

**To: Mayor and Members of Township of Norwich Council**

**From: Dustin Robson, Development Planner, Community Planning**

## **Zone Change Application**

### **ZN 3-26-02 – Richardson**

#### **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

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- The application for zone change proposes 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 undersized agricultural parcel.
- The subject lands are approximately 9.4 ha (23.4 ac) in area and are currently vacant of any 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**

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##### **BACKGROUND**

OWNERS: David and Donna Richardson  
714456 Middletown Line, Woodstock, ON N4S 7V8

AGENT: Marius Kerkhoff (Remax AB Realty Ltd.)  
165421 New Road, Otterville, ON N0J 1R0

LOCATION:

The subject lands are described as Part of Lot 9, Concession 5 (East Oxford). The lands are located on the south side of Firehall Road, between Middletown Line and Oxford Road 14 and are municipally known as 485556 Firehall Road, in the Township of Norwich.

COUNTY OF OXFORD OFFICIAL PLAN:

Schedule "N-1"	Township of Norwich Land Use Plan	'Agricultural Reserve' and 'Open Space'
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TOWNSHIP OF NORWICH ZONING BY-LAW 07-2003-Z:

Existing 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 single detached dwelling on an undersized agricultural parcel comprising an area of approximately 9.4 ha (23.4 ac).

The applicants are proposing to rezone the subject lands to allow for the future development of a single detached dwelling on private services. The area in which the applicants have identified as being an appropriate location for the future dwelling is located in the southwest corner of the lands. The proposed building envelope is approximately 0.3 ha (0.9 ac) in size.

The subject lands are currently vacant of any buildings or structures and are currently used for agricultural purposes. Surrounding lands consist of agricultural operations of varying sizes. In addition to the surrounding agricultural uses, rural residential uses also exist to the north of the subject lands.

Plate 1, Location Map with Existing Zoning, shows the location of the subject lands and the existing zoning in the immediate vicinity.

Plate 2, Aerial Map (2025) with Existing Zoning, shows an aerial view of the subject lands and the approximate location of the proposed building envelope.

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 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 lands are located within the Agricultural Reserve and Open Space designations according to the Township of Norwich Land Use Plan, as contained in the County Official Plan. The proposed location of the single detached dwelling is located entirely within the Agricultural Reserve designation.

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 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 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 acres);
- 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 lands are 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, as well as single detached dwellings accessory to the farm operation. The 'A2' zone requires a minimum lot area of 20 ha (49.4 ac) and a minimum lot frontage of 100 m (328.1 ft) in order to develop the lands for any farm related buildings.

Section 5.9 of the Zoning By-law provides that an existing vacant lot, zoned 'A2', held under distinct and separate ownership and having a lot area of at least 16 ha (39.5 ac) may be used and a building or structure may be erected, altered, or used, provided that all other requirements of the Zoning By-law are complied with.

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

#### AGENCY COMMENTS

Canada Post advised that mail delivery will be via owner installed/maintained rural mailbox. Otherwise, no further comments.

The Township Chief Building Official/Director of Building Services advised the following:

- 1.) No concerns with the proposed zone change.
- 2.) Building permit required prior to construction of any building exceeding 10 square metres and prior to construction of an on-site sewage system.
- 3.) MDS I calculations will be required at the time of building permit applications.
- 4.) A municipal drain is located on the subject property and shall not be altered, including new crossings, without Council approval.
- 5.) A portion of the property is regulated by the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA). A development permit may be required from the GRCA prior to applying for a building permit if the proposed construction is near or within the regulated area.
- 6.) Development charges may apply to the construction of a new dwelling unit.

The Oxford County Public Works Department and the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) indicated no concerns with the subject application.

#### PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Notice of complete application and notice of public meeting regarding the application for zone change were circulated to surrounding property owners on March 11, 2026 and April 28, 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 9.4 ha (23.4 ac).

Planning staff have reviewed the proposal and are of the opinion that it conforms to the policies of the Provincial Planning Statement. The proposal would not result in the creation of a new residential lot within a prime agricultural area and would not negatively impact surrounding agricultural operations. The proposed building envelope is also situated in a way that removes minimal agricultural land from production while also allowing the remainder of the subject lands to continue to be used for agricultural purposes.

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 single detached dwelling and associated amenity areas will have frontage on a public road (Firehall Road). The proposed dwelling location also generally minimizes the loss and fragmentation of the tillable area and will not preclude the balance of the parcel from being used for continued agricultural purposes.

The draft zoning by-law contains provisions to ensure that the single detached dwelling and associated accessory buildings, amenity space, and area for the provision of private services are located as proposed in the application. The siting location shall be 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 a single detached 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 has been prepared to outline the 0.3 ha (0.9 ac) building envelope and to recognize the lot area of the subject lands.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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It is recommended that the Council of the Township of Norwich approve the zone change application submitted by David and Donna Richardson, whereby the lands described as Part of Lot 9, Concession 5 (East Oxford), in the Township of Norwich 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**

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**Authored by:** Original Signed By

Dustin Robson, RPP, MCIP  
Development Planner

**Approved for submission:** Original Signed By

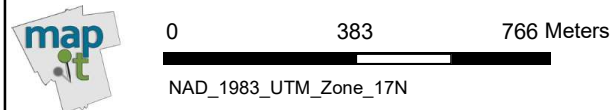
Eric Gilbert, MCIP, RPP  
Manager of Development Planning



**Legend**

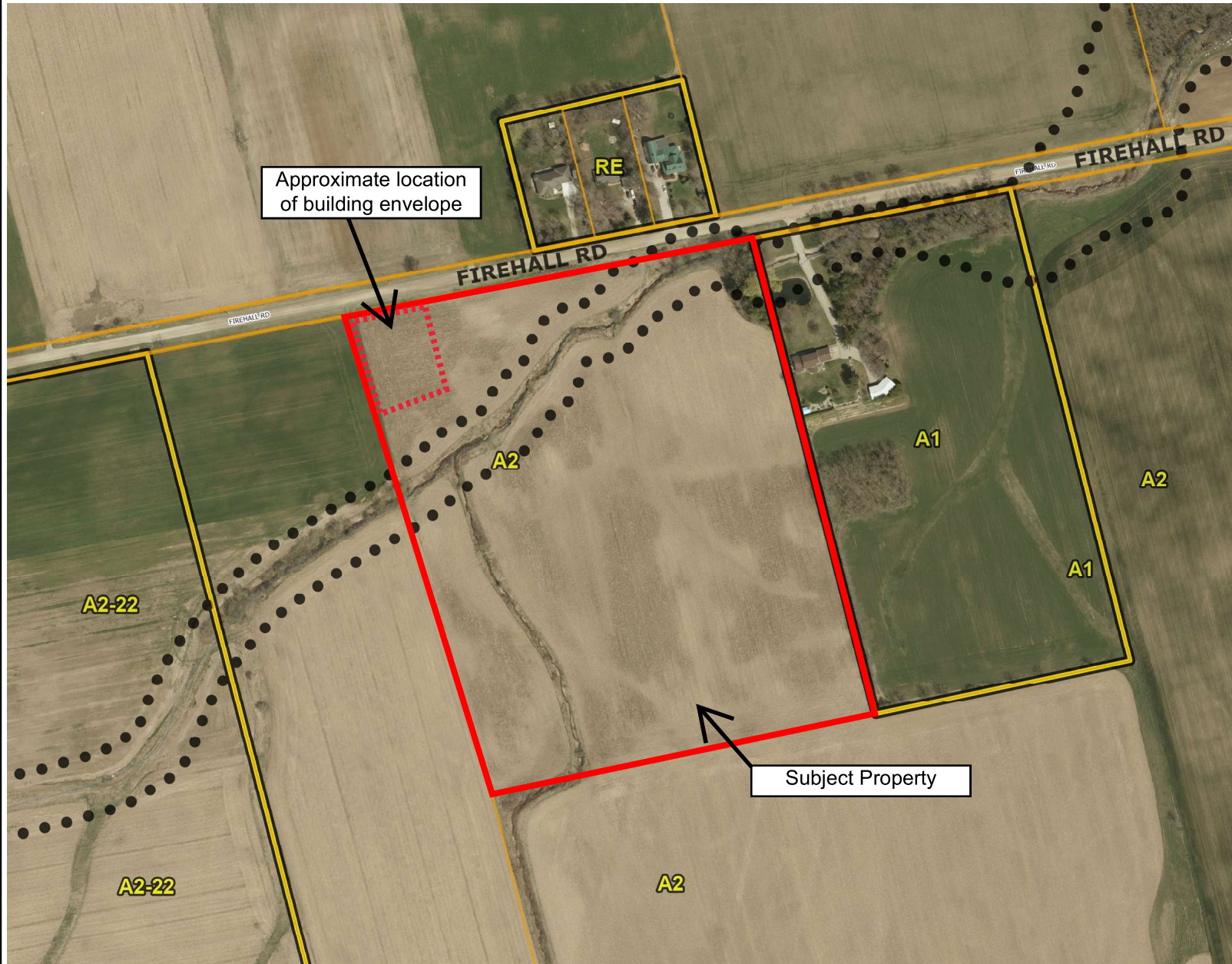
- Parcel Lines
  - Municipal Boundary
  - Property Boundary
  - Assessment Boundary
  - Road
  - Unit
- Zoning Floodlines Regulation Limit
  - ◆ 100 Year Flood Line
  - ▲ 30 Metre Setback
  - Conservation Authority Regulation Limit
  - Regulatory Flood And Fill Lines
- Land Use Zoning (Displays 1:16000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

**Notes**



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 10, 2026



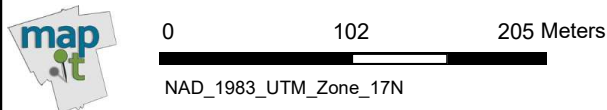
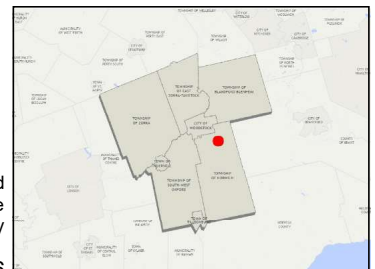
Approximate location of building envelope

Subject Property

**Legend**

- Parcel Lines**
  - Municipal Boundary
  - Property Boundary
  - Assessment Boundary
  - Road
  - Unit
- Zoning Floodlines**
- Regulation Limit**
  - ◆◆ 100 Year Flood Line
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**Notes**



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April 28, 2026

Plate 3: Applicants' Sketch  
File No.: ZN 3-26-02 (Richardson)  
Part of Lot 9, Concession 5 (East Oxford); 485556 Firehall Road, Township of Norwich

