

Town of Kingsville
2021 Division Rd N
Kingsville, Ontario
N9Y 2Y9

Mayor Nelson Santos and members of Town Council

Re: Kingsville Greenhouses

Dear Mr. Mayor and Council Members,

We attended the meeting on December 10 regarding the above mentioned matter. As lifelong residents of Kingsville, the fear and hate was the most disturbing.

We own and operate a greenhouse and orchard farm. The presentation represented many misconceptions about this portion of agriculture. The OGVG tried to give a broad explanation of the greenhouse farming business. It was unclear as to whether those in attendance understood what we positively contribute to this community. I would have liked to see someone question some of the information presented by Kingsville Property Owner. However I do know that a private meeting was conducted earlier. I would like to address several misguided parts of that presentation.

The actual definition of agriculture is: the science, art or occupation concerned with cultivating land, raising crops and feeding, breeding and raising of livestock, farming.

A greenhouse is simply a plastic structure to grow and hold plants to protect them from the weather. As opposed to manufacturing which deals with the assembling or fabrication on a large scale.

We, as greenhouse owners produce food. It is perishable, healthy and nutritious for everyone. This comes in the form of a 24/7 service in which we are solely responsible for in our lives. To explain anyone's day to day cycle would be fruitless. We don't complain because it has been a life we chose. We live this life because of and for the many live plants that grow in our greenhouses.

When speaking of our workers who harvest and care for our plants during the year, I ask for respect. They are people who want to earn a living for their families just like you do. They give that respect while here and they don't deserve anything less. Many reporters will have you believe misconstrued stories regarding these programs. While no one is perfect we are all doing the best we can. Dr Taylor was asked if we would hire Canadians, we have done this under many government programs. The results were not very successful. That does not mean that those jobs don't exist, they are just hard to fill. We wait for our produce our produce does not wait for us. There are still Canadians who work with packing, box making, maintenance, trucking and supervisors positions.

Kingsville Property Owners explanation of greenhouses was not very factual.

We do not remove top soil from lands. Instead it is leveled to give a good stable growing surface.

Concrete is not poured in the greenhouse growing area.

Why is a farm not entitled to have office space?

All agriculture is becoming more and more technically sophisticated. We must continue to educate ourselves so that the future for fresh fruits and vegetables can sustain itself.

We are in support of establishing a new zoning for Cannabis, as it does not relate to the fruit and vegetable industry. Greenhouse owners have tried to work with their neighbors. Mucci Farms even posted on its facebook website a public meeting regarding lighting. This was to explain and help create understanding in their phase to curtain their property. There is cooperation among us, however my hope is that people understand that we are the face of agriculture. The picture depicting the Traditional farm has not existed for a hundred years. Property values are higher than they have ever been. To date many farms have been cleared to make way for high priced housing. The conclusion being that residential and farms are truly getting closer. Now we need to find co existence for the future.

As to the future of our community I would like to point out the many businesses directly related to the greenhouse and farming life. To operate efficiently we indirectly employ this partial list of businesses:

Irrigation systems, Computer systems(office and greenhouse controls), Construction, Fabrication, Fertilizer, Seed, Biological services, CO2 companies, alarm companies (security and boiler needs), Boiler specialists, Accounting and Legal services, Food Safety personnel, along with audit companies, Insurance, Waste and Disposal, Plastics, Cardboard industry, Electrical contractors, Logistics, Plumbing and heating, Pipe Fitters, Mechanics, Engineers, Building Inspectors and Town Planners.

All of these people will be affected by the decline in the farming industry. After last night it is very unclear what direction Council is moving. All of these farms in your community are family run some with four generations. Most came from other countries and taught their children how to work and emphasized the importance of a good education. They learned well and from very small beginnings a well respected innovative way of farming began.

We would be available for any questions you may have about this topic. I am sure most growers in the area would feel the same. I am not sure if, when or who will make zoning decisions but information is the key.

Our community over the past three decades has evolved and grown in part due to the success of greenhouse farming. We are proud of the success and work hard each day to give our best for the community.

Respectfully from a community farmer,

John and Laura Mastronardi

