
Haldimand County

Report PDD-16-2025 Application for an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment to Permit Special Events, Oneida

For Consideration by Council in Committee on June 17, 2025



Objective:

To consider an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment to permit special events on the subject lands.

Recommendations:

1. THAT Report PDD-16-2025 Application for an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment to Permit Special Events, Oneida be received;
2. AND THAT application PLOPZB-HA-2023-219 to amend the Haldimand County Official Plan for the subject lands on a site-specific basis to permit special events be approved for reasons outlined in Report PDD-16-2025;
3. AND THAT application PLOPZB-HA-2023-219 to amend the Haldimand County Zoning By-law HC 1-2020 for the subject lands on a site-specific basis to permit special events be approved for reasons outlined in Report PDD-16-2025;
4. AND THAT the subject lands be placed under site plan control for reasons outlined in Report PDD-16-2025;
5. AND THAT the proposal is deemed to be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement 2024, or other matters of provincial interest;
6. AND THAT the by-laws attached to Report PDD-16-2025 be approved at a future Council meeting.

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Respectfully submitted: Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager, Community & Development Services

Approved: Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

Executive Summary:

An Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment application has been received to permit special events on the subject lands. The property is located on 3rd Line, east of Highway 6, north of Hagersville. The applicant seeks a site-specific amendment for the property to allow for special events, including weddings and ceremonies, to be permitted as accessory to the existing residential use and landscaping operation on-site. Site specific zoning will prescribe the range and extent of the use, while site plan control will be applied to all future development. These implementing tools will ensure the use remains appropriate in its design and intensity.

Planning staff are of the opinion that the application is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement 2024, conforms with the Haldimand County Official Plan and Zoning By-law HC 1-2020.

Background:

The subject property is described as Oneida Range East of Plank Road Part Lot 16, Haldimand County; known municipally as 4690 Highway 6, and are located on the south side of 3rd Line, immediately east of Highway 6 between Caledonia and Hagersville. The property measures 4.45 hectares (11 acres) in size, containing an existing dwelling and four (4) former poultry barns that have been repurposed for the landscaping operation (Zen Construction Inc.) and storage purposes (Attachment 1). The subject lands were previously used as a poultry operation, however in 2018 an Official Plan Amendment (PLOP-HA-2017-137) and Zoning By-Law Amendment (PLZ-HA-2017-138) application was approved to permit a landscaping business and associated contractor's yard. The property has been operating as such since that time. The area immediately surrounding the storage buildings is primarily grassed, with access pathways that are graveled. The land at either end of the barns are graveled more extensively, and are proposed to contain the parking for the business.

The surrounding lands include a variety and mix of uses as follows:

- North – agricultural lands and operations
- South – agricultural lands, existing non-farm residential lot and a garden centre
- East – agricultural lands and operations
- West – non-farm residential lots; and rural industrial operations including a trucking yard, concrete facility and a gypsum mining operation

The existing landscape operation is known as Zen Construction Inc. which is an established landscaping business that provides services throughout the County. The business employs a total of 10-15 people depending on the time of year. The property owners have provided significant investment into the property and are now seeking the opportunity to permit weddings and similar special events on the property. The applicants intend to use the manicured grassed area to the east side of the property for the events, however it is noted that no new buildings or permanent structures are proposed. Any structures used as part of events would be mobile and temporary in nature (e.g. tents, portable washrooms).

The purpose of the subject report is to introduce the proposal and present draft amendments to the Official Plan and Haldimand County Zoning By-law that would permit the additional use on the subject lands.

Analysis:

Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

Planning staff have reviewed the proposal relative to the policy framework of the Provincial Policy Statement, 2024 (PPS). The subject lands are classified under a prime agricultural area within the PPS. The overall intent and purpose of the PPS is that wider prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture and that non-agricultural uses in these areas should not conflict with or compromise the ability to undertake agricultural operations. The PPS further sets out policies for Permitted Uses which includes on-farm diversified uses, which are defined as: "Uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property, and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products." Moreover, the PPS also allows for Non-Agricultural Uses in Prime

Agricultural Areas (Section 4.3.5), wherein planning authorities may 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:
 - 1. the land does not comprise a specialty crop area;
 - 2. the proposed use complies with the minimum distance separation formulae;
 - 3. 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
 - 4. alternative locations have been evaluated, and
 - i. there are no reasonable alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas; and
 - ii. there are no reasonable alternative locations in prime agricultural areas with lower priority agricultural lands.

The subject lands are not classified as specialty crop area and there is no impact from a minimum distance separation perspective. There are no livestock operations on lands adjacent to the property. The proposed use is secondary to the existing residential use and commercial operation on the property and would be occasional. Additionally, the parcel is smaller in nature and has limited agricultural capacities given the proximity of adjacent non-farm residential uses. The area consists of a mix of land uses, which also further limits some of the function of the site. The subject lands are considered to be a lower priority classification.

