prairiegardens.org>  
**Sent:** October 6, 2022 2:52 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services  
**Subject:** Diversified Ag Definition

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**RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22**  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is [Cathy Spicer](#)

My husband & I are both currently employed at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

Both our jobs will be lost, a devastating blow to our financial well being.

Yours truly,

[Cathy Spicer](#)  
[Tom Spicer](#)

Cathy Spicer  
Office Manager  
Prairie Gardens & Adventure Farm  
Edmonton Events Award Winner! Best Venue - 2016  
P: 780.921.2272 F: 780.921.2398  
E: [office@prairiegardens.org](mailto:office@prairiegardens.org)  
[www.PrairieGardens.org](http://www.PrairieGardens.org)



**Lisa Schovanek**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** October 6, 2022 3:10 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services  
**Subject:** RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22

**Categories:** Lisa, COMPLETED BY LEG OFFICER

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Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is Susan,

I currently am employed at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost.

Yours truly,

Susan Eve Heschel  
Corporate Special Events  
Director of Communications  
Prairie Gardens & Adventure Farm  
Direct line: 587.991.8111



**From:** Keegan Richardson  
**Sent:** October 6, 2022 3:49 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services

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**RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22**  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is Keegan Richardson

I currently am employed at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost. It is very difficult for people with my mental health conditions to find work suitable work. I beg you to take this into consideration.

Yours truly, Keegan

**Lisa Schovanek**

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**From:** joe and lenora purschke  
**Sent:** October 6, 2022 3:50 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services  
**Subject:** Public hearing bylaw 1597-22  
**Attachments:** img014.pdf

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Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is Lennie Purschke

I currently am employed at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost.

Yours truly,

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

**From:**  
**Sent:** October 6, 2022 3:57 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services  
**Subject:** I love my job!

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RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is Todd McCrae.

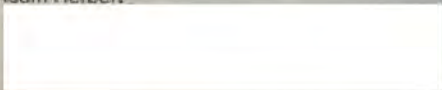
My partner & I are both currently employed at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

Both our jobs will be lost, a devastating blow to our financial well being.

Yours truly,

Todd McCrae  
Adam Herbert



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**From:** Caryn Gravelle  
**Sent:** October 6, 2022 4:51 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services  
**Subject:** Public hearing oct 6,2022

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Our names are Jordan and Caryn Gravelle and we would like to thank Mayor Alanna and the Councilors for providing the opportunity to communicate our concerns with the Agritourism/Agribusiness Bylaws and specifically Event Venues. We agree with the County's proposed amendment to not allow Event Venues in the AG District.

We realize our comments are similar to the June 14th Public Hearing which we attended but we could not let the opportunity of a 2nd Public Hearing pass without continuing to share what has happened to us personally. Especially due to recent media stories involving other venues within the County, we felt it was important for people to hear OUR story because it has been nothing short of exhaustive and it has not even been resolved yet.

A couple of years ago an adjacent 5 acre property was purchased in our tight knit community and the new owners felt they could do whatever they wanted with the property. The intent was always to set up an Event Venue evidenced by a commercial website for booking events. We have witnessed all the things that can go wrong when proper Bylaws are not in place and then a complete disrespect for existing protocols within the County are not followed.

Shortly after the land purchase, the extensive renovations started without permits. The County ultimately put a Stop Work order in place because of this. However, the illegal work continued but in the middle of the night to try and hide the continued work. Soon there was an ornamental tractor in the front yard with nothing Agricultural related being done. Large parties were then hosted as "family" functions. These parties had zero respect for us personally or other adjacent landowners. These Events were not Agriculture related. A Court Order was put into place in an attempt to stop the events. Events continued. This land owner has not contributed positively to the County or its residents, and it has ultimately cost the County significant resources.

One of the biggest problems with our situation was every "Event" that was held was referred to as "family" even though there was a commercial website set up. How does the County propose to differentiate commercial versus family or help residents differentiate, especially if it will be a complaint driven process?

Five minutes just isn't enough to communicate all that we have gone through, but I will highlight some additional concerns in point form:

Traffic issues;  
Excessive noise;

Environmental concerns;  
Parking issues;  
Trespassing, including property damage;  
Harassment and Disrespect to neighbours and County officials/employees; Safety and security issues;  
Potential for increased criminal activity;  
Fire and EMS protocols not in place;  
RCMP involvement.

