

Richmond Allotment Gardens Association

January 08, 2010

BC Assessment
31935 South Fraser Way, Suite 240
Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 5N7

Attention: Colin Jack, RI, Senior Appraiser

**Re: Assessment Roll No. 11-320-R031476096 and
Property Address: 10711 Palmberg Road, Richmond**

I am writing you on behalf of the Richmond Allotment Garden Association. For about 30 years the Richmond Allotment Garden Association have leased the above mentioned property from the Lewis family for the Association's allotment gardens. This is the only property leased by the Association. For a number of years Mrs. Jeanne Lewis, the property owner, has requested that the Association provide any information which BC Assessment requires, and this has been done.

Forms have been sent annually to the property owner to complete, but have routinely been handled by RAGA for Jeanne Lewis. The information required to complete the form was not appropriate to allotment gardens. I therefore called the BC Assessment office back in 2001 to discuss this, describe the RAGA operation, and get direction on how to address BC Assessment's requirements. Robin Austin, senior appraiser, was uncertain how we should proceed, and took the matter under advisement. The result was no reclassification from ALR status at that time, and in later years RAGA were asked only to provide a copy of the lease each year when renewed.

However Mrs. Lewis and the Association are concerned by your letter of December 9, 2009 which states the property no longer meets the regulatory requirements for farm classification and is to be removed from the 2010 Assessment Roll. Since the use of the land has remained unchanged for about 30 years, and we wish to have the property retain or regain ALR status, please explain what has changed the status and what would be required to restore ALR status.

Richmond Allotment Gardens Association

For your information, the Richmond Allotment Garden Association has operated as a non-profit society under the BC Societies Act since 1978. The Association is totally self supporting, receiving no funding or other support from any level of government. There are no salaries or wages paid to any members. It has some 128 individual members, comprised of some 102 'families'. The membership is male and female, and is racially diverse, native born and immigrant stock. Most are seniors or near seniors. Some have very limited incomes. Gardening offers a physically and mentally healthy diversion from every day problems and apartment living, while providing nutritious food.

A 'standard' or full plot is approximately 1000 square feet. 3/4 and half plots are available for those members who prefer less. Annual plot payment is currently \$50.00 for a full plot, prorated for fractional plots. There are some 87 full plots and some 50 fractional plots for a total under cultivation of some 114,000 square feet (about 10,470 square meters), not including common pathways and grassed verges, or the parking lot. The cultivated land is used principally for the production of vegetables, some apples and grapes.

It is estimated that some \$100 to \$120 is spent on rental and gardening supplies each year for each full plot. However, as a non-profit society members can not sell their produce, although much is given to friends and neighbours and the food bank. While it is difficult to accurately estimate the value of the produce per plot, it certainly exceeds \$200 per plot, indicating a produce value of at least \$22,000.

Attached is a copy of the Association's Bylaws and (new member's) Welcoming Brochure.

As I will be away for more than a month, please call Bette Soglo, vice president, (tel. 604-277-6191) if there is any other information which may be helpful, or to provide advice.

Yours truly

Harry A. Baxter, Director,
Richmond Allotment Gardens Association
Telephone (604) 275-4100