Lastly, the PPS includes policy which outlines that “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”. The proposed additional use for weddings and special events is generally secondary to the commercial use on the site and will be limited in terms of total events annually. Also, the property will be subject to Site Plan Control which can further evaluate screening and buffering.

The farm parcel itself is fragmented in nature, small in size and the developed condition of the lands limit the opportunities for traditional agricultural uses. These factors lend to the site being well suited or alternative uses that can be supported in the agricultural areas of the County.

Based on the analysis of the proposal, the subject application is considered to conform to the policies of the Provincial Planning Statement.

Haldimand County Official Plan

The subject lands are designated ‘Agriculture’, with Special Policy HCOP-42 within the Haldimand County Official Plan. Within the ‘Agriculture’ designation, the land base is to be protected and the use of the lands must be predominately agriculturally oriented. Permitted uses include all forms of farming, as well as land uses compatible with or related to agriculture, including value added uses, secondary uses and agriculturally related uses. HCOP-42 allows a landscaping business and associated contractors yard as additional permitted uses. As the intent is to expand on the existing permissions in place to accommodate a use that is generally not agricultural in nature, an Official Plan amendment is required to permit the use. The implementing zoning by-law will limit the scale and scope of the use and this is described in further detail in the zoning section below.

The Haldimand County OP does permit opportunities for agriculturally-related uses including industrial and commercial operations, as well as permit opportunities for on-farm diversified uses. On-Farm Diversified uses are considered additional opportunities to diversify and supplement farm income, as well as to accommodate value-added and agri-tourism uses in prime agricultural areas. There are a number of criteria relating to on-farm diversified uses including:

- i) The use is located on a parcel of land which contains an existing farm operation;
Comment:
The subject lands are not part of an active farming operation, however are located within the agricultural area and maintain the designation. The subject amendment to the Official Plan is required to facilitate the proposal and permit the use in accordance with the policies.
- ii) The use is secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property;
Comment:
The use is intended to be secondary and the area to be used for the events area is approximately 2 hectares (5 acres). The intention of the function would be limited in size and scale and area. It will continue to be secondary to the primary function of the existing residential use on the property and the on-going commercial landscape operation.
- iii) The use is limited in area;
Comment:
As noted above, the use would be limited to approximately 2 hectares (5 acres) and would have a minimal impact on both the subject lands and adjacent uses. The events would be supported by private contractors providing services such as sanitary facilities, catering and music for the specific occasion which would further mitigate impact on the property and maintain more of an ancillary function of the use.
- iv) The use may include, but is not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses including overnight tourist accommodation, such as a bed and breakfast establishment, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products, including those that use crops from other producers;
Comment
The proposed use will be for ceremonies, weddings and special events which can be complementary to the existing use on the property and promote limited tourism benefits to the municipality.
- v) The use is compatible with, and will not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations;
Comment
The proposed use is minimal in nature and is not expected to negatively affect neighboring properties. The objective is to embrace the rural environment and highlight the natural surroundings as a component of the events. No permanent event structures or buildings are to be erected and event footprints (e.g. tents, washroom trailers, food caterer) would 'come and go' over the course of a few days.
- vi) Surrounding agricultural operations are able to pursue their agricultural practices without impairment or inconvenience;
Comment:
There is no anticipated impact to existing agricultural operations or practices as a result of the proposed used.
- vii) The use is appropriate to available rural services and infrastructure;
Comment:
The events would be supported by private contractors providing services such as sanitary facilities. The existing road network is sufficient to accommodate the anticipated traffic

