Report No: CP 2026-343
COMMUNITY PLANNING
Land Division Committee: November 5, 2026

**To:** Chair and Members of Oxford County Land Division Committee

**From:** Spencer McDonald, Development Planner, Community Planning

# Application for Consent
# B26-43-5– Claessic Fields Inc.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The application for consent proposes a non-farm rural residential lot addition in the Township of Zorra.
- The proposed lot addition would have the effect of increasing the lot area for an existing non-farm rural residential lot to provide more area for an existing rural entrepreneurial use (electrical contractor business).
- Planning staff are recommending the application not be approved as the proposal does not conform with Official Plan policies respecting permitted uses in prime agricultural areas.

## DISCUSSION

### Background

OWNER: Claessic Fields Inc.
622891 Road 62, Ingersoll, ON,

APPLICANT: Paul and Jayme Claessens
642914 Road 64, Ingersoll ON, N5C 3J6

LOCATION:

The subject lands are described as Part Lot 22, Concession 3 (North Dorchester), in the Township of Zorra. The lands are located on the south side of Road 64, between 15th Line and 17th Line and are municipally known as 642860 Road 64, Township of Zorra.

OFFICIAL PLAN:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Schedule “Z-1” | Township of Zorra Land Use Plan | Agricultural Reserve |

TOWNSHIP OF ZORRA ZONING BY-LAW 35-99:

Existing Zoning

| | |
|---|---|
| Lot to be Severed: | General Agricultural Zone (A2)* |
| Lot to be Enlarged: | Rural Residential Zone (RR)* |
| Lot to be Retained: | General Agricultural Zone (A2) |

Proposed Zoning

Lot to be Severed and Enlarged:

*Special Rural Residential Zone (RR-sp) – the lands proposed to be severed and enlarged are subject to a recent zone change application (approved in principle by Township Council) as outlined in the zoning section of this report.

SERVICES:

Lot to be Severed – none
Lots to be Retained and Enlarged – privately owned and operated well and septic

ROAD ACCESS:

Paved, Township Road (Road 64)

PROPOSAL:

| | SEVERED LOT | RETAINED LOT | ENLARGED LOT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Area | 0.3 ha (0.75 ac) | 40 ha (99 ac) | 0.4 ha (1 ac) |
| Frontage | Nil | 550 m (1,804 ft) | 44 m (144 ft) |
| Depth | 61 m (200 ft) | 685 m (2,247 ft) | 103 m (337 ft) |

The purpose of the Application for Consent is to facilitate a lot addition from an ‘A2’ zoned property to an ‘RR’ zoned property. The lot to be severed will cover an area of approximately 0.3 ha (0.75 ac) and is currently vacant. It is proposed that the lot to be severed will be added to the lot to the immediate north (642914 Road 64) with the intention of enabling an existing rural entrepreneurial use (electrical contractor business) to expand with future plans to establish a new contractor’s shop on the lands proposed to be severed and added to the ‘RR’ lot.

The dimensions of the subject lands are identified in the chart above. The lot to be enlarged contains an existing single detached dwelling with and a detached accessory structure that contains the existing electrical contractor business. Once merged with the lot to be severed, the newly enlarged lot will be approximately 0.7 ha (1.75 ac) in area.

The lot to be retained will be approximately 40 ha (99 ac) in area after the severed portion is removed. There is no proposed development on the lot to be retained at this time. The retained lands are vacant agricultural lands used for cash cropping production. The retained lands also include an area of significant woodlands, as identified by the Oxford Natural Heritage Systems

Study (ONHSS). Surrounding land uses are predominately agricultural, with aggregate industrial operations to the north and smaller agriculturally zoned and non-farm rural residential lots to the east.

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

Plate 2a, Aerial Map (2025), provides an aerial view of the subject lands and the surrounding lands.

Plate 2b, Aerial Mapping (2025) Close-up view, provides a close-up aerial view of the subject lands, including the existing 'RR' lot with the approximate area proposed to be severed and conveyed for the purpose of accommodating the proposed rural entrepreneurial use in a future shop.

