



StandOurGround.ca NEWSLETTER

Issue 007 - December 2025

Save Russell Township from Mega Sprawl!

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Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

As the year comes to a close, **StandOurGround** wishes you and your loved ones a wonderful holiday season. In the new year, we invite you to join our newsletter to stay informed, connected, and engaged as these important issues continue to concern our Township.



Dumped on Again!

In November the communities of Russell, Vars, Carlsbad Springs and Edwards were told the City of Ottawa is bidding (possibly hundreds of millions of dollars) in an ultra-secret process to buy the site Taggart Miller sought landfill approval for at the corner of Frontier and Devine roads. The site was given approval in 2017 after a questionable process of environmental assessment and so-called consultation.

This is the site which local residents opposed for 13 years. Yes, 13 years! That's not including the two years previous when residents also opposed turning the former Russell Quarry, now a 50-acre lake, into a mega-landfill.

The history:

It was 15 years ago, November 9, 2010, that the same Taggart Miller consortium announced in local media that they had purchased Quarry Lake to make into a mega-landfill. (Because everyone knows dumping half a million tonnes of garbage each year into a lake overtop a regional aquifer is a good idea.)

The consortium was made up of the Toronto waste company Miller Waste and the overly powerful Ottawa developer Taggart Group (owners of Doran Construction, Tamarack Homes, Taggart Realty, and more). Golder Associates were the engineers hired by Taggart Miller to promote the plan.

Dump the Dump Now was born and held public meetings within two weeks of the announcement. Residents learned the site was in no way suitable for a landfill. DTDN launched two years of protests/presentations/petitions to Council, to MPPs and MPs.



Then, in late 2012, Taggart Miller simply moved the chosen site by 4 km, placing it just inside the City of Ottawa boundary. The move was a classic bait-and-switch. Although they referred to it as Carlsbad Springs, the site is actually closer to the villages of Russell, Vars and Edwards than it is to the Carlsbad Springs village.

The battle between Taggart Miller/Golder and the residents of the area lasted five years. In 2017 the provincial environment minister granted limited approval for a landfill and recycling centre at the second proposed site, called Boundary Road.

The Boundary Road site is covered by farmland, including fields and a forested wetland. This same site was disqualified by the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton in the 1980s for a landfill and incinerator, due to 30 metres of sensitive Leda Clay which covers the site, and which sinks under surface loading. In fact, Taggart Miller was told by their consultants they would have to put all of their surface structures on piles. Even the roads on the site would have to be built on concrete panels supported by piles. Because of that fragile soil, a landfill cell that is 16 metres high would be expected to settle 7 to 8 metres. This would break the underground pipes collecting leachate, resulting in contamination of groundwater and surface water.

We believe Taggart Miller did not start the construction of the landfill in the last eight years, even though they received provincial approval and city rezoning, because it would be too risky and too expensive to build and operate.

With the City signing a non-disclosure agreement with Taggart Miller their Council still approved proceeding with their bid on purchasing the property to replace their Trail Road dump. They claim that dump will close by 2035. Whether it's the City or another operator, whoever is successful in purchasing this property will face huge risks and costs for the same reasons as in the 1980s.

If you are opposed to a giant stinking landfill only 7 kilometres upwind from Russell schools, the library, the arena, the fairgrounds and the sports fields, write to the Ontario Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks at: minister.mecp@ontario.ca and write to the Mayor of Ottawa at mark.sutcliffe@ottawa.ca. Tell them this proposed dump will be a disaster you don't want your or your children and grandchildren stuck with!

It's another reason to Stand Our Ground.

Correspondence

Councillor Lisa Deacon's response to an email thanking councillors for attending our inaugural community meeting on September 16, 2025

Good morning and thank you for your message,

To my knowledge the agricultural sector has been intentionally included by staff in the development of the economic development strategies. I have personally connected local farmers with staff to encourage their participation in focus groups and public engagement related to the development of that strategy.

With regard to the notion of an agricultural advisory committee I had asked to set up a meeting with you a few months back on this topic so that I can better understand your request but I can send the questions that I have about it by email here.

Can you provide an example of a lower tier municipality that has such a committee? I haven't had any luck, and I would like to understand what their terms of reference look like and in broad strokes what terms of reference you would have in mind

2026 Municipal Election

The next municipal election is less than a year away. **StandOurGround** will be hosting a community meeting early in the new year. We hope all candidates who are sincere about wanting to protect farmland from development, will join us. If a candidate is willing to speak up in Council and stand against the destruction of habitat and loss of agriculture in this municipality **StandOurGround** would like to endorse you!

I'd like to understand how the current need is unmet in your view in terms of opportunities for the agricultural sector to engage with their local government.

Your request prompted me to do an audit on how I engage with the agricultural sector in our region:

- I engage regularly with the Eastern Ontario Agri-Food Network which is the farmer-led counties-level organization for agri-food in our region and on whose board Mayor Lajoie participates. I am connected with the National Farmers Union local as well and stay current on their updates through email.
- I connect often with the Ontario Farmers Association at conferences and receive their advocacy packages. I attend Russell County Chapter meetings when I can.
- I am a founding board member of the Eastern Ontario Land Trust which is currently working with farmers in our region to protect their farmland through easements.
- I attend and receive updates from a regional young farmers group that are working to support one another to access land.
- I have been an Embrun co-op member in the past, though I resigned my membership upon being elected to avoid conflicts of interest.
- I did consulting work in the past with Agricom, supporting them to understand the concerns and priorities of their members as they reviewed their strategic plan.

Lisa Deacon

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StandOurGround's response to Councillor Lisa Deacon (October 6, 2025)

Dear Councillor Deacon

Re: Your letter of September 23, 2025

Thank you for your letter in response to **StandOurGround's** (SOG) letter (September 18, 2025) acknowledging your attendance at our event. We were glad that you and Councillors Lalonde and Armstrong attended our inaugural community meeting on the importance of preserving farmland in our Township. We were honoured to have Martin Straathof and Jenna Salvatore from the Ontario Farmland Trust (OFT) to share their expertise on farmland protection. Their perspectives very much echoed those repeatedly offered to Council by members of **StandOurGround**.

Agriculture and the Township Economy

As we have tried to remind Council on numerous occasions agriculture and agri-food remain as Township's largest industries, yet they face serious threats from U.S. and the rapid purchase of prime farmland by developers.

The Embrun CO-OP, based in our Township, illustrates our agricultural strength: with 3,800 members, \$100 million in annual sales, and \$50 million in assets. This is a major industry that contributes to our community in many ways!

- The 2017 Russell Township Economic Development Strategic Plan mentioned agriculture, in an historic sense, dismissing it as "*low impact*".
"Agriculture is described as a strong presence in the township, with a high density of self-employed farming operation owners. On the downside, the sector is not a large direct employer and is subject to broader market shifts and commodity trends. The most likely area of economic growth relative to agriculture is its connection to other sectors such as tourism and agri-food, both of which are existing priority areas for UCPR."
- As our local agriculture industry supports tourism, agri-food businesses, and our broader community economy, seeing we look forward to seeing a more appropriate profile in the Township's soon to be released Eco Dev Strategic Plan. We are aware that the local branch of the OFA has provided the Township with valuable and current economic reports and projects. We know that our local OFA chapter has already shared these reports with the Township. We are attaching them here for your information.²

¹ 2017 Eco Dev report, page 25.

² The documents we attached were: 1) Fiscal Input of Farmland on Ontario's Economy; 2) Economic Contribution of Agriculture to UCPR; and 3) North Grenville ARAAC TOR.

Township Planning and Farmland Loss

We have reviewed the Township's plans for the future.

- Ontario is losing 319 acres of farmland per day. Once farmland is developed, it is lost forever.
- The, still unapproved, Township Official Plan (Jan 2025 Draft) says almost nothing about agriculture (our biggest industry). There is a minor note in section 3.3.2 but otherwise agriculture is ignored. A glance at the table of contents, section 4 - Land Use Designations, says it all.
- Agriculture is not profiled as a designated land use. This omission is alarming for our largest industry.
- By contrast, most "*lower-tier*" OPs list "*Agricultural*" as a land use designation in their land use sections and include agricultural policies, even if the upper-tier sets the land use designations. Why? Because it signals to Council, staff, developers, and residents that agriculture is a priority—and that its prioritization guides local decisions. The Township of Essa, the Township of Severn, the Municipality of Mississippi Mills and the Municipality of Bayham offer some good examples for our Township.

Agricultural Advisory Committee

It is time for our Township to support the local agriculture/food industry as it would for any other industry within its borders, which is why we have asked for the establishment of a Township Agricultural Advisory Committee.

- A Township Agricultural Advisory Committee would provide informed feedback to Council, ensuring that farmers, agri-businesses, and the broader agri-food sector have a direct voice in municipal decision-making.
- Our neighbours in the Township of North Grenville (United Counties of Leeds and Grenville) offer a model with its Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee. (Terms of Reference attached.) You may also wish to consult with the Township of Tay, the Town of Georgina, Clarington, and the Township of Augusta. These are all lower-tier municipalities in Ontario that have recognized the importance of agriculture through a dedicated advisory committee.

How Can You Help SOG?

Thank you for providing the list of agricultural related groups you have connected with.

We recognize your involvement as a Board Member with the Eastern Ontario Land Trust (EOLT), established in 2022, which focuses on natural areas. We are encouraged by the discussions to partner with the Ontario Farmland Trust (OFT), established in 2004, so that EOLT can benefit from OFT's expertise in protecting farmland through easements and donations of land to be managed by the trust. This partnership could strengthen both farmland and environmental protection in Eastern Ontario. We would welcome your activism in this regard!

SOG's Request To Council

We call on you and all members of Russell Township Council to take immediate and decisive action to support our local agriculture and agri-food sector:

- Recognize agriculture and food production as a core economic and community priority, equal in importance to any other industry within the Township.
- Explicitly embed agriculture in the Official Plan and all planning decisions, ensuring policies reflect the significance of our local farmland and agri-food economy.
- Establish a Township Agricultural Advisory Committee to provide direct, informed input from farmers, agri-businesses, and the broader agri-food sector on local decision-making.
- Protect our farmland through the rigorous application of PPS 2024 and local Official Plan requirements, preventing unnecessary loss of our most productive land.

Farmland is finite. Once it is developed, it is gone forever. We urge Council to act now to safeguard the future of Russell's agriculture and rural character.

Thank you for your continued engagement.

StandOurGround

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.

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