In conclusion, we are hopeful that the County's proposed amendment to not allow Event Venues in the AG District, will help resolve the Event Venue we are dealing with. However, a situation like ours could easily happen to any County resident and that is why it is incredibly important to get this Bylaw correct. We are advocates for growth and development in the County and recognize that the county wants to be supportive of Diversified AG, but please don't rush to a quick decision before it's right. Having this second Public Hearing is evidence that the County wants to get it right.

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

**Lisa Schovanek**

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**From:** Cheryl Gerlock  
**Sent:** October 6, 2022 6:08 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services  
**Subject:** Fwd: Presentations  
**Attachments:** 10.6.22 Cheryl.docx; 10.6.22 Fernando.docx

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See attached for land use bylaw public hearing.

Thanks.

Begin forwarded message: Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

**From:** Cheryl Gerlock  
**Date:** October 6, 2022 at 3:25:51 PM MDT  
**To:** Cheryl Gerlock  
**Subject:** Presentations

My name is Cheryl Gerlock, and I am speaking out against the proposed changes to the land use bylaw.

First, thank you, Madam Mayor and Council, for hearing our feedback and holding this session at a time when it was easier for most to be able to attend. Thank you as well for hearing some of the concerns and for administration making some revisions. While we are grateful Event Venues have been removed completely from AG1 and made a discretionary use in AG2, there are still several gaps which are very concerning, and which we feel will lead to many issues.

The ABAT task force listed several functions which they propose may be included as permitted uses under the new designations. They suggested functions should include, but not be limited to, farm retail sales of products, agritourism, farm living or nature based recreational experiences such as hay rides and petting zoos, yoga classes, farm themed playgrounds, corn mazes, seasonal events, retreats, small scale on farm recreation, farm to table suppers, cooking classes and ice cream. These suggestions are all coincidentally things which already happen at some of the businesses these bylaws are being written to accommodate, and whose owners were part of the committee writing the proposals.

Yoga classes???

There are no mention of limits on attendance under these new proposed changes. What about hours of operation? What about the number of events you would expect neighbours to tolerate? There should be limits, and those limits should protect the neighbours and their ability to enjoy their own property. The maximum allowed should be 100 people per day. Anything more than that is not a farm, it is straight up a business. There is mention of a matrix that would be developed. If you are interested in what sort of limits should be set, and at what point the business would impact the neighbours, ask the neighbours! This matrix should be made public, and the details should be part of the bylaws.

If the events of the past 6 weeks taught us anything, it should be that we need to be more buttoned up than we are, or situations can and will be manipulated. Our neighbour is already proposing small scale weddings where they use produce grown on the property, and enjoy the scenery of the property, are really considered farm experiences, and therefore allowed under the new bylaws.



The bylaw also falls short in addressing any concerns around enforcement. What exactly will bylaw officers be able to do in responding to violations? To date, all they could do is make notes and send emails regarding the situation. If they don't have the power to enforce the bylaws, what is the point? As well, complaint driven enforcement leads to those of us who are on the right side of the bylaws, and who dare to stand up in defence of our rights, to be forced to endure character defamation, threats, and false accusations. I think maybe council and administration may now have an appreciation for what this sort of retaliation feels like.

We understand 2 surveys were done as part of the task forces research. One was apparently online, and the other was a mail out survey sent to targeted residents. It is wrong to assume putting a survey online was going to meet the widest possible audience. For the second attempt at feedback, only 384 surveys were sent out. That's only approximately 2% of our population. Worse, only 39 came back, less than .2% of the county's population. "We tried" is not acceptable when it comes to something so impactful to residents as the sweeping changes being proposed. Council could have put it back to the task force to find options to engage the population in more meaningful ways. It would have been responsible for council to reject those results and refuse to move forward back then, it would be prudent for council to do so now. If businesses are forced to scale back, lay off staff, or close as a result, that is on them, as they are the ones who made the decision to move their business beyond what the laws of our county allowed.

This is a huge proposed change, one that should not be rushed into. If we move forward with this, there's no turning back. We need to go further than the task force did in researching proposals. We need to work harder to have more engagement from the community. We need to ensure any bylaw revisions are written to protect the neighbours first. We need to ensure any bylaw put forward actually has some teeth to it, is one that can be regulated, and is one that has clearly defined consequences. It needs to be one the county can enforce and manage.

