

To: Mayor and Members of Township of Blandford-Blenheim Council

From: Dustin Robson, Development Planner, Community Planning

Application for Zone Change **ZN 1-26-03 – Highview Estate Ltd.**

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The zone change application proposes to rezone the retained lot resulting from Severance B26-29-1 from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special Rural Residential Zone (RR-sp)'. A special provision is being proposed to permit a reduced minimum lot frontage.
- Severance B26-29-1 was approved by the Land Division Committee on August 6, 2026 and the subject zone change application is required to fulfill a condition of consent.
- Planning staff are recommending approval as it is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement and maintains the intent and purpose of the Official Plan with respect to farm consolidations and non-farm rural residential development in prime agricultural areas.

DISCUSSION

BACKGROUND

OWNER: Highview Estate Ltd.
826619 Township Road 8, Drumbo, ON N0J 1G0

APPLICANT: Robert Harrison
866829 Township Road 10, Bright, ON N0J 1B0

SOLICITOR: White Coad LLP (Aleena Ashfaq)
408 Dundas Street, Woodstock, ON N4S 1B9

LOCATION:

The subject lands are described as Lot 16, Part Lots 15 and 17, Concession 9 (Blenheim), Township of Blandford-Blenheim. The lands are located between Township Road 9 and Township Road 10, lying between King Road and Oxford Road 3, and are municipally known as 846863 Township Road 9 and 866844 Township Road 10, in the Township of Blandford-Blenheim.

COUNTY OF OXFORD OFFICIAL PLAN:

Existing:

Schedule "B-1"	Township of Blandford-Blenheim Land Use Plan	'Agricultural Reserve'
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TOWNSHIP OF BLANDFORD-BLENHEIM ZONING BY-LAW 1360-2002:

Existing Zoning: 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)'

Proposed Zoning: 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' and 'Special Rural Residential Zone (RR-sp)'

PROPOSAL:

The zone change application proposes to rezone the retained lot resulting from Severance B26-29-1 from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special Rural Residential Zone (RR-sp).' A special provision is being requested to permit a reduced lot frontage of 10 m (32.8 ft) rather than the minimum required 35 m (114.8 ft) lot frontage. The related consent application, B26-29-1, was approved by the Land Division Committee on August 6, 2026. The subject zone change application is required to fulfil a condition of the related consent.

The application for consent proposed a farm consolidation and the retention of a lot for non-farm rural residential use. The lot to be severed comprises approximately 55 ha (136 ac) which is currently in agricultural production (cash-crop) and contains an accessory building (to be removed). It is proposed that the lot to be severed will be added to the agricultural lot to the immediate east. The lot to be enlarged is approximately 38 ha (94 ac) in size, is in agricultural production (cash-crop), and is vacant of any buildings or structures.

It is proposed that the lot to be retained and rezoned will be approximately 0.8 ha (2 ac) in area with approximately 10 m (32.8 ft) of frontage on Township Road 9. The lot to be retained contains an existing single detached dwelling (circ. 1860).

Plate 1, Location Map and Existing Zoning, indicates the location of the subject property and the existing zoning in the immediate vicinity as well as the configuration of the lands from the associated consent application.

Plate 2, Aerial Map (2025) with Existing Zoning, provides an aerial view of the subject lands and surrounding uses as existing in the Spring of 2025.

Plate 3, Applicant's Sketch – Lot to be Retained, depicts the configuration of the subject lands, with the location of the existing buildings and structures, as provided by the applicant.

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 is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Section 4.3 (Agriculture) of the PPS directs that prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long term agricultural use.

Further, Section 4.3.3 (Lot Creation and Lot Adjustments) discourages the creation of new lots in prime agricultural areas and provides only four instances where such lot creation may be permitted, as summarized below:

- a) for agricultural uses, provided the lots are of a sufficient size for the type of production common in the area and are sufficiently large enough to maintain flexibility in adapting the operation in the future;
- b) for agricultural-related uses, provided that any new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services;
- c) one new residential lot per farm consolidation for a residence surplus to an agricultural operation, provided that:
 - 1. the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services; and
 - 2. the planning authority ensures that new dwellings and additional residential units are prohibited on any remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new residential dwellings or additional residential units are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches that achieve the same objective; and
- d) infrastructure, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or rights of way.

