

**THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF NORTH GLENGARRY**  
**PUBLIC MEETING OF PLANNING**

**Monday, March 08, 2021**

**6:00 pm**

**Via Zoom**

COUNCIL MEMBERS      Mayor: Jamie MacDonald

PRESENT:

Deputy Mayor: Carma Williams  
Councillor (At Large) - Jacques Massie  
Councillor (Lochiel Ward) - Brenda Noble  
Councillor (Kenyon Ward) - Jeff Manley  
Councillor (Maxville Ward) - Johanne Wensink  
Councillor (Alexandria Ward) - Michael Madden

MUNICIPAL STAFF      CAO/Clerk - Sarah Huskinson

PRESENT:

Director of Building, By-law & Planning - Jacob Rhéaume  
Township Planner - Kasia Olszewska

**PUBLIC MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

**The chair of the Committee called the meeting to order at 6:00pm**

**1.      DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- There were no declarations of interest.

**2.      ACCEPT THE AGENDA (Additions/Deletions)**

**Resolution No. 1**

**Moved By:** Michael Madden

**Seconded By:** Brenda Noble

That the Council of the Township of North Glengarry accepts the Public Meeting Agenda of Monday, March 8th 2021.

**Carried**

**3.      RATIFY MINUTES – NOT APPLICABLE AT THIS TIME**

The Meeting was then turned over to the Planning Department  
- **Township Planner** - Kasia Olszewska

#### 4. ZONING AMENDMENTS

##### a) No. Z-05-2021

**Owner:** Yves Ballenegger

**Location:** 20845 McCormick Rd., Alexandria

**Purpose of application:** To permit a total of 8 Mongolian yurts for rental purposes on the subject lands by adding a special exception to the existing Special Exception General Agriculture (AG-125).

The clerk asked for comments from the public in attendance.

**Councillor (Alexandria Ward) - Michael Madden** Inquired with the Director of Building, By-law & Planning, Jacob Rheume, if each unit would require a building permit.

**Director of Building, By-law & Planning - Jacob Rhéaume** – Responded by saying yes, each unit (yurt) would require a building permit. More research would have to be done as it is a grey area in the Ontario Building Code. The yurts would also be considered temporary structures.

**Rose McPherson – Neighbour** – Opposed to the proposed amendment. She would like the decision to be denied or deferred as per the rural planner/expert that she hired who provided a letter to the Township with that recommendation.

The Mongolian yurts would be installed too close to her property line. She has safety concerns and fears of possible damage to her buildings. This amendment would be putting her livelihood in jeopardy. Loss of privacy would occur and property values may decrease. McCormick road is already a busy road and this would increase the amount of traffic.

Rose McPherson also had concerns over the yurts being imported from Mongolia and if they were also importing insects. Cucumber beetles had taken away her crops for the season.

**Duncan Ferguson – Representing the Glengarry Federation of Agriculture** – The applicant's application and the Township staff report was submitted to head office and OMAFRA. Both experts came back with the same concerns, primarily the lack of consideration for MDS. The new intended use would be MDS warranted.

The staff report was vague on the number of yurts allowed on the property. He would of liked to have seen a more precise plan and a more precise recommendation by staff and the logic behind it.

Mr. Ferguson finished by saying he supports and is in agreement with the submission made by Mr. McPherson.

**Henry Van Der Byl – Neighbour** – Against the proposed amendment. He concurs with Mr. Ferguson. This is an agricultural community. He does not want an upcoming campground. Not the proper location and sees problems being created.

**Yves Massie – Neighbour** – Asked if rules were different between a campsite and a bed & breakfast? What are the differences between one and the other?

**Director of Building, By-law & Planning - Jacob Rhéaume** – There are many differences. A B&B can be done on any residential property. The septic system or noise is not evaluated. The owner of the house is permitted to rent it as is. This request is not being considered as a campground. For a campground, the garbage, lighting, septic, servicing, laundry and washroom facilities would all to be evaluated and approved. This is only being considered as a tourist attraction.

Also, a request for a campground at this location would require an Official Plan amendment.

**Township Planner - Kasia Olszewska** – Correct. A campground does not conform to the Official Plan and an amendment would be required. An amendment would not pass and would not even be contemplated.

**Mayor: Jamie MacDonald** – Asked Mr. Yves Massie if he had any further comments.

**Yves Massie – Neighbour** – Yes, he noticed the plans show a bar & kitchen that are not mentioned anywhere else in the literature. This is a big concern.

**Township Planner - Kasia Olszewska** – No, she did not speak to the applicant about the bar. It's more long term and not part of this amendment.

**Yves Massie – Neighbour** – Also another concern, looking through all documentation. There was a drought out west a few years ago. The east was selling hay that had to be fumigated to prevent pests from going out west. Question to Yves, being the material from the yurts are all natural, are they being fumigated to prevent importation of any pests or what not.

**Mayor: Jamie MacDonald** – Responded by saying he will have Mr. Yves Ballenegger comment on these questions at the end of this.

**Yves Massie – Neighbour** – Another concern regarding the bar, there was a deadly accident on his property a few years back, obviously because of drinking. The idea is great but the location bugs him. It's a real concern.

**Mayor: Jamie MacDonald** – Asked if there were any other comments

**Rose McPherson's daughter – Neighbour** – Wanted a bit of clarification. Is this being considered a residential building or a tent? The grey area needs to be more defined.

**Director of Building, By-law & Planning - Jacob Rhéaume** – He'll have to check into the permits. This is being considered as a B&B because it's not permitted to have a kitchen or a bathroom in the yurts. Therefore, it's a good idea to have a permit to ensure no bathroom or kitchen facilities are installed.