This isn't it.

My name is Fred Fibi, and I am speaking out against the proposed changes to the land use bylaw.

I've said this before, and I'll say it clearly again. I'm a farmer, and I want to live on my farm and enjoy my lifestyle in peace. I do not want a business operating next door to me. I assure you, no one does. Just because you call it Diversified Agriculture doesn't make me want to live next door to it either. I'm concerned the proposed bylaw does nothing to address the intensity of these operations. Is it 2 people a day? 20 people a day? 2,000 people a weekend? The bylaw fails to address and define this. Trust me, festivals attended by thousands of people every weekend from middle of August through the end of October are definitely a disruption to our lives.

As the mayor said during her interview on the Ryan Jespersen show, if your farm can't be sustained by 100 visitors a day, you are not a farm, you are a business. I 100% agree. Charging \$26 admission, plus \$10 to park your car, makes you a business. Businesses should be zoned commercial, regardless of if they are selling on farm grown pumpkins and a "farm experience". Just because you call yourself a small family farm doesn't make you one. When you are one of the largest landowners in the area, and, conservatively, \$750,000 a year of your income comes from the cost of admission alone, you are a business. Businesses need to be located in areas that support them, like commercial parks, where they can't impact neighbours, and they should pay the appropriate taxes, and not be allowed to hide under the guise of agriculture.

If we benefit as a county from agribusiness and agritourism, where are the hotels that people spend the night at while they tour our county? Where are all the restaurants? The shops? The fact is we are located 20 minutes north of Edmonton. People come out, spend their money at the business they are going to, then go back to the city. The county won't be making increased tax dollars either from any of these businesses as they will not be taxed as commercial operations if allowed to operate under the revised bylaw.

Proposed changes say the business shall not generate noise considered offensive by the Development Authority. We can assure you these businesses generate noise. We can assure you it is offensive. In our case, we have told you and provided you with physical evidence of all the noise, traffic, and trespassing issues

we face as a neighbour to one of these businesses. How much more of this are you going to ignore? What more can we do to have our voices heard and our concerns as neighbours taken seriously? I can assure you, there is no way you can make 50,000 visitors a year tolerable, no matter how much you slow the traffic down.

Protection of neighbours' rights should be the priority. Any application to rezone, or diversify in any way, should require 100% of the neighbours' approvals. These proposed changes should not be incorporated into our current land use bylaws as permitted uses. I maintain they should be discretionary, with each and every event, festival, and whatever else these business owners dream up, requiring a permit that neighbours can have a say in, and with clearly defined operating requirements that the county actually enforces.

I'm speaking out today despite the threats of character defamation, slanderous comments, and other retaliations I have faced. I'm tired of all of it. I'm sure Council and administration now have a very good understanding of what me and my family have had to endure because we don't want a business operating next door to us.

My hope today is Council takes into consideration the events of the past 6 weeks and all the issues leading up to them, and recognizes the bylaw, as it is currently written, is nowhere near ready and should be sent back for heavy revisions or tabled completely in favour of further research. I hope the events of the past 6 weeks have opened your eyes. If we move forward with the bylaw as it is, we are opening a can of worms no one will be able to close.

# Sturgeon County 2nd Public Hearing

October 06th, 2022

Regarding Agritourism venues in the Agricultural District of Sturgeon County.

Living in Sturgeon for many years we have in the previous year witnessed a single dwelling home turned into a wedding venue. Unknown to any neighbors close by it was quickly transformed to a commercial venue. Certain things were also illegally transformed on the property. Then the traffic enhanced to that venue off highway 37 which is a very busy highway. The music was very loud and played indoors and outdoors. We live only two houses down and it was unbearable to sit outside in our back yard because of the loud music. All afternoon and into the late evening we had to stay inside our home. Even indoors we could still hear the loud sounds. Can you just imagine this in your back yard all summer!

It was very stressful throughout the whole season as our community felt as though we needed to be vigilant of the comings and goings on this particular property. This owner was very disrespectful and how many more could appear in our county and create havoc to those whose livelihood is all about farming and country living.

We wish to thank the Sturgeon County Council for hearing our voices and concerns and hope there can be proper guidelines for everyone to follow.

There is nothing wrong with growing varieties of vegetables on farmland but those types of functions need to be regulated; but who will be over-seeing these venues?