The PPS also directs that lot adjustments in prime agricultural areas may be permitted for legal or technical reasons, which include consents for the purpose of easements, corrections of deeds, quit claims and minor boundary adjustments that do not result in the creation of a new lot.

OFFICIAL PLAN

The subject lands are located within the 'Agricultural Reserve' designation according to the Township of Blandford-Blenheim Land Use Plan in the Official Plan.

According to Section 3.1.1, the goal of the Agricultural Reserve policies is to ensure prime agricultural lands are preserved for food and fibre production by avoiding the fragmentation of the land base, by minimizing conflict between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, and by supporting the needs of the agricultural community by permitting land uses which are complementary to, and supportive of, agriculture.

The goal of the Agricultural Reserve designation is to minimize conflict with farm operations and non-farm uses, including commercial, industrial, and residential. Further, a strategic aim of the Agricultural Reserve policies is to prevent situations of land use conflict in the agricultural designations by careful management of non-farm uses, including rural residential development, recreational uses, commercial and industrial uses, and aggregate resource extraction.

The policies of Section 3.1.5.3 (Creation of Rural Residential Lots) permit the consideration of non-farm rural residential lots in the following circumstances:

- i) A proposal to rezone an existing industrial (with the exception of aggregate or limestone industrial), commercial, or institutionally zoned lot to a residential use, provided such lot does not exceed 1 ha (2.5 acre) in area. Where such lot is larger than 1 ha (2.5 acre) in area, consideration may only be given to rezoning for agricultural use, in accordance with the policies of Section 3.1.5.1; or,
- ii) A proposal to create a lot for a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation, provided that:
 - a) The proposal is to retain an existing permanent, habitable dwelling that was constructed prior to December 13, 1995, where such dwelling is contained on an

agricultural lot that is to be legally consolidated with an abutting agricultural lot, to form one larger agricultural lot under identical ownership, or;

- b) The proposal is to retain an existing permanent, habitable dwelling, where the farm owner owns multiple agricultural lots which may or may not abut, and providing:
- The lot containing the surplus dwelling proposed to be severed contains a minimum of 2 existing dwellings, and all such dwellings were constructed prior to December 13, 1995;
 - The resulting agricultural lot is owned by the farm owner; and,
 - The resulting agricultural lot is rezoned to prohibit the future construction of a new residential dwelling of any type and an agreement for such prohibition is also registered on the property title. The requirement for the Zoning By-law amendment and agreement, as noted above, shall be implemented through conditions imposed by the County's Land Division Committee at the time that provisional consent approval is given.

If the proposal to create a non-farm rural residential lot qualifies under one of the listed scenarios above, then the proposal shall be reviewed against the following criteria:

- The proposal shall not result in the severance of the only dwelling from an agricultural lot, except in the case of a farm consolidation involving the merger of abutting agricultural lots as one larger lot under identical ownership, where one of the agricultural lots to be consolidated is vacant, but the existing zoning would permit the construction of an accessory dwelling on that lot.
- The lands shall be zoned for agricultural use.
- The proposed non-farm rural residential lot shall not be located within a Quarry Area, Limestone Resource, or Sand and Gravel Resource Area.
- The proposed non-farm rural residential lot shall not be located within a Future Urban Growth Area designation.
- The creation of new residential lots in prime agricultural areas shall not be permitted, except in accordance with Section 3.1.5.3, which permits a lot for a surplus residence subject to the area of the new lot being limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the uses and appropriate sewage and water services. Non-farm rural residential lots shall generally not exceed 0.8 ha (2 ac) in size. Proposals to exceed 0.8 ha (2 ac) shall demonstrate the following:
 - The additional area is required to accommodate individual on-site water services and individual on-site sewage services;
 - The lands have topographic limitations for agricultural use;
 - The lands are physically separated from the remainder of the farm by significant natural heritage features/watercourses;
 - The additional area is required to conserve cultural heritage resources;
 - Proposed lots will not exceed 1 ha (2.5 ac) in size;
- The proposal can demonstrate the ability to provide adequate on-site private services;
- Compliance with Minimum Distance Separation formulae (MDS);
- The proposed non-farm rural residential lot shall have direct frontage on a permanent public road maintained year-round and receives approval for access through the appropriate road authority;
- Compliance with relevant Environmental Resource policies;
- Any enlarged agricultural lot that would result from a proposal for non-farm rural residential development through farm consolidation shall comply with the applicable policies of Section 3.1.4.2.4;
- The proposed non-farm rural residential lot may only contain an existing barn or other farm structures where they are suitable to be used as accessory structures to a residential use and have been formally converted such that they are no longer suitable for the housing of

livestock or poultry or storage/handling of manure, and/or are protected pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act; and,

- Where a barn or other farm structure exists within the immediate vicinity of a non-farm rural residential lot to be created through a farm consolidation, the demolition or formal conversion of such structure shall be required, to ensure it cannot be used for the housing of livestock or poultry or storage/handling of manure in the future.

