



City of Pitt Meadows
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

December 1, 2022

File: 6635-20-2022-01

Commission Chair Jennifer Dyson
Agricultural Land Commission
201 – 4940 Canada Way
Burnaby, BC V5G 4K6

Dear Chair Dyson:

Re: Agricultural Land Commission Resolution #416/2022 (Maple Meadows Equestrian, ALC application 64317)

On behalf of the City of Pitt Meadows Council, I am writing to express our disappointment and disagreement on the outcome of the Commission's decision to deny the application for a farm supply retail use at the Maple Meadows Equestrian facility.

The Otter Co-op in Pitt Meadows has offered local producers feed, seed, and other necessary agricultural supplies for more than 60 years. Its unavoidable loss due to major transportation infrastructure works will affect many local agricultural operations. Council and the community were hopeful to find a solution to accommodate this continued service, which included a thorough review of potential options. Unfortunately, the Commission's decision means local agriculture producers will have reduced access to essential operational supplies. With current and potential future supply-chain disruptions, and now reduced availability of local suppliers, this gap in service will negatively affect the viability of local agriculture.

The Commission's rationale for denying the application, as per Commission resolution #416/2022 sections 15 and 16, included concerns of conflicting commercial traffic, anticipated impacts to the subject property, and belief the use is better suited to the urban area. Council respectfully, but strongly, disagrees with the Commission's rationale for the following reasons:

1. We believe the Commission's reasoning fails to recognize that agriculture is fundamentally a commercial enterprise and, therefore, selling operational supplies needed by producers is not a competing or conflicting commercial land-use activity as suggested. In response to the traffic concerns raised by the Commission, any additional local traffic introduced by the proposal would be agricultural in purpose (i.e., agricultural producers seeking and/or delivery of agricultural supplies). This is reasonably comparable to farm-gate sales traffic, which is accepted by ALC policies.
2. The proposal does relate to the existing farm-operation and will not reduce the agricultural utility of the property as suggested. As recognized in the Commission's resolution, the property currently includes an equestrian facility. This type of operation requires ongoing supplies of feed, hay, and other agricultural goods that would be offered for sale to other agricultural operations; therefore, the proposal is well connected to the needs of the existing farm-operation.

Additionally, the proposal was to re-purpose existing structures and parking areas, thus restricting its footprint to areas already developed for an approved use. It is unclear how the Commission determined the area available for agriculture would be reduced and the use would not be constrained to the subject property.

3. Council agrees the proposed use could be suited to an urban location; however, access by agricultural producers and land availability do not appear to have been taken into account by the Commission. Agricultural producers typically require large volumes of materials and site access and travel distance are important considerations. The proposed location in the agricultural area will reduce transportation costs and time for producers, and they can avoid navigating busy urban road networks that can be challenging for the vehicles and trailers necessary to transport supplies.

Additionally, the urban area of Pitt Meadows is bound by the Agricultural Land Reserve. The resulting concentration of urban uses severely limits the availability of suitable sites for a viable agricultural supply retail business. Further, there are similar shortages of suitable types of retail locations across much of the rest of Metro Vancouver. Without creative solutions to address the needs of agricultural suppliers, agricultural producers will face reduced availability and increasing costs to source necessary supplies.

As the Agricultural Land Commission and Ministry of Agriculture can appreciate, agriculture continues to evolve, regulations continue to increase, and the economics of the sector impose increasingly thin margins for producers. In the Metro Vancouver region particularly, all levels of government need to think creatively and be flexible in order to support viable

agriculture. The Ministry and the ALC mandates include the protection of agricultural land and promotion of agriculture, and Council firmly believes this proposal was a creative solution to achieving these mandates in Pitt Meadows.

Yours Truly,



Nicole MacDonald
Mayor, City of Pitt Meadows

cc: Danalynn Rooks and Mike Crouse, Maple Meadows Equestrian
Pitt Meadows City Council
Hon. Pam Alexis, Minister of Agriculture and Food
Hon. Lisa Beare, MLA, Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows
Kim Grout, Chief Executive Officer, Agricultural Land Commission
Mark Roberts, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Pitt Meadows