Plate 3, Applicant's Sketch, shows the proposed configuration of the subject lands, as well as the location of the existing dwelling and detached garage on the enlarged lands, as prepared 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.

Section 4.3.2 (Permitted Uses) provides that in prime agricultural area, permitted uses and activities are: agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses and on-farm diversified uses, based on provincial guidance.

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:

- 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;
- 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;
- 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

- infrastructure, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or rights of way.

The policies of the PPS also direct that lot adjustments in prime agricultural areas may be permitted for legal or technical reasons, which are defined to mean 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.

Section 4.3.5 (Non-Agricultural Uses in Prime Agricultural Areas) states that planning authorities may only permit non-agricultural uses in prime agricultural areas for:

a) extraction of minerals, petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources; or
b) limited non-residential uses, provided that all of the following are demonstrated:
    - the land does not comprise a specialty crop area;
    - the proposed use complies with the minimum distance separation formulae;
    - there is an identified need within the planning horizon identified in the official plan as provided for in policy 2.1.3 for additional land to accommodate the proposed use; and
    - alternative locations have been evaluated, and
        - there are no reasonable alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas; and
        - there are no reasonable alternative locations in prime agricultural areas with lower priority agricultural lands.

Impacts from any new or expanding non-agricultural uses on the agricultural system are to be avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated as determined through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance.

Official Plan

The lands to be severed, retained and enlarged are designated ‘Agricultural Reserve’, as shown on Schedule ‘Z-1’ – Land Use Plan for the Township of Zorra as contained in the Official Plan.

Permitted uses in the Agricultural Reserve designation generally include agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses. In order to protect and preserve the County’s prime agricultural area for long-term agricultural use, non-agricultural uses will only be permitted in limited circumstances in accordance with Section 3.15 and 3.17 of the Official Plan.

Section 3.15 provides that it is an objective of the Official Plan to permit new or expanded non-agricultural uses only where such uses to not conflict with the goal for the agricultural policies and to direct non-agricultural uses to settlement areas whenever possible. Non-agricultural uses include commercial, industrial, institutional and non-farm rural residential uses.

The policies regarding boundary adjustments for lands used for non-farm rural residences in areas designated Agricultural Reserve are outlined in Section 3.1.6 (Consents for Legal or Technical Reasons) in the Official Plan. Specifically, these policies permit consents for, among other matters, 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, private water supply or private sewage disposal facilities on abutting lots.

Proposals which have the effect of adding agricultural land to an existing residentially zoned property will satisfy the policies related to maximum lot size in Section 3.1.5.3, which direct that expanded non-farm rural residential lots will be as small as is practical in order to preserve the County's agricultural land base. Severance proposals to expand lots for non-farm rural residential use will generally not exceed 0.8 ha (2 ac) in area. Proposals seeking to sever parcels larger than this limit will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the additional area is required to accommodate a private water supply or on-site sewage facilities, where the topography of the area has limitations for agriculture or where the proposed lots are physically isolated by natural features such as streams.

Section 3.1.5.2.1 – Secondary Uses on Rural Residential Lots, provides that the establishment of a rural entrepreneurial uses may be permitted, where they are small in scale and secondary to the residential use on the lot. This section also directs that specific uses that may be permitted as rural entrepreneurial uses in each Area Municipality shall be set out in the Area Municipal Zoning By-law, and be in accordance with the applicable policies of this section.

For greater clarity, the following uses shall not be permitted as a rural entrepreneurial use:

- Retail uses, offices, medical/dental clinics and restaurants, except where explicitly permitted in this section;
- Institutional uses;
- Restaurants;
- Residential uses or accommodation; and,
- Other uses that, in the opinion of the County and/or Area Municipality, may;
    - i) Attract large numbers of customers or other people;
    - ii) Generate significant traffic, or not otherwise be appropriate for rural infrastructure or public services;
    - iii) Create compatibility or enforcement issues;
    - iv) Undermine or conflict with the planned function of rural settlements, except where explicitly permitted by the policies of this section; or,
    - v) Not otherwise be consistent with the applicable policies and objectives of this Plan.