Pursuant to Section 3.1.6, consents for severance involving agricultural uses and non-agricultural uses, including rural residential uses, may be considered for the following reasons:

- To create or alter any private easement or right-of-way;
- To correct or confirm valid title for an agricultural lot which is held in distinct and separate ownership;
- To make minor adjustments to the boundaries between abutting lots to conform to existing patterns of exclusive use and occupancy, or to rectify problems created by the encroachment of buildings, structures, individual on-site water services and individual on-site sewage services on abutting lots; or,
- To permit the severance of non-farm rural residential zoned lands, where they will be legally consolidated with an abutting agricultural lot to form one lot under identical ownership and rezoned for agricultural purposes.

ZONING BY-LAW

The subject lands are currently zoned 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' in the Township of Blandford-Blenheim Zoning By-Law. The 'A2' zone permits agricultural uses, including a farm and a single detached dwelling accessory to a farm. 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). Once merged, the enlarged lot will be approximately 93 ha (229.8 ac) with approximately 1,093 m (3,585.9 ft) of frontage on Township Road 9.

The subject lands are proposed to be used for non-farm rural residential purposes and, as a condition of the associated consent application, are required to be rezoned to recognize the use of the lands as such. The 'Rural Residential Zone (RR)' requires a minimum lot area of 2,800 m² (30,139 ft²), a minimum lot frontage of 35 m (114.8 ft), and a minimum lot depth of 80 m (262.5 ft). The subject lands are proposed to have an area of 0.8 ha (2 ac) and a lot frontage of approximately 10 m (32.8 ft) on Township Road 9.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Township Chief Building Official advised that MDS was not a concern for the subject lands.

The Township Director of Public Works advised of no concerns but did comment that any additional driveways required due to the severance will require Township approval and a permit.

The Oxford County Public Works Department, the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), Canada Post, Hydro One, and Southwestern Public Health have indicated no concerns.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Notice of the public meeting for the proposal was circulated to neighbouring landowners on August 13, 2026 in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*. As of the date of this report, no comments or concerns had been received from the public.

Planning Analysis

The subject zone change application and the associated application for consent, which proposes the severance of agricultural lands and the retention of a lot for non-farm rural residential use have been reviewed under the policy direction of the PPS and the Official Plan.

It is proposed that approximately 55 ha (136 ac) of agricultural land will be severed and merged with the existing farm parcel to the immediate east, which is approximately 38 ha (94 ac) in area, for a total farm parcel size of approximately 93 ha (230 ac). The resulting lot size and configuration is consistent with the PPS for maintaining farm parcels of adequate size to adapt to changing agricultural conditions.

The subject lands will be approximately 0.8 ha (2 ac) in area and will be used for non-farm rural residential purposes. Given the lot size, staff are generally satisfied that the proposal is consistent with the policies of the PPS regarding non-farm rural residential uses and lot creation in prime agricultural areas.

The subject application proposes to rezone the lot to be retained from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special Rural Residential Zone (RR-sp)' to recognize a non-farm rural residential lot. A special provision is being requested to permit a minimum lot frontage of 10 m (32.8 ft). In staff's opinion, the developable area of the lot is sufficient to accommodate the necessary servicing, parking, and amenity space. The proposal has been reviewed by the Township Director of Protective Services who has not indicated concerns with the proposed 10 m (32.8 ft) frontage for access to the site for fire apparatuses. As such, staff are satisfied that the frontage is appropriate.

In light of the foregoing, it is the opinion of this Office that the proposal is consistent with the policies of the PPS and maintains the intent of the Official Plan and Planning staff recommend that the subject zone change application be approved-in-principle.

