

May 19, 2022

P. Fay, City Clerk
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Brampton, ON L6Y 4R2
cityclerksoffice@brampton.ca

Dear Mayor Brown and Council,

In May of 2021, Brampton city council heard a delegation from the Peel Federation of Agriculture (PFA) regarding the inappropriate and incorrect calculation of Stormwater Management Charges as applied to agricultural properties. At that time, council directed staff to “undertake an assessment of working farm properties to determine and implement internal adjustments that may be required to the Stormwater Charge recognizing the characteristics of such properties.” Further, council requested “staff to undertake a verification of the impervious areas to which the stormwater charge applies for all working farm properties recognizing the characteristics of such properties.”

On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) and the Peel Federation of Agriculture (PFA), we would appreciate an update on both the verification and the internal adjustments, as listed above. As we understand it, agricultural properties have not yet received any form of adjustment, or update regarding Stormwater Charges. PFA has also not yet received a response from Brampton Council or its staff regarding the concerns raised by the OFA’s May 6, 2021 letter to Mayor Brown and Council, as requested.

As described in OFA’s letter dated May 6, 2021 to Mayor Brown and Council, staff report 2019-05-26 Report to Committee of Council “Brampton Stormwater Management Charge” by Mr. Michael Heralall contained numerous errors in both process and application of the stormwater charge on agricultural operations which have a significant impact on these farms. The errors included the consultants’ exclusion of agriculture at the beginning, the program not meeting two of the four stated core principles; and a number of substantial errors in application to agricultural properties. We believe there were a number of incorrect assumptions in the report, as well.

OFA is concerned that the errors we have noted have not been addressed in the year that has past. We are aware that council have many competing priorities but would like to see this issue return to the priority list, as it has significant impact on our members – farmers who grow food for Brampton, Ontario and the world. Is there a way that we can meet with you or your staff and discuss the concerns, and work towards resolution of these issues?

Of interest, since the time of PFA’s delegation and OFA’s original letter, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) released a consultation on “Low Impact Development Stormwater Management Guidance Manual, January 2022”. It is interesting to note that while this document explicitly states that it is intended for urban developments, many of the best management practices being advocated for residential properties have been common

practices by farmers for decades. As stated in the MECP guidance material, the first and second priorities are retention and filtration, both of which are inherent in the large quantity of pervious land on agricultural properties – a factor that was missed in the development and application of Brampton’s Stormwater Management Charges to agricultural properties.

We also respectfully request an update to both PFA and OFA on:

- i) the status of assessment of working farm properties to determine and implement internal adjustments that may be required to the Stormwater Charge recognizing the characteristics of such properties;
- ii) the staff’s verification of the impervious areas to which the stormwater charge applies for all working farm properties recognizing the characteristics of such properties; and
- iii) the response to the concerns raised in OFA’s May 6, 2021 letter regarding staff report 2019-05-26 Report to Committee of Council “Brampton Stormwater Management Charge”.

While Brampton’s farmers await this review, they are required to continue paying unwarranted stormwater management fees that do not reflect the “user-pay” principle these charges were meant to embody. A year has past with no response. With this in mind, we hope for an expedient continuation of this conversation beyond the year-old correspondence from us.

Looking forward to the chat.

Sincerely,



Peggy Brekveld,
President

cc: Peel Federation of Agriculture