

To: Mayor and Members of Township of Zorra Council

From: Spencer McDonald, Development Planner, Community Planning

Application for Zone Change

ZN 5-26-03 – Eric and Michelle Hutchison

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The application for zone change proposes to rezone the subject property from 'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)' to permit the development of a dwelling on an undersized agricultural parcel.
- The subject property is approximately 13 ha (33 ac) in area and is currently vacant of all buildings or structures.
- Planning staff are recommending support of the proposal as it is generally consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement and maintains the intent and purpose of the Official Plan respecting development of undersized agricultural lots.

DISCUSSION

BACKGROUND

OWNERS/APPLICANTS:

Eric and Michelle Hutchison
254890 25th Line, Ingersoll, Ontario N5C 3J6

LOCATION:

The subject land is described as West Part Lot 5, Concession 3 (North Oxford), in the Township of Zorra. The subject lands are located between 19th Line and Road 64 and are municipally known as 194488 19th Line, Township of Zorra.

COUNTY OF OXFORD OFFICIAL PLAN:

Schedule "Z-1" Township of Zorra Land Use Plan Agricultural Reserve

TOWNSHIP OF ZORRA ZONING BY-LAW 35-99:

Current Zoning: 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)'

Proposed Zoning: 'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)'

PROPOSAL:

The purpose of this application is to rezone the subject lands from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)' to permit the construction of a dwelling on an undersized agricultural parcel comprising an area of approximately 13 ha (33 ac).

The applicants are proposing to rezone the subject lands to allow for the future development of a dwelling on private services. The area in which the applicants have identified would be an appropriate location for the future dwelling is located along the westerly property line of the property and the proposed building envelope for the dwelling, well, septic and laneway is approximately 0.4 ha (1 ac) in size.

The subject lands are currently vacant and have been used for agricultural purposes (cash cropping) previously. Surrounding land uses are predominantly agricultural with some non-farm rural residential parcels to the west (Dickson's Corners).

Plate 1, Location Map and Existing Zoning indicates the location of the subject property and the existing zoning in the immediate vicinity.

Plate 2, Aerial Map (2020) shows an aerial view of the subject lands and surrounding area.

Plate 3, Applicants' Sketch, identifies the intended location of the proposed building envelope on the subject lands, as submitted by the applicants.

APPLICATION REVIEW

2024 Provincial Planning Statement

The 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. Under Section 3 of the Planning Act, where a municipality is exercising its authority affecting a planning matter, such decisions shall be consistent with all policy statements issued under the Act. The following outlines the key PPS policies that have been considered but it is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Section 4.3 of the PPS directs that planning authorities are required to use agricultural system approach and further that prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long term agricultural use. In prime agricultural areas, permitted uses and activities include agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses. All types, sizes and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards.

The PPS defines agricultural uses to mean the growing of crops, including nursery, biomass and horticulture crops, as well as the raising of livestock and animals for food, fur or fibre including poultry and fish, apiaries, agro-forestry, maple syrup production and associated on-farm buildings and structure including accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment.

An agricultural system is comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agri-food sector. More specifically, it contains agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, it may also include rural lands that help to create a continuous productive land base for agriculture and an agri-food network which

includes agricultural operations, infrastructure, services, and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector.

Official Plan

The subject site is located within the Agricultural Reserve designation according to the Township of Zorra Land Use Plan, as contained in the County Official Plan.

In the Agricultural Reserve designation lands are to be developed for a wide variety of agricultural land uses, such as general farming, animal or poultry operations, regulated livestock farms, cash crop farms and specialty crop farms. Permitted uses also include woodlands, market gardening, tobacco farming, nurseries and orchards, together with farm buildings and structures necessary to the farming operation, and accessory residential uses required for the farm.

Section 3.1.4.2.3 of the Official Plan (as recently amended via OPA 269) outlines key objectives that apply to existing undersized agricultural lots:

- To ensure the primary function of existing undersized agricultural lots is for agricultural purposes
- To encourage consolidation of exiting undersized agricultural lots with abutting lots to form one larger agricultural lot under identical ownership;
- To ensure manure generated by smaller livestock and/or poultry operations not regulated by the Nutrient Management Act is appropriately managed.

The policies related to existing undersized agricultural parcels shall apply to all existing agricultural lots that are smaller than 16 ha (39.5 ac) in area. Further, existing undersized agricultural lots may be primarily used for a use permitted in Section 3.1.4.1, however development of a residential dwelling and/or other buildings shall not be permitted, except in accordance with the policies of Section 3.1.4.2.3.1.

Section 3.1.4.2.3.1 provides a policy framework to allow Area Municipalities to consider the establishment of a dwelling and/or agricultural buildings and structures on an existing undersized agricultural lot through a site-specific amendment to the Area Municipal Zoning By-law.