- generated from the proposed use while ample on site parking is available across the large acreage of the site.
- viii) The use maintains the agricultural/rural character of the area;
Comment:
As noted previously, the intention is to utilize and highlight the rural nature of the property. No significant site alterations or construction is intended to accommodate the proposed use, so the primary nature and appearance of the subject lands will remain the same.
- ix) The use meets all applicable environmental standards for air emissions, noise, water and wastewater standards and receives all relevant environmental approvals including but not limited to Environmental Compliance Approval, Permit to Take Water, and/or sewage works approvals under the Ontario Water Resources Act, 1990;
Comment:
There are no anticipated environmental concerns resulting from the proposed use. Licensed sanitary contractors would be utilized for all washroom services. In addition, it is noted that any special event would be subject to Haldimand's Noise By-law.
- x) Outside storage areas associated with the on-farm diversified use shall be screened from the road and residential buildings on adjacent properties and be included in the limited area calculations;
Comment:
There is no outdoor storage proposed as part of the special events. Site Plan Control will also apply to ensure that the use is reviewed from a technical perspective and will include any screening if necessary.
- xi) If more than one on-farm diversified use is proposed on a single property, the combined area of all on-farm diversified uses shall be within the land area and building area requirements;
Comment:
The use is being considered through the Official Plan Amendment in conjunction with the existing residential use and commercial operation. The uses are considered compatible and complementary to the function of the area. The proposed use will be considered on a site-specific basis.
- xii) On-farm diversified uses that are proposed to grow beyond the area limits, either incrementally or otherwise, will not be permitted and will be encouraged to locate in areas of the County appropriately designated for the use;
Comment:
The use will be limited in size and scale through the special provision and site plan review. Additionally, the number of events is proposed to be limited through the implementing zoning by-law amendment which will clearly define the size and scale of the operation.
- xiii) On-farm diversified uses will be subject to site plan control, where warranted and appropriate (e.g. for those uses requiring outdoor storage areas, visitor parking and/or a new farm access, etc.), in accordance with the policies of Section 9.6.5 (Site Plan Control); and
Comment:
Site Plan Control will apply to the subject lands and proposed use.
- xiv) Severances to separate the on-farm diversified uses from the farm property will not be permitted.
Comment:
The proponent has been made aware of this provision and there are no plans to make such an application.

The subject lands, while in the agricultural area, are not a functioning farm and are limited in size. Two of the existing structures on the property have been converted to accommodate the landscaping operation and contractors shop, with additional outdoor storage space allocated to the use. The proposed weddings and special events space will occupy approximately 2 hectares (5 acres) of the subject lands on the east side of the property and are not proposing any permanent buildings associated with the use at this time.

Based on the policy framework, planning staff are of the opinion that this amendment is considered appropriate and will serve to maintain the general intent of the Haldimand County Official Plan by permitting a use on the site that will not have a negative impact on the surrounding land uses, and also, provides a service and benefit to some of those within the agricultural/rural community.

A copy of the draft Official Plan Amendment is included as Attachment 3.

Haldimand County Zoning By-law HC 1-2020

The subject lands are currently zoned “Agricultural (A)”, with site-specific special exception 36.411. The “Agricultural (A)” zone permits agricultural and agriculturally-related uses, with 36.411 authorizing the landscape and contractors yard operation. The intent of the subject proposal is to establish a site specific zoning provision on the subject lands to permit special events (ceremonies, weddings).

Planning staff are of the opinion that establishment of this additional use is appropriate. More specifically, the type of use is generally minor in nature due to its occasional nature and generally compatible with the surrounding lands. The subject lands also provide an opportunity to locate a business in a strategic location and complementary to the existing use currently on-site.

To ensure that the scale, layout and approach to development is appropriate, a series of special zoning provisions are proposed as follows:

- Special events (weddings, ceremonies) may occur up to 20 times per year.
- The area associated with the weddings and special events is limited to the approved subject area of 2 hectares (5 acres).
- The property is subject to Site Plan Control.

The collection of these special provisions will ensure that the use is regulated appropriately and remains small in scale with appropriate land use separations. These regulations apply and will be used in the future if site works are proposed. Any deviation from the above, including expansion to the operation, would require a future application, public process and Council consideration. A copy of the draft Zoning By-law Amendment is included as Attachment 4.

Overall, the proposal is appropriate as the proposed use is generally in keeping with the intent of the Zoning By-law and represents an opportunity to create a new diversified opportunity within the County and for the subject lands.

Financial/Legal Implications:

Not applicable.

Stakeholder Impacts:

Planning and Development – Development Technologist: At this time, staff have no concerns with the addition of the proposed “Event Use”. It is acknowledged that no new permanent structures are proposed, no additional hard surfacing is required for parking, and no new entrances to the property are planned.

As the property falls within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), any required upgrades to the intersection at Highway 6 and 3rd Line will be addressed through MTO. Should the County's involvement be necessary—whether to enter into an agreement or to review updated traffic reports or intersection designs—Development Engineering will respond accordingly.

Building and Municipal Enforcement: Building Permits will be required for the erection of any structures or tents. Parking to be provided. Servicing and Fire routes to be identified.

Forestry: No concerns regarding the application. No impact to County trees or significant natural features.

Customer Experience & Communications – Licensing: wedding venues and associated special events currently do not require a business license.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing: No objections or comments regarding the subject application.

Comments were not received from the Ministry of Transportation (circulated several times); Mississaugas of the Credit; Six Nations of the Grand River or members of the public.

Report Impacts:

Agreement: No

By-law: Yes

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

References:

None.

Attachments:

1. Location Map
2. Owners Sketch
3. Draft Official Plan Amendment
4. Draft Zoning By-law Amendment