The lands were previously subject to two separate severance applications (Severances B26-21-1 and B26-29-1). Severance B26-21-1 is to be finalized prior to Severance B26-29-1. Given that the subject zone change application is a condition of Severance B26-29-1, staff will bring forward the necessary by-law and schedules to Council for formal passing once Severance B26-21-1 has been finalized and closed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council of the Township of Blandford-Blenheim approve-in-principle the zone change application submitted by Highview Estate Ltd. (File No. ZN 1-26-03) whereby the lands described as Lot 16, Part Lots 15 and 17, Concession 9 (Blenheim) are to be partially rezoned from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special Rural Residential Zone (RR-sp).'

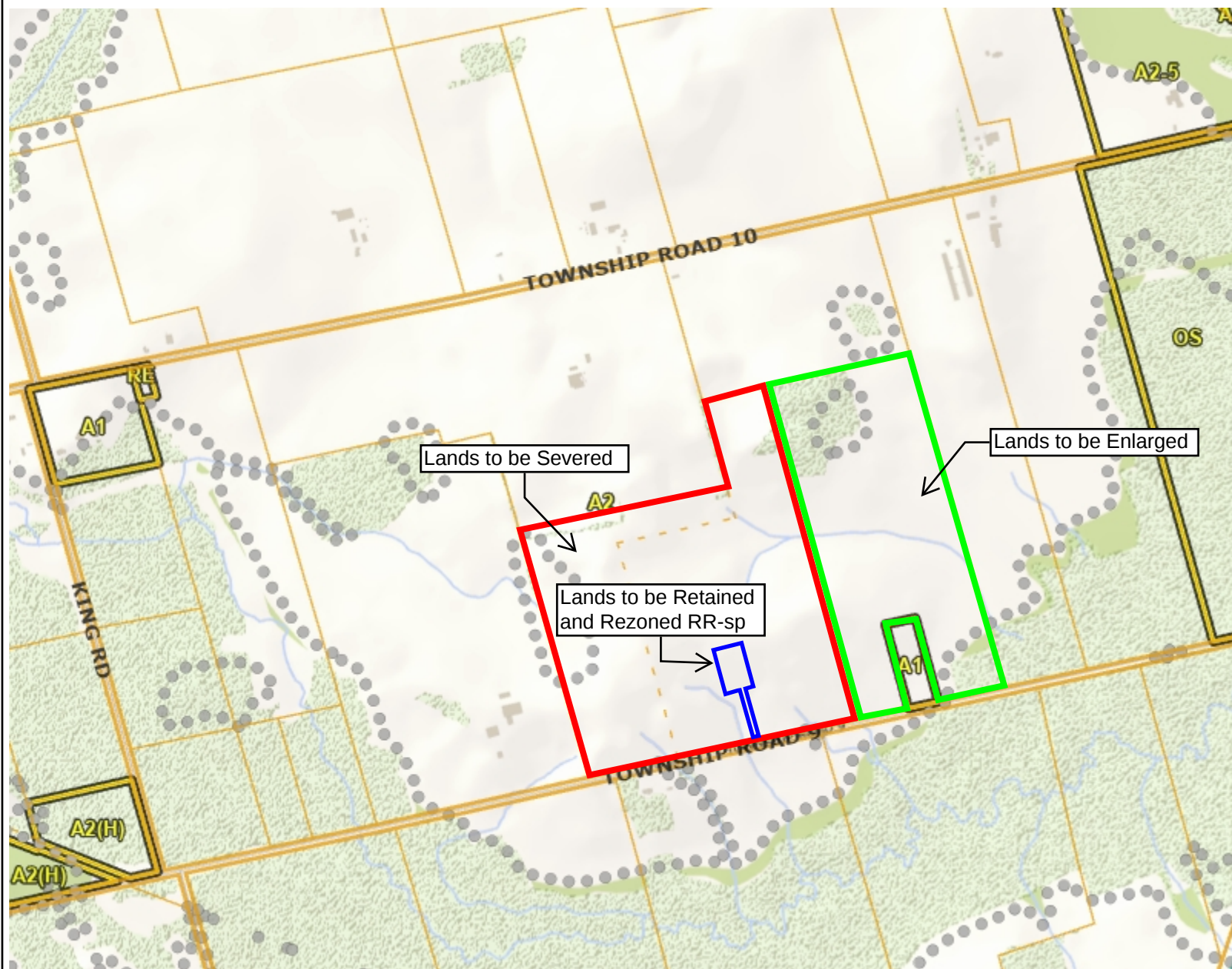
SIGNATURES

Authored by: Original Signed By

Dustin Robson, MCIP, RPP
Development Planner

Approved for submission: Original Signed By

Heather St. Clair, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner



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



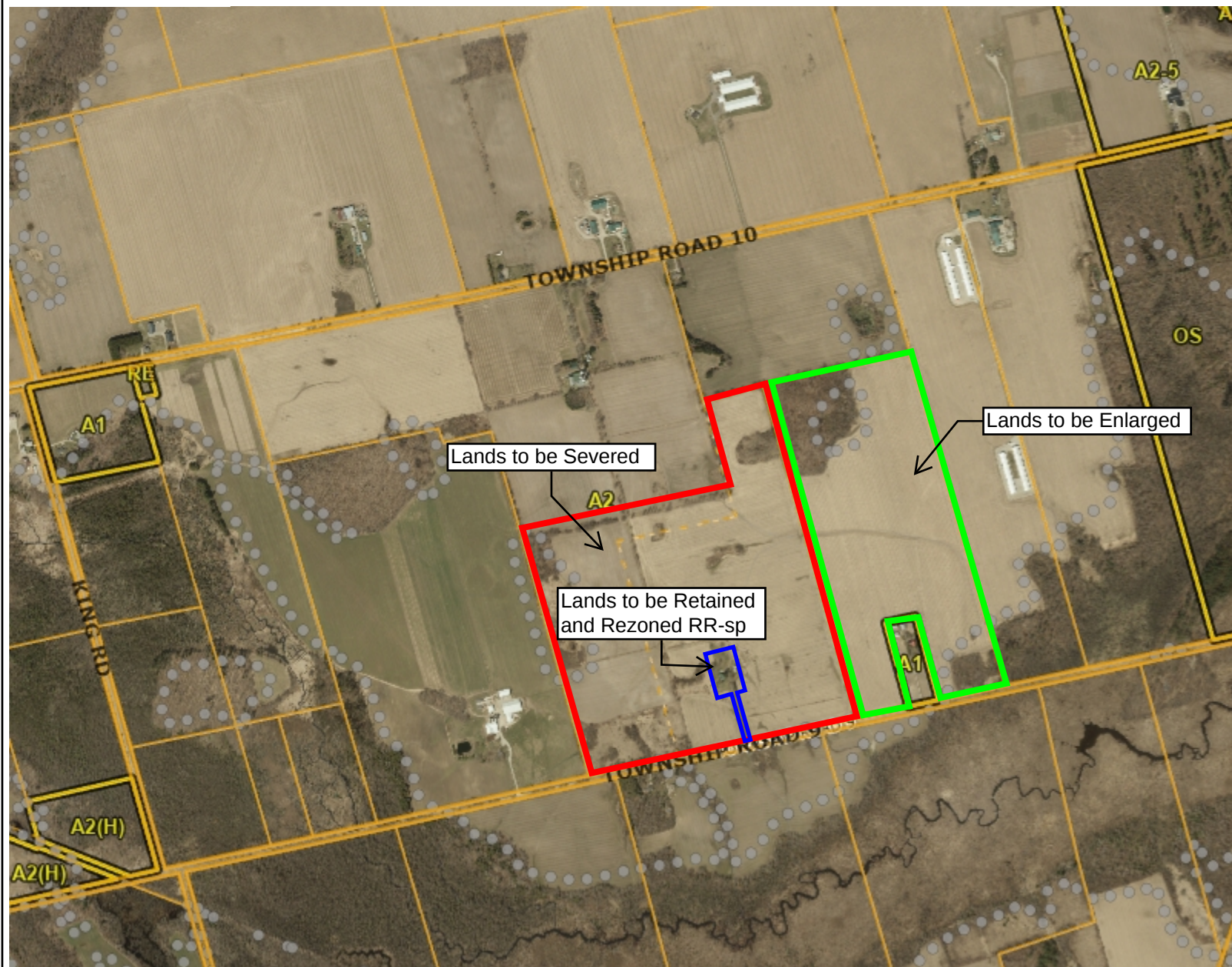
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May 7, 2026



Legend

Parcel Lines

- Municipal Boundary
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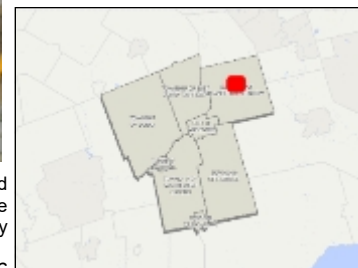
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May 7, 2026