The Area Municipality may permit a dwelling and/or agricultural buildings and structures where it has been demonstrated that the proposed building envelope satisfies the following criteria:

- i) Has frontage on, or direct vehicular access to, a public road, maintained year-round, at a reasonable standard of construction;
- ii) Is the minimum size required to accommodate the dwelling and associated outdoor amenity areas, driveway and individual on-site water services and individual on-site sewage services and shall not exceed 0.4 ha (1 acre);
- iii) Is located so as to minimize the loss of tillable agricultural land and potential impacts on existing and future agricultural uses on surrounding lots (e.g., MDS II setback requirements) and to maximize the continued and/or potential future use of the lot for agricultural purposes (e.g., by locating on lands with existing constraints for agriculture, wherever possible, and not creating small or irregularly shaped areas for tillage and cropping);
- iv) Complies with MDS I requirements;
- v) Where development or site alteration is proposed within or adjacent to natural heritage features and areas, it is supported by an Environmental Impact Study, in accordance with the requirements of Section 3.2; and,

- vi) Proposals shall also comply with all other applicable policies of this Plan, including, but not limited to: Section 3.2, Environmental Resource Policies, Section 3.3, Cultural Resource Policies and Chapter 10, Implementation Measures.

Zoning By-law

The subject property is currently zoned 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' according to the Township's Zoning By-law.

The 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' permits a wide range of agricultural uses including farming, on-farm composting facilities, on-farm diversified uses (subject to further provisions of the Zoning By-law), as well as single detached dwellings accessory to the farm operation. The 'A2' zone requires a minimum lot area of 30 ha (74.1 ac) and a minimum lot frontage of 100 m (328.1 ft).

The Zoning By-law also provides that Minimum Distance Separation formula requirements shall be applied to the development of livestock barns and new farm residences, respectively.

Section 5.16 iii) of the Township Zoning By-law specifies that a minimum 15 m (49.2 ft) setback is required from the top of bank from any enclosed municipal drain outside of a designated settlement.

Agency Comments

The Township of Zorra Chief Building Official/Drainage Superintendent, Township of Zorra Director of Public Services, Township of Zorra Director of Corporate and Protective Services, Township of Zorra Fire Chief and Oxford County Public Works and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) have indicated that they have no comments or objections regarding the proposal.

Public Consultation

Notice of complete application and notice of public meeting regarding the application for zoning amendment were circulated to surrounding property owners on March 27, 2026 and April 22, 2026, respectively, in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act. As of the date of this report, no comments or concerns have been received from the public.

Planning Analysis

The applicants are proposing to rezone the subject lands from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)' to permit the development of a single detached dwelling on an existing undersized agricultural parcel comprising an area of approximately 13 ha (33 ac).

Planning staff have reviewed the proposal to rezone the subject lands to permit an accessory dwelling unit on an undersized agricultural parcel and are generally satisfied that the proposal is consistent with the policy direction of the PPS to provide for additional housing options that will not adversely effect surrounding agricultural uses.

Regarding the policies of the Official Plan pertaining to the development of undersized agricultural parcels, Planning staff are satisfied that the location of the dwelling as proposed by the applicants is appropriate and generally conforms with the relevant policies of the Official Plan. The proposed

location of the dwelling and associated amenity areas will have frontage on a public road (19th Line) and result in minimal loss of tillable land and complies with MDS I setbacks. The proposed dwelling location generally minimizes the loss and fragmentation of the tillable area, avoids regulated areas surrounding the municipal drain and will not preclude the balance of the parcel from being used for continued agricultural purposes. The proposed location is located in close proximity to existing non-farm rural residential development and as such the impact of the dwelling on future livestock operations for surrounding agricultural operations is minimized.

The applicants' proposed building envelope is offset from the westerly property line, utilizing an existing driveway. The applicants have worked with planning staff to determine a suitable building envelope keeping closer to the westerly lot line to minimize loss of tillable acreage. Although the proposed dwelling is set back approximately 76 m (250 ft) from 19th Line, the existing municipal drain along the frontage of the property necessitates a further setback for the proposed dwelling. Further, the proposed building envelope (both the setback and the approximate width) would be under a 0.4 ha (1ac) envelope. The proposed location also complies with the requirements of MDS and satisfied the criteria of the Official Plan. The implementing by-law, once prepared, will provide a maximum permitted setback of 80 m (262.4 ft) to ensure the building envelope is kept to an appropriate area which minimizes the loss of tillable acreage.

The draft zoning by-law, pending approval, will contain provisions to ensure that the dwelling and associated area for the provision of private services are located as proposed in the application and restricted to a building envelope that does not exceed 0.4 ha (1 ac), in accordance with the policy objectives of the Official Plan.

As such, Planning staff are satisfied that the proposal to permit the dwelling is generally consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement and maintains the intent of the Official Plan regarding the development of undersized agricultural parcels. Planning staff are supportive of the application and recommend approval. An amending by-law and associated mapping will be prepared to outline the 0.4 ha (1 ac) building envelope and recognize the lot area of the subject lands.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council of the Township of Zorra approve-in-principle the zone change application submitted by Eric and Michelle Hutchison, whereby the lands described as West Part of Lot 3, Concession 5 (North Oxford), in the Township of Zorra are to be rezoned from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)' to facilitate the construction of a single-detached dwelling on an undersized agricultural parcel.