Rural entrepreneurial uses may be permitted subject to the following:

- The establishment of a rural entrepreneurial use shall require a site-specific amendment to the Area Municipal Zoning By-law. The site-specific zoning amendment shall identify the specific rural entrepreneurial use to be permitted and contain any provisions necessary to ensure that policy criteria of this section are addressed, including but not limited to:
    - i) The location of the use on the lot;
    - ii) Restrictions on sale of goods or materials, maximum gross floor area, and number of employees;
    - iii) Parking and loading requirements; and,
    - iv) Appropriate restrictions on signage, outdoor storage and/or display, and other evidence of business activity.

Only proposals for a specific rural entrepreneurial use will be considered by the Area Municipality.

Area Municipalities may choose to establish more restrictive use, size and scale requirements for a rural entrepreneurial use than permitted by the policies of this Plan, provided they do not conflict with said policies. Where stricter requirements are established by the Area Municipality in the Zoning By-law, they shall take precedence over these policies.

A rural entrepreneurial use is defined to mean a small scale, business or industry, including:

- A home occupation that exceeds the permitted size and/or scale of a rural home occupation, and

- Rural home industries

Such uses shall be secondary to the rural residential use of the property and comply with the use, scale and design criteria for a rural entrepreneurial use, as contained in the Official Plan. A rural home industry is defined to mean a small-scale business or industry that is secondary to the agricultural or residential use of the lot and typical examples include small equipment repair, small-scale veterinary clinics, a workshop for a building contractor or trade occupation and a studio space for a woodworker or craftsperson.

Rural entrepreneurial uses shall be small scale and not detract from the residential character of the property. The maximum gross floor area of all buildings and structures permitted to be used for the purposes of a rural entrepreneurial use shall be regulated through the Area Municipal Zoning By-law, however, said gross floor area used or occupied by the use shall not exceed 280 $m^2$ (3,014 $ft^2$) or 10% of the total lot area, whichever is less. All new buildings and/or structures used or occupied by a rural entrepreneurial use shall be designed and constructed so as to maintain or complement the residential character of the property and be sited on the lot so as to be visually secondary to the residential use. The shop proposed by the applicant for the rural entrepreneurial use (and approved in principle for Zorra Council) is to be approximately 278 $m^2$ (3,000 $ft^2$) in size, and the applicant also requested to maintain the current 148 $m^2$ (1,600 $ft^2$) detached garage as accessory to the existing residential use – resulting in a total accessory building coverage of 427 $m^2$ (4,600 $ft^2$) – (approved in principle by Zorra Council).

New or expanding rural entrepreneurial uses that would exceed the size, scale, or use limitations in this section shall not be permitted. Such uses shall be directed to locate or relocate in a settlement or must comply with the policies for establishing a non-agricultural use as contained in Section 3.1.7. Rural entrepreneurial uses shall generally be recognized as a Type A Land Use for the purpose of determining the application of the Minimum Distance Separation Formulae I.

One or more of the occupants of the dwelling on the lot must be directly involved in the operation of the rural entrepreneurial use. The rural entrepreneurial use may involve up to two additional employees who do not reside on the lot.

Zoning By-law

The subject lands are currently zoned ‘General Agricultural Zone (A2)’ and ‘Rural Residential Zone (RR)’ in the Township of Zorra Zoning By-law.

The lots to be severed and retained are Zone ‘A2’. Lands zoned ‘A2’ allow for a range of agricultural uses and require a minimum lot area of 30 ha (74.1 ac) and a minimum lot frontage of 100 m (328.1 ft) and an interior side yard of 7.5 m (24.6 ft). The lot to be enlarged is zoned ‘RR’. Lands zoned ‘RR’ allow for a single detached dwelling and require a minimum lot area (2,800 $m^2$ / 30,139 $ft^2$), minimum lot depth of 80 m (262.4 ft) and a minimum frontage of 35 m (114.8 ft).

