

PUBLIC HEARING

October 6, 2022

5:00 p.m.

Sturgeon County Centre, Morinville, Alberta
and Through Electronic Communications

**5:00 p.m. Public Hearing - Bylaw 1597/22 - Diversified Agriculture - Amendment to Land Use
Bylaw 1385/17 - Agribusiness and Agritourism Review Recommendations**

**RECORD OF SUBMISSIONS
RECEIVED AS OF 1:00 P.M.
OCTOBER 5, 2022**

Lisa Schovanek

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 a 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 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!

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

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

From: Bonnie McInnis <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 6th 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 14th, 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 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

sturgeoncounty.ca

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From: [Taylor Aliq](#)
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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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