Your Name

Date:

{optional address, or Postal Code}

CAO Reegan Mccullough rmucclough@sturgeon.ca

Sturgeon County Mayor – Alannah Hnatiw ahnatiw@sturgeoncounty.ca

Council of Sturgeon County: Council@sturgeoncounty.ca

Subject Line:

We Love Prairie Gardens

Dear Mayor and Sturgeon County Council,

We are sending love with this letter of support, not only for Prairie Gardens, but to save all small family farms in Alberta, and in support of Every Child Matters, Treaty Six.

1. **VOTE YES! To Diversified Agriculture and Agri-tourism as Permitted Land Use in Sturgeon County.** The proposed amendments to the County’s Land Use Bylaw 1597/22 are to go to second-reading scheduled at the September 13, 2022, Sturgeon County Council Meeting. It will include Diversified Agriculture within the AG-Agriculture District as a permitted use, and also create a new AG2 – Agriculture 2 District that supports more intensive permitted uses. Diversified Agriculture includes value added ag processing, retail sales of ag products, and allows for commercial experiences and events related to farming or farm life. Your stop work order instructed Prairie Gardens to apply for a development permit based on this new bylaw. Make it happen and approve their application! *Access Bylaw 1597/22 at sturgeoncounty.ca/AgriReview*
2. **VOTE YES! Agritourism Boosts Rural Communities:** What is agri‐tourism? Agri‐tourism is a world‐wide activity. Simply put, agri‐tourism is tourism that supports agriculture. Agri-tourism involves a wide range of tourist activities, from farm visits and pick-your-own orchards to petting zoos, farm markets, educational programs and distillery tours. Such activities can provide a valuable revenue stream for farms and rural communities. We need local farms like Prairie Gardens that grow local food, welcome visitors, add value to agricultural crops and create local jobs. We want you to nurture and support them, rather than restrict and bankrupt them. Across Canada and the USA, there over 28,575 farms offered agritourism and recreational services resulting in $949 million in sales - 2017 Census. In Canada, in both BC and Ontario, farms are allowed agri-tourism / diversified agriculture as permitted agricultural land use. Why go against the trend? VOTE YES to Support local farms that support both urban and rural communities!
3. **VOTE YES! – to Support Local Farms that Grow Local Food and Reinstate Prairie Gardens so they can save the harvest:** We need local farms like Prairie Gardens, where farmers grow food for our dinner tables. We want a place for our children to learn about where food comes from. We want you to encourage local farms to participate in programs like Open Farm Days so they can do just that. We want to encourage families to enjoy healthy eating and lifestyle activities, like pick-your-own veggies, corn mazes, pumpkin picking and family fun.
4. **VOTE YES for Progress!** We want to save family farms by allowing them to diversify to sell direct to the public - not only food, by also experiences! Changing market demands in agriculture have required today’s farmers to adapt to new realities and embrace alternate strategies to keep their farms viable. Tourism is a common example of diversification for farms. The expansion of tourism activities on farms has been shown to be one of the most successful diversification options generating new revenues and creating new employment opportunities for a variety of types of farm operations. This has enabled farms to enhance their economic viability and resilience. We want this in Sturgeon County. Your position that you do not want to encourage local agri-tourism farms is not what we, the taxpayers want. It is not acceptable.
5. **Vote Yes! In support of Every Child Matters - Treaty Six** Prairie Gardens opened the 2022 Every Child Matters Corn Maze on Open Farm Days on Sunday, Aug 14 at Prairie Gardens. Because reconciliation is an act of communities coming together in a spirit of reconciliation and hope - every child matters. We support Sturgeon County Council reinstating the Prairie Gardens intensive agriculture permit, and corn maze at Prairie Gardens .

Yours truly,

Your Name

CC

Minister of Tourism

Minister of Agriculture

Minister of Transportation

Minister of Womens Affairs