Once consolidated, the residential parcel will comply with the relevant zoning with respect to lot area, frontage and depth, however it is recommended that, if approved, a condition of consent be included to require the lot to be severed be rezoned to ensure that the zoning of the lands is consistent with the lands to which they will be added and reflect the ‘new’ use of the land resulting from the severance.

As previously identified, the Council of the Township of Zorra, at its August 13, 2026 regular meeting of Council, approved-in-principle the zone change which requested that the subject lands

(including the area proposed to be severed and conveyed to the immediate north) be rezoned from 'A2' to a special 'RR-sp' zone with a site-specific provision to allow the electrical contractor business as an appropriate rural entrepreneurial use, and allow for the proposed future shop to accommodate the business. If approved by the Oxford County Land Division Committee, an implementing by-law will be brought back to Township Council for signing and final approval (pending the outcome of the subject application).

Agency Comments

The Township Director of Corporate and Protective Services, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA), Hydro One and Oxford County Public Works have indicated no concerns with the proposal.

Township Director of Public Services, the Township Director of Corporate and Protective Services and the Township Fire Chief have indicated no concerns with the proposal.

The Township Chief Building Official / Drainage Superintendent commented that drainage reapportionment will be required as a condition of the consent. The applicant is to be advised that they may be subject to development charges for any future buildings that are proposed on the subject property.

Public Consultation

Public Notice of the application was circulated to neighbouring property owners on October 22, 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 application for consent proposes to sever lands from an agricultural parcel for the purpose of a lot addition to an existing residential parcel, for the purpose of adjusting lot boundaries between neighbouring parcels, resulting in additional lands for the lot to be enlarged to accommodate a future shop for a rural entrepreneurial use (electrical contractor business) to remain and grow on the subject property. While the current contractor's shop that exists on the subject lands is not a permitted use, a zone change was approved-in-principle in August, 2026 by the Township of Zoning, that would permit the proposed expansion pending the result of the subject application.

Respecting the direction provided in the PPS, 2024, specifically, Section 4.3.3 (Lot Creation and Lot Adjustments) discourages the creation of new lots in prime agricultural areas and provides direction that permits such adjustments for agricultural uses and agricultural-related uses. The proposed use, which is seeking to take additional agricultural lands out of production in order to accommodate it, is neither an agricultural use, nor an agricultural-related use. The use itself does not comply with the goals of the agricultural area to protect and preserve the agricultural land base, and the proposed severed lands are not required to confirm to the existing patterns of use or needed for private servicing. It is the opinion of Staff that although the use may be acceptable to local Council as being an appropriate rural entrepreneurial use, it does not necessitate the removal of additional agricultural lands from production in order to continue to exist on the subject lands.

Further, respecting Section 3.1.6 of the Official Plan, (Consents for Legal or Technical Reasons) in the Official Plan which focused on policy direction which allows for 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, private water supply or private sewage disposal facilities on abutting lots, Staff are of the opinion that this is not what is being sought by the subject application. There has been no justification provided that, in the opinion of Staff, demonstrates the proposed severed lands are needed to recognize existing patterns of exclusive use, not is the application seeking to rectify a problem created by encroachment or a servicing issue.

Planning staff have reviewed the applicant's request and are of the opinion that although the proposal to sever 0.3 ha (0.75 ac) of land and add it to the existing rural residential lot to the immediate north may represent a minor lot addition that will not result in the creation of a new lot, it does not provide sufficient justification to unnecessarily take prime agricultural lands out of production in order to accommodate the use, and should therefore, not be considered appropriate in this instance. The applicant has advised that the severed lands are needed to accommodate a proposed shop, which (pending approval of the subject application) would be anticipated for construction in 2027 and will continue to serve the surrounding agricultural community (both residential and agricultural lands with the electrical contracting service).

