

Mayor Brodie and Councillors,

For full disclosure, I belong to a special interest group.

We call ourselves "Richmond."

Self-interest parties opposing our **public**-interest movement will say we should go away, but we have every right to stand up for our Richmond, including our ALR land bank and our generations to follow. In fact, it's our civic responsibility.

I'm speaking in support of the **whole** set of recommendations that were considered at the recent planning committee meeting, whether they carried or not. That includes one that **limits ALR farmhouse construction to 500 square metres.**

So far in 2018, applications to build mega-mansions on Richmond's ALR farmland have poured into City Hall at a rate of 7 per month. By this time next year, that would mean over 100 new applications for mega-mansions on ALR farmland. It's predictable that few or none would be real farmhouses for real farming families that would farm the land.

That hectic activity is a blatant assault on the Agricultural Land Reserve, the provincial land bank. In some key ways, our **Richmond** ALR is like the local branch of the land bank that safeguards our farmland and ensures lawful use of it. In contrast, by the way, it should **not** compromise with those who would raid the bank or use the wealth in unlawful ways.

To be clear, what is happening is in conflict with the Agricultural Land Commission Act, which is the land bank act. Section 18 of the ALC Act states this:

Unless permitted under this act, a local government . . . may **not** . . . permit **non-farm** use of agricultural land or permit a **building** to be erected on the land **except** for **farm** use.

All of the 100 or so additional ALR farmland mega-mansions in the works or built by this time next year would be *buildings*, and almost none would be for farm use. However, the Agricultural Land Commission wouldn't enforce the law, even if it had enough inspectors, because local governments like ours are expected to be looking after it.

In any case, the Ministry of Agriculture has a *Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas*, including a way to work out a local limit on the size of houses built on ALR land. It is a way to direct non-farmers away from building non-farmer residences. The Richmond limit works out to 300 square metres, but I have to support the lowest available option, which is 500 square metres. It is far from ideal, but it is the only allowed option in this crucial matter that isn't blatantly wrong.

Since the perfect can be the enemy of the good, I support that and the full set of recommendations. At least it will keep Richmond moving in the right direction. Thank you for the positive momentum.

Excerpt from the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*:

18 Unless permitted under this Act,

(a) a local government, a first nation government or an authority, or a board or other agency established by a local government, a first nation government or an authority, or a person or agency that enters into an agreement under the *Local Services Act* **may not**

(i) permit non-farm use of agricultural land or permit a building to be erected on the land except for farm use