**Rose McPherson's daughter – Neighbour** – How does his use qualify as an agricultural use or on-farm diversified use? He's not a farm. He's not located on a farm. She does not understand what this is being qualified as?

**Township Planner - Kasia Olszewska** – The land is designated as agricultural resource lands in an agricultural setting surrounded by farms, that's why it's classified as on-farm diversified uses.

**Mayor: Jamie MacDonald** – Asked if there were any other comments in favor or against the application?

**Pauline Hambleton – Neighbour** – She does have a few concerns. She reviewed the previous amendment and noticed that he does have permission for one yurt. Eight yurts can no longer be classified as a bed & breakfast but a campground. She is looking for clarification on bed & breakfasts in a dwelling compared to in a yurt.

**Director of Building, By-law & Planning - Jacob Rhéaume** – We were caught off guard with this request when we passed the first amendment. We were considering it as a tourist attraction where someone can go sleep in a yurt for the experience. Not to be considered as a bed and breakfast but a resort of some kind with no cooking or bathroom facilities in each unit. The Township had not received any complaints before this application. We can definitely address the proper wording.

**Pauline Hambleton – Neighbour** – Jacob what is your definition of a campground? When looking at the plans, I see eight yurts, toilette, shower facilities and a swim pond. This does not look like a bed & breakfast but a campground.

**Director of Building, By-law & Planning - Jacob Rhéaume** – Responded by saying that he is not an expert on campgrounds. Some campgrounds accept recreational vehicles. The buildings have to be CSA approved and they can connect to hydro and septic systems. It's very hard to explain. He is not 100% sure how to describe the difference between a campground and multiple yurts. Yurts are very new everywhere including this country. Not sure how to answer this question. Sorry.

**Pauline Hambleton – Neighbour** – Understands that he does have permission for one yurt but to her understanding there are currently four yurts set up. How come by-law or the building inspector has not been on the premises to enforce compliance?

**Director of Building, By-law & Planning - Jacob Rhéaume** – The original amendment permits to have one yurt to be used as a bed & breakfast where someone can go sleep in it for the experience. In the meantime, Yves asked if he could set them up to work on them and use them as a display. The current by-law does not prevent that. This could be our fault. That's why we didn't enforce anything. This is a grey zone.

**Lyne Massie – Neighbour** – Family owns and operates the farm and sugar bush across the street. The family has been there for over a 100 years. They want to preserve the agricultural environment and are strongly against the proposed amendment.

**Yves Ballenegger – Owner** – Did not realize all the issues that his neighbours had. This comes as a big surprise. He had previously invited everyone over to discuss his project and any potential conflicts. However, no one went over.

Insects are common in this area. All containers are fumigated and checked by border security. The bar on his plan is a complete misunderstanding. The area written bar/kitchen is a place for staff meetings and not opening a bar to the public.

He wanted to be clear that his intent is not to have a campground. He is targeting couples looking for peace and quiet with the possibility of hosting yoga retreats.

**Deputy Mayor: Carma Williams** – How will the MDS 1 study affect the application?

**Director of Building, By-law & Planning - Jacob Rhéaume** – We will have to look into it. MDS 1 is usually applied when you want to create a new residential lot. It gives you a set back from a current livestock facility. It's designed for smell nuisances. Usually, the MDS requirements are for single family dwellings and not yurts. Not sure if MDS can be applied in this situation.

**Deputy Mayor: Carma Williams** – Wanted to add an additional comment. She understands what Yves is trying to do. He is not intentionally trying to deceive or annoy his neighbours. The economic development is real and very entrepreneurial. These ideas have value.

This situation is highly unfortunate. It is a location issue.

**Mayor: Jamie MacDonald** – This is a great idea. It would draw people to North Glengarry, Agri tourism at its best but it's not the right place. Maybe somewhere else? The neighbours do have valid concerns.

**Councillor (Maxville Ward) - Johanne Wensink** – Agrees with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. There is a lot to learn. Yurts are a great idea but not in an agricultural area.

**Councillor (At Large) - Jacques Massie** – Agrees, it's a great idea but the place is wrong for it. Perhaps another area in North Glengarry can be better suited. We have to keep in mind the families that surround this area. Their quality of life would be impacted. He is completely against the amendment.

**Councillor (Kenyon Ward) - Jeff Manley** - We need to wait until we have more information from staff before any decision can be made. The grey areas need to be clarified.

**Councillor (Alexandria Ward) - Michael Madden** – Agrees that there are potential benefits. Encourages everyone involved to have a discussion to better understand everything. He realizes that there are no decisions being made tonight during a public meeting but he is completely on the fence.

**Councillor (Lochiel Ward) - Brenda Noble** – She did receive many calls. Some more negative than others. Not everyone had an issue with the project. There were issues with the size of the project. There is a misunderstanding about the bar. This is a new business to everyone. Definitely need to look at all options. Is there a way to maybe possibly have three yurts on the property especially now going into the summer and with Covid. Maybe we could look a plan that would make mostly everyone happy.

**Mayor: Jamie MacDonald** – Would like to thank all members of the public who came out tonight and giving their comments for this public meeting. Special thanks to Mr. Ballenegger for his idea. It's recognized how passionate he is about this project. We need to find a compromise or something that will work for everyone.

No additional comments from Council or the public in attendance.

5. **OLD BUSINESS**

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

7. **NOTICE OF MOTION**

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

**Resolution No. 2**

**Moved By:** Jacques Massie

**Seconded By:** Jeff Manley

There being no further business to discuss, the Public Meeting was adjourned at 8:01pm.

**Carried**

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CAO/Clerk/Deputy Clerk

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Mayor/Deputy Mayor