In addition to the foregoing, and as previously identified in this report, it is proposed that the rural entrepreneurial use will occupy a new, approximate 278 $m^2$ (3,000 $ft^2$) building, while the existing detached accessory building (approximately / 1,600 $ft^2$ in size) would also be retained, with the intention of servicing the residential use. Although staff acknowledge the applicant's effort to keep the building proposed to accommodate the 'REU' at the maximum permitted 280 $m^2$ (3,014 $ft^2$) size, the existing structure, together with the proposed 'REU' use would significantly exceed the intended scale for structures accessory to the residential use of the property. Further, staff are of the opinion that the proposed lot addition is not consistent with the Official Plan policy direction intended to protect prime agricultural lands for long-term agricultural use, and the requested lot addition does not appropriately justify the removal of farmland from the agricultural land base.

Although, the lot to be enlarged would be kept to under 0.8 ha (2 ac) in area, which is in keeping with the policy direction of the Official Plan with respect to lot sizes for non-farm rural residential development, it is the opinion of Staff that the business can be accommodate on the subject land s without necessitating the need for additional farmland. Further, the intent of the Official Plan policies which speak to permitting rural entrepreneurial uses is to accommodate them on existing lots which are sufficiently sized for the needs of the specifically identified rural entrepreneurial use, with the understanding that many businesses may exceed the scope of what is intended to be considered rural entrepreneurial and may be more appropriately accommodated in a nearby settlement area.

In light of the forgoing, Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposed lot addition does not maintain the intent and purpose of the Official Plan regarding boundary adjustments on lands designated as Agricultural Reserve and should not be given favourable consideration from a planning perspective.

## RECOMMENDATION

**Whereas the application for consent does not comply with the policies of the County of Oxford Official Plan, we are of the opinion that the application is not acceptable from a planning perspective and should not be granted.**

## SIGNATURES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Authored by:** | *"Original Signed By"* | Spencer McDonald, MCIP, RPP<br>Development Planner |
| **Approved for submission**: | *"Original Signed By"* | Heather St. Clair, MCIP, RPP,<br>Senior Development Planner |

Plate 1 - Location Map and Existing Zoning
File No. B26-43-5 - Claessic Fields
642914 Road 64, Township of Zorra




## Legend

Parcel Lines
- Municipal Boundary
- Property Boundary
- Assessment Boundary
- Road
- Unit

Environmental Protection Flood Overlay
- Flood Fringe
- Floodway
- Environmental Protection (EP1)
- Environmental Protection (EP2)

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



0 302 603 Meters

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

*September 28, 2026*

Plate 2a - Aerial Map (2025)
File No. B26-43-5 - Claessic Fields Inc.
642914 Road 64, Township of Zorra




## Legend

Parcel Lines
- Municipal Boundary
- Property Boundary
- Assessment Boundary
- Road
- Unit

Environmental Protection Flood Overlay
- Flood Fringe
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Zoning Floodlines Regulation Limit
- 100 Year Flood Line
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Land Use Zoning (Displays 1:16000 to 1:500)