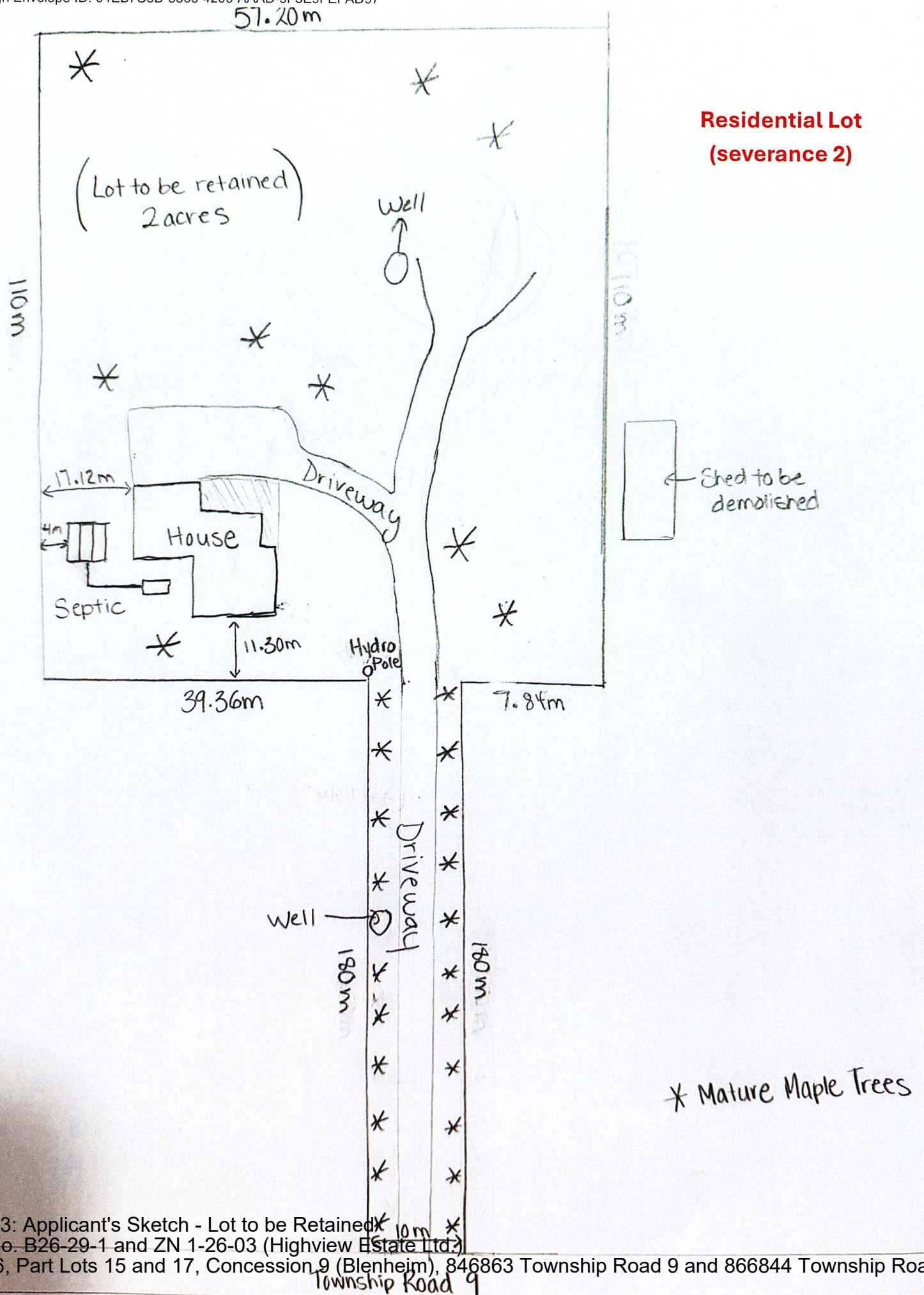


Plate 3: Applicant's Sketch - Lot to be Retained
File No. B26-29-1 and ZN 1-26-03 (Highview Estate Ltd.)
Lot 16, Part Lots 15 and 17, Concession 9 (Blenheim), 846863 Township Road 9 and 866844 Township Road 10