Patricia & Louis Baucher

Sturgeon County

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Tam Andersen  
Sturgeon County, AB  
RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

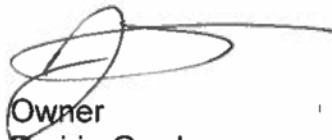
Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is Tam Andersen. I run and operate Prairie Gardens in Sturgeon County.

Passing this bylaw as amended will likely shut a business down that has been in continuous in Sturgeon County operation since 1956 – for over 66 years.

Thank you for your careful considerations on this matter.

Tam Andersen

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'A' with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Owner  
Prairie Gardens  
Sturgeon County, AB

**From:** Frances Gagnon  
**Sent:** October 6, 2022 6:59 PM  
**To:** Legislative Services; Dianne Mason  
**Subject:** Re: Registering to speak at the Public Hearing Oct 6  
**Attachments:** Sturgeon County Public Hearing, October 6, 2022.pdf

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Hello Dianne and Legislative Services,

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I am so sorry I did not attend the hearing tonight, and did not notify you before.

My submission is attached.

Thank you,

Frances Gagnon

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

On Oct 5, 2022, at 1:44 PM, Frances Gagnon

wrote:

Attending in person. Thank you.

On Oct 5, 2022, at 12:58 PM, Legislative Services  
<[legislativeservices@sturgeoncounty.ca](mailto:legislativeservices@sturgeoncounty.ca)> wrote:

Thank you. I have put you on the list of registered speakers. Will you be attending in person or will you require a virtual TEAMS meeting invitation?

Dianne Mason  
Legislative Officer  
780-939-8277  
[dmason@sturgeoncounty.ca](mailto:dmason@sturgeoncounty.ca)  
sturgeoncounty.ca  
9613 100 Street, Morinville, AB T8R 1L9

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-----Original Message-----

From: Frances Gagnon  
Sent: October 5, 2022 12:22 PM

To: Legislative Services <legislativeservices@sturgeoncounty.ca>

Subject: Registering to speak at the Public Hearing Oct 6

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Hello,

I would like to register to speak tomorrow evening at the Sturgeon County Public Hearing. Please confirm.

Thank you,

Frances Gagnon

This communication is intended for the recipient to whom it is addressed, and may contain confidential, personal, and or privileged information. Please contact the sender immediately if you are not the intended recipient of this communication, and do not copy, distribute, or take action relying on it. Any communication received in error, or subsequent reply should be deleted or destroyed.

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October 6, 2022

Frances Gagnon

██████████  
St. Albert, AB ██████████

Sturgeon County  
9613 100 Street, Morinville, AB T8R 1L9

RE: Second Public Hearing, Bylaw 1597/22

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

For anyone residing in Sturgeon County, having this bylaw in place with appropriate details, regulation and enforcement is crucial. There may not be a situation for you at the present time but it can happen unexpectedly to anyone at any time, as it did to our family.

My parents are longtime land owners and active community members in Sturgeon County. They reside on a quarter-section west of St. Albert, along the Sturgeon River. On the same section are other family members, with a number of neighbours in a similar situation.

Three years ago, an event venue began operating across the river on a residential parcel of land. No one resides on the property; it is used as an event venue for wedding ceremonies and parties, overnight guests and camping. It is noisy throughout the weekend as well as the day of the ceremony, with traffic, people, speeches and entertainment. It continues past the 11 pm noise regulation, and neighbours have to follow-up with bylaw and RCMP.

Under an amended bylaw, the property owners of the wedding venue would not be allowed to operate as the event venue is smaller than 5 acres, in AG residential.

One concern is that on a larger parcel of land, this could continue to unfold. It could be a semblance of agriculture and still be involved in larger events. Another concern is that without substantial definitions, the bylaw could be open to interpretation. For example, saying weddings on a farm are part of diversified agriculture, as a wedding could involve local chefs preparing food with ingredients from the farm. <https://www.stalberttoday.ca/local-news/diversified-agriculture-law-heads-for-second-public-hearing-mcnab-peter-andersen-5822772>

Regulation and enforcement are very important with any Event Venues, Agribusiness and Agritourism ventures. The County and Administration will need ample resources and support. It must go beyond a complaint-driven method, where the burden is on the neighbours.

