



StandOurGround.ca NEWSLETTER

Issue 003 - August 2025

Save Russell Township from Mega Sprawl!

The Importance of
Preserving Russell's
Farmland Community
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The Importance of Preserving Russell's Farmland Community Meeting

Tuesday, September 16, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Russell Arena, 1084 Concession Street, Russell

A Community Meeting you shouldn't miss!

StandOurGround.ca has invited speakers Martin Straathof and Jenna Salvatore from Ontario Farmland Trust (OFT) to speak to our community.

Community Meeting Sponsors

StandOurGround.ca

We started our group, StandOurGround, because many of us in the community are worried that our farmland and rural environment are fast disappearing. We all live here because, while accepting change, we want to preserve our basic rural way of life. If we don't take action soon, we'll lose the very things that make our township special.

Ontario Farmland Trust (OFT)

Ontario Farmland Trust's mission is to protect and preserve Ontario farmlands and associated agricultural, natural and cultural landscapes of food production for the benefit of Ontarians today and future generations.

With over 20 years of experience of on-the-ground projects, OFT has worked with farmers to permanently protect over 2,700 acres of farmland. The organization partners with farmers, land conservationists, municipal planners, public servants, and academics to lead critical discussions and development of sustainable land use planning policies. OFT has the unique ability to support grassroots, farmer-led and community-driven action on farmland protection.

*Please join us at this very important community meeting and spread the word to your neighbours and friends. Farmland is being lost in Ontario at over 300 acres a day. Something must be done **NOW** before it is too late!*

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Community Meeting Speakers

Martin Straathof is the Executive Director of the Ontario Farmland Trust, a conservation organization dedicated to the long-term protection of Ontario's food producing landscapes. With his upbringing on a dairy farm in Arnprior, a BA in Agricultural Development, and an MSc in Agricultural Land Use Planning, he wants to help achieve a vision where Ontario's farmland is valued, where farming communities prosper, recognizing them as an integral part of a thriving economy. Martin brings their steadfast advocacy for sustainable agriculture by actively engaging with stakeholders and fostering partnerships to advance community-based solutions.



Martin Straathof
Executive Director,
Ontario Farmland Trust

Jenna Salvatore is the Eastern Ontario Farmland Protection Coordinator at the Ontario Farmland Trust. She has her master's in Environmental Science. With over five years of experience in the environmental non-profit sector, Jenna began her career at a nature centre, where she led community stewardship initiatives. Jenna brings valuable experience in coordinating conservation projects throughout Ontario, including land securement and restoration.



Jenna Salvatore
Eastern Ontario Farmland
Protection Coordinator,
Ontario Farmland Trust

Why should you attend this meeting?

On January 2025 Rhonda Bradley stood up at a Russell Township meeting to deliver a presentation on behalf of StandOurGround and the Russell Community.

One of the concerns we raised was the expansion of the settlement areas onto prime farmland. Our reasons were:

- a) the Province of Ontario has only 5% of arable land – a lot of that land is here and is irreplaceable;
- b) the agricultural industry remains our biggest economic sector and is crucial to maintain a stable and healthy economy; and
- c) recent economic forecasts indicate that the ag sector could add another \$11 billion to Canada's GDP. A share of this future rightly belongs to the Township of Russell.

We asked that Council pause the expansion of commercial and settlement areas onto prime farmland. The Local Planning Authority should evaluate alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas, and where avoidance is not possible, consider reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas.

Since that meeting more land has been sold to developers. We believe thoughtful, controlled growth in Russell Township is achievable, one that respects agriculture, the environment, and the preservation of our quality of life.


We need a Council that is prepared to stand up for and protect what makes our Township such a great place to live, work, play, raise families and age well.

We also would like the Township to include the agricultural industry in their future economic development plans, as well as to develop an Agricultural Advisory Committee to give the interests of local farmers a voice on the future of our Township.

StandOurGround.ca welcomes your feedback, counterarguments, photographs, and written submissions for our Newsletter. Kindly inform us if you would like your Letter to the Editor to remain anonymous.

 standourground.ca

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 Facebook: What's Up Russell?