SIGNATURES

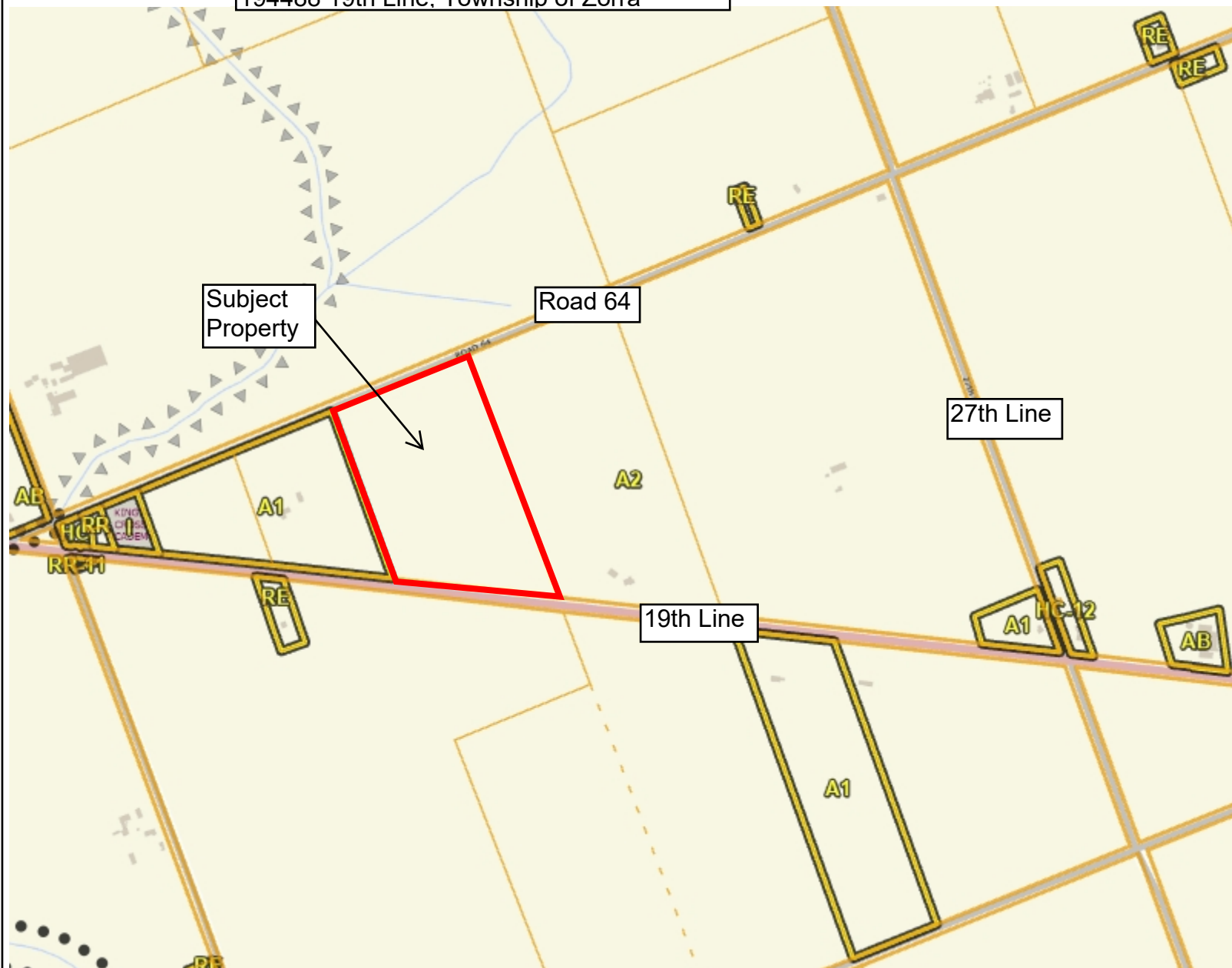
Authored by: *"Original Signed by"*

Spencer McDonald, MCIP, RPP
Development Planner

Approved for submission: *"Original Signed by"*

Eric Gilbert, RPP, MCIP
Manager of Development Planning

Plate 1 - Location Map and Existing Zoning
File No. ZN5-26-03 - Hutchison
194488 19th Line, Township of Zorra



Legend

- Parcel Lines**
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Property Boundary
 - - - Assessment Boundary
 - Road
 - Unit
- Zoning Floodlines**
- Regulation Limit**
 - ♦♦ 100 Year Flood Line
 - ▲ 30 Metre Setback
 - Conservation Authority Regulation Limit
 - Regulatory Flood And Fill Lines
- Land Use Zoning (Displays 1:16000 to 1:500)

Notes



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NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N



This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. This is not a plan of survey

March 24, 2026



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Notes



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Search...

Getting Around

Make A Map

Analysis



Tool Labels



How To Use Map



Feedback



Home



Point



Address Search



Change visible
map layers



Pan



Google Street
View

About GLIMR

Location Info

Google Street View

