



Angela Gedy called the Tuscan farm project 'ghastly' when she spoke at the Monday night (May 6) Township of Council meeting that went on to approve the rezoning of the property for a residential subdivision.

Langley Township council backs subdivision of former Tuscan Farm

Langley Township council members say they are preserving farmland by approving an 85-lot subdivision.

DAN FERGUSON / May. 8, 2013 3:00 p.m. / NEWS

Dozens of extra chairs were added to Langley Township council chambers for the vote on a plan to build houses on the former Tuscan Farm Gardens site at 24453 60 Ave.

It still wasn't quite enough to accommodate the flood of more than 200 people who turned out for the Monday night (May 6) meeting, most of them there to see if council would approve construction of 65 houses on the southern 32 acres of the 80 acre site.

About a dozen ended up standing through the meeting.

Council voted 6-3 to approve the necessary rezoning more than two hours after the hearing began, after first hearing six residents speak against the proposal, then listening to the developer and two employees.

Township staff reported 11 letters were filed by people opposed to the project.

No supporters wrote.

Opponents of the Tuscan project complained it was another case of building high-density housing on agricultural land and compared it to the controversial Wall proposal near Trinity Western University.

In response, those in support argued the project actually increased the amount of farmland in Langley because the developer restored the northern 48 acres to make them suitable for agriculture.

Those against talked about the impact of the project on local wells, sewage and traffic while those who wanted to build it said water would be piped in, a sewage treatment plant would prevent contamination of ground water, and the builders would chip in if the Township decided to install speed bumps.

Local resident Angela Gedye warned the impact would be “ghastly” while traffic expert Jason Potter of Bunt and Associates, speaking for the developer, said the addition of 65 homes would represent a “modest volume” of traffic.

Developer Gordon Cameron of Canadian Horizons said his company would also contribute to installing a traffic light.

It was not enough reassure Councillors David Davis, Kim Richter, and Michelle Sparrow, who voted against.

"I do not support chopping up farmland," Davis said.

Those who voted for the development, Mayor Jack Froese and Councillors Grant Ward, Bob Long, Steve Ferguson, Bev Dornan and Charlie Fox, said they were convinced by the developers' decision to restore previously unusable farmland and to bring water in by pipeline as well installing a sewage treatment plant.

"This added 48 acres into the farmland inventory," Fox said.

The debate was generally polite, though Mayor Froese cautioned Councillor Davis about using the word "frigging" at one point, leading an amused Davis to observe he could have used worse language.

After the meeting, a member of the Township Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) announced by email that she was resigning in protest.

"I am personally disappointed after having spent five years on the [AAC] and have finally realized that the committee's opinions mean nothing," Pam Erikson said.

"Our committee unanimously recommended to council that this development be turned down right back when it was first proposed, but all our concerns apparently fell on deaf ears."