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Memo

To: Members of Council
From: Agricultural Development Advisory Board
Date: July 11, 2017
Subject: Farm house severances

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT memo **Farm house severances**, be received; and

THAT the City of Kawartha Lakes Council does not support the request by the Town of Lakeshore to the Province of Ontario for easing of restrictions on surplus dwelling severances in areas zoned agriculture; and

THAT this resolution be circulated to the AMO and Ontario Municipalities including the Town of Lakeshore.

Background:

At the Agricultural Development Advisory Board meeting of June 27th the correspondence received from the Town of Lakeshore was reviewed and following motion was passed:

Rebecca Parker moved and Bruce McKeown seconded

THAT the Agricultural Development Advisory Board (ADAB) recommends Council support a status quo recommendation to the Province of Ontario regarding the Town of Lakeshore request to ease restrictions on farm house dwelling severances in areas zoned Agriculture thereby permitting the seller of the farm to sever off an existing dwelling (i.e. farm house). ADAB does not support the request by Town of Lakeshore to ease restrictions on severing surplus farm house dwellings from farmland.

Rationale:

Provincial Policies for prime agricultural land don't allow farm retirement lot creation any longer, as they did prior to 2005. The only provision for severances or lot creation on prime agricultural land occurs with surplus farm dwellings as part of a farm consolidation.

When a farmer purchases an additional farm that has a farm house on it which is not needed as part of the existing farm operation, they are able to sever the house from the farm land. The farm land is joined with the existing agricultural land holdings of the farm operation and the house is severed onto a small residential lot of not more than 0.6 ha. A Zoning By-law amendment is also completed to restrict future residential use on the retained farmland portion.

The request from Town of Lakeshore seeks an easing of the restrictions of surplus dwelling severances in areas zoned Agriculture, thereby permitting the seller of the farm to sever off an existing dwelling (i.e. farm house) prior to the sale of a property in order to be ready for a future sale.

While no new residential development is created, there is a likelihood that, within a 3-5 year period of creating a residential severance lot from a farm property, there will be non-farm residents in the severed farmhouse. This is the experience locally with previous retirement lots taken by retiring farmers according to members of the Agricultural Development Advisory Board (ADAB). The addition of non-farm residents within a farming area has the potential to escalate complaints regarding normal farm practices. With no way of knowing what future policies may be put in place regarding setbacks from neighbouring residential uses, any increased allowance for non-farm residences is discouraged.