The County needs to get the bylaw and details right. Thank you for your consideration and listening to residents and families.

Sincerely,

Frances Gagnon

October 6, 2022

Sturgeon County  
9613-100 Street,  
Morinville, Alberta  
T8R 1L9

Dear Madam Mayor and Councillors of Sturgeon County:

Thank you for allowing us to share our thoughts regarding the proposed bylaw to support and grow Agribusiness and Agritourism in the County

1. We fully support diversified agriculture activities on agricultural land allowing farm families to innovate to stay viable and sustainable in Sturgeon County. Research describes agritourism as a growing strategy for many farm families to expand their incomes and business. Agritourism incorporates value-added agricultural processing and retail sales of agricultural and related products, farms selling commercially the experiences and events related to farming or farm life, such as farm table dinners or corn mazes. We ask you to vote in favour of these land use amendments and to reflect best practice in other jurisdictions.

2. We are concerned about the wording that farms permitted for Diversified Agriculture are *"not allowed to hold commercial events that are not focused on agriculture – such as weddings, retreats, ceremonies, and corporate functions – on agricultural land"*.  
We ask that you consider revising the wording to: "would allow farms permitted for Diversified Agriculture to be able to "hold commercial events that are focused on agriculture – such as retreats, ceremonies, and corporate functions, or a limited number of small weddings (up to 10 per year) through value-adding farm food products or processes – on agricultural land."

We challenge the statement that *"weddings, retreats, ceremonies, or corporate functions are not focussed on agriculture"*

If the purpose of this bylaw is to allow small family farms to remain sustainable with only "Minimal Site Visits" then surely they should be allowed to sell their experiences to clients who would appreciate the opportunity to support a family farm through group purchases of experiences. These activities are indeed agricultural in nature, as they would result in agricultural tours, education, and sale of primary and value-added agriculture products. i.e. Examples could include: Corn on the cob at a corn roast, a campfire cookout using farm raised beef, or a farm picnic with locally raised berries.

Groups are more likely to attend via bus or limo companies - which reduces vehicle visits while growing the positive visitor (tourism) economy in the region. It is a win for many stakeholders in Sturgeon County!

Visiting a corn maze, or any other agritourism operation could be an ideal team building retreat, or company picnic. The positive economic impacts, jobs creation and agricultural educational opportunities are recognized by many other municipalities across BC and Ontario, where company picnics and retreats are allowed as part of the agritourism permitted land use definition, as are a limited number of weddings (up to 10) per season. Sturgeon County can lead the way in Alberta with best practices already tried and true in other Canadian jurisdictions.!

3. The Application Process. We are concerned about the heavy requirements and expensive burdens that will be placed upon small family farms in the application process. For example, to acquire an engineered traffic volume and routing plan will cost \$10,000 - \$25,000. Please consider ensuring small family farms can diversify without making it so expensive to do so, it won't be worthwhile. Please do not kill agritourism from the top down with barriers too large to allow for access for entry level or small farms. Keep it simple! A traffic accommodation plan costs only \$300 and gives the result needed.

4. Not a Sustainable Business Model. We are concerned that Sturgeon County is placing new restrictions on Intensive Agriculture, by limiting the number of customers to "Minimal Visit per day". We have learned that this number to be about 25 cars per day off any rural road in Sturgeon County. Alberta Transportation uses an Average Annual Daily Total (not peak numbers) for car visits to be 100 or less before triggering a turning lane requirement. This "25 cars per day" does not support a sustainable business model and should be revised to reflect Alberta Transportation's protocols.

5. Vision and Leadership. Sturgeon County is a leader in its efforts to regulate Diversified Agriculture and Agritourism in Alberta. There is a tremendous opportunity to be visionary while creating progressive and sustainable policy.

We are concerned that the Mayor of Sturgeon County said publicly at the council meeting where this public hearing was announced, *"that 100% of neighbors must be in support of an application for AG 2 operations, or the farmers need not apply, as the \$3000 development permit fees would be kept, and the application rejected"*.

It appears that such complaints are not thoroughly verified or investigated in Sturgeon County, even though there is policy in place "as a standard operating procedure". Nuisance complaints are not investigated or dismissed. This gives the undemocratic power of veto to any single individual over an entire neighborhood, community or even the entire region as new policy is created. This is highly unfair and should not be condoned by any municipality.

