

# NEC says no to Halton Place horse shows

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ing the Town of Halton Hills. However, the Town did insist that Halton Place have all outstanding building permits—some open since 2003—closed before the shows.

“Halton Place will comply with all conditions,” stated Arnold. He added that Halton Place owner Timur Leckebusch has made a significant investment into the property, turning it from an intensive pig farming operation to an equestrian farm. He said Halton Place’s spinoff agricultural and economic benefits are region-wide, adding local farmers are supplying material and working on-site.

Neighbour and longtime opponent Jack Pemberton did not