## Notes



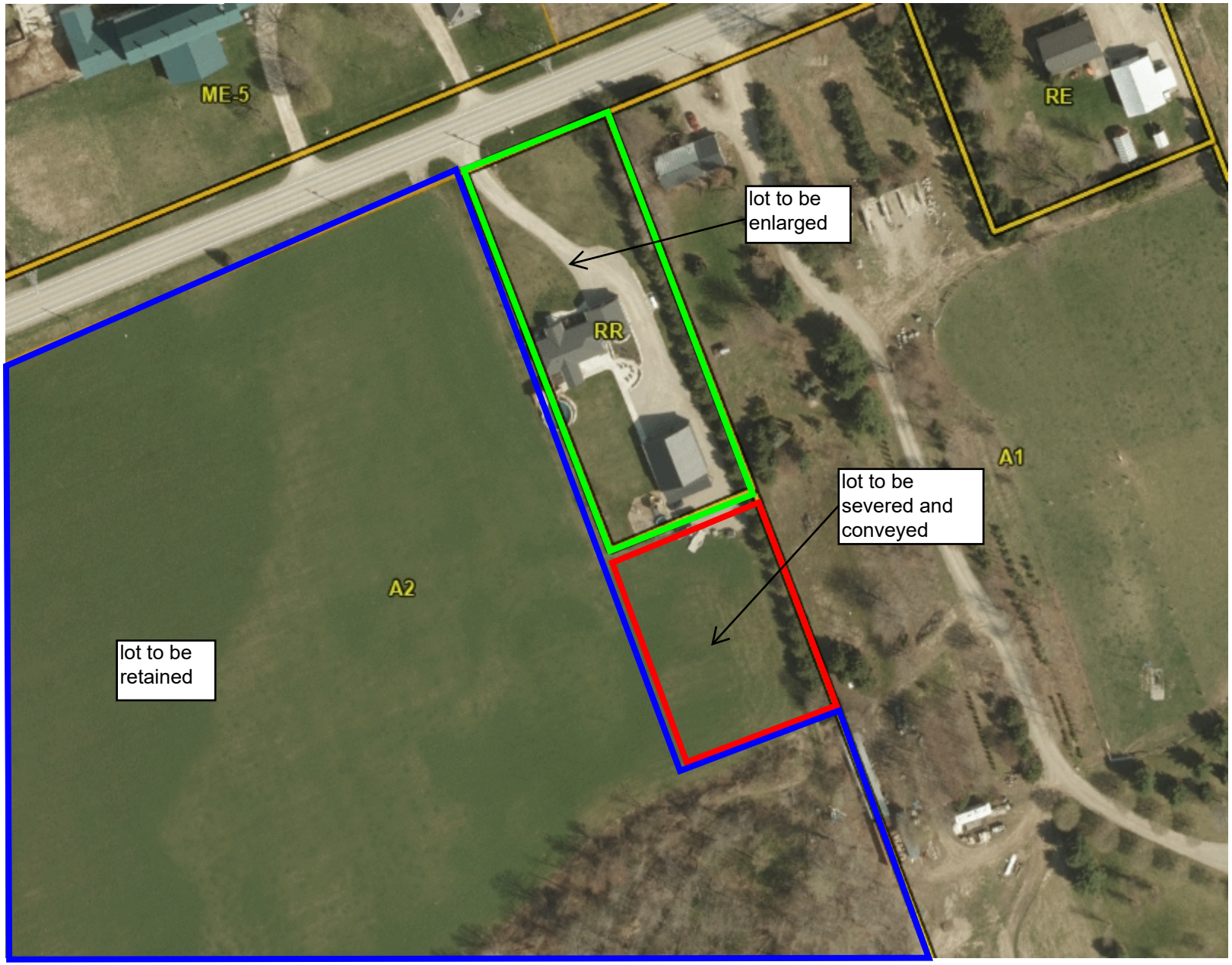
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September 28, 2026

Plate 2b - Aerial Map (2025) Close-up View
File No. B26-43-5 - Claessic Farms
642914 Road 64, Township of Zorra




## Legend

Parcel Lines
- Municipal Boundary
- Property Boundary
- Assessment Boundary
- Road
- Unit

Environmental Protection Flood Overlay
- Flood Fringe
- Floodway
- Environmental Protection (EP1)
- Environmental Protection (EP2)

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

0 38 75 Meters

NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N

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Plate 3 - Applicant's Sketch
File No. B26-43-5 - Claessic Fields Inc.
642914 Road 64, Township of Zorra

Existing Property owned by Paul and Jayme Claessens

Parcel to be severed From Claessic Fields to Paul and Jayme Claessens

Yellow Property to remain as Claessic Fields