We believe Sturgeon County can do better by creating a process to resolve neighbourly disputes through engagement and mediation. It's just the right thing to do!

6. Changes to the Intensive Agriculture Permit: It would seem that Council is attempting to push small family farms into applying for the Diversified Agriculture or Ag 2 designation, by further limiting what is allowed under the Intensive Agriculture designation. Changing the wording to -- "*minimal site visits, typically on a seasonal basis, to an agricultural parcel for customers for the purchasing of strictly onsite farm products.*" is not conducive to allowing for intensive agricultural growth on farms and effectively limits the amount of returns that farm families could expect from their investments into diversification. How are these to be enforced? Will you have a retail product bylaw squad at each farm, banning items from being sold? This is an overreach. Please vote to not include this amendment as written.

7. Treaty Six Lands. We are concerned when we see "Ceremonies" listed as a "not allowed" activity on agricultural land. Governed by the Government of Canada - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, this would not seem to be appropriate or under municipal jurisdiction. See: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/committees/inan-jan-28-2021/inan-section-35-consitution-act-1982-background-jan-28-2021.html> Please support the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. Please vote to remove this word from the "not allowed" Activities.

## **Supplemental Information**

### Higher Level of Understanding of Agritourism

We to attended (virtually) the 2022 International Workshop on Agritourism in early September, held in Burlington, Vermont, USA.

The International Workshop on Agritourism (IWA) is a global network of farmers and ranchers, tourism experts, researchers, educators, agricultural service providers, and others interested in promoting agritourism.

With over 500 attendees from over 50 countries.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress on Agritourism is scheduled for May 2024 in Italy.

15th WORLD AGRITOURISM DAY – 16 May 2022

### Key Highlights of Agritourism:

#### Benefits to the greater community

- Jobs created and economic opportunity
- Activities, things to do, etc.

- Part of regional destination development
- Keeping farmland active and undeveloped
- Aligned with community goals

Financial benefits – diversified income stream:

- More income without increasing acreage
- Building a new business with existing resources

Meets the need of increasing trend for people to be connected with their food and educates the public on:

- Where food is grown
- Farming methods
- Youth engagement opportunities
- Marketing opportunities

Examples of benefits of agritourism:

- Cash flow during the off season
- Opportunity to sell the “experience” of your agricultural venue
- Opportunity to sell products grown and harvested in your agricultural operation (and neighbouring ag operations)
- Opportunity to share your passion of agriculture with others

Conclusion: Agritourism offers farmers the possibility of diversifying and generating additional income through on-farm touristic activities in order to help **supplementing** their low agricultural income. This helps to maintain the viability of active farms and rural communities. Agritourism activities support and promote agricultural resources, traditions and culture. Following this line of thought, agritourism results to be a successful example of sustainable tourism that has gained importance over the years.

Respectively Submitted

Keleigh Cormier

Pierre Cormier

RESIDENTS OF STRATHENA COUNTY

RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is *Kathy Larson*

I work at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost in the process.

Yours truly,

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is *Serena Boone*

I work at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost in the process.

Yours truly,

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is Anthony Pedgerachny

I work at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost in the process.

Yours truly,

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act



*DAVE PANGLE*

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is *Dave Pangle*.

I work at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost in the process.

Yours truly,

Nora Nukipilo

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is *Nora Nykipilo*

I work at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost in the process!

Yours truly,

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

Julianna Patry

RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is Julianna Patry

I work at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost in the process.

Yours truly,

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

Michelle Dubois

RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is Michelle Dubois

I work at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost in the process.

Yours truly,

Korbin

DuBois

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is Korbin DuBois

I work at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost in the process.

Yours truly,

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

TDM SPICER

RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is TDM SPICER

I work at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost in the process.

Yours truly,

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is Gilbert Pouliot

I work at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost in the process.

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act

Yours truly,



RE: PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 1597-22  
Diversified Agriculture / Intensive Agriculture Land Use Definition Amendments

October 6, 2022

Mayor and Distinguished Members of Council,

My name is *JACKY USHER*

I work at Prairie Gardens.

Passing this bylaw as amended will shut down a business that has been in continuous operation since 1956 – for over 66 years – in Sturgeon County.

My job will be lost in the process.

Yours truly,

Severed in line with section 17 of the FOIP Act