

Councillor Andrew Black statement in support of rezoning for proposed abattoir during Sackville Town Council meeting of January 11, 2021.

I'm speaking in favour of this motion because of the recommendations that have been presented to council and the process and procedures that are put in place to govern this type of operation. The developer has come to council to ask for a rezoning of the industrial area so that he may try to start a business. I say "try" because the immeasurable amount of work that has to be done to open an abattoir is no walk in the park. The applications and studies need to be completed; the various provincial and federal agencies that govern abattoirs need to be contacted and the fees have to be paid.

That's just the start. After that Mr. Pierce will have to look hard at whether a small abattoir entirely situated inside this building will be commercially viable; whether the space inside is enough to do the work required; whether the margins lost on following the stringent rules on disposal will undercut the profits made and keep the retail price competitive; how bringing the animals inside immediately to a holding pen rather than a calming area before slaughter will affect meat quality.

But, none of that is of concern because this is a zoning request of council not a judgment on whether a business should open or not.

In the weeks since council started talking about this, I have received and read many, many e-mails from citizens both in favour and not in favour and the reasons for making the decision that they made. The bulk of the concerns that most people have with this business trying to operate are covered by the heavy blanket of oversight controlled by the department of agriculture and the department of health regulations. Smells, noises, disposal of remains, cleanliness, animal control and ethical treatment will all be taken care of.

The rest of the concerns are with the size of the operation and its placement. While it is my personal belief that I would like to see this in an agricultural zone with development agreements in place, that is not what is being asked. The size is small and won't be allowed to get any bigger. And, as for its location, it is far enough out of the way to not be an impact considering again how small it is.

Keep in mind that before the industrial park was industrialized, it was an agricultural area. In fact, Sackville is a rural community and is celebrated for being so. The closest house to the proposed abattoir raised cattle for 20 plus years up to three years ago, sometimes as much as 28 head. There was a small section of fenced pasture land on the south side of Crescent Street that had cattle in it to graze for a time period of 10 to 15 years.

This is a part of our town and if you have any doubt, go outside when the wind is blowing right and the smell of the manure spread on the fields outside and inside our town will be noticeable.

The last thing I will remind everyone of is that we have this development agreement with this business which I would not even think of approving this request without. It is an immediate cease and desist as the zoning would return to what it was before the amendment upon evidence of violation. This is our trump card and safeguard on a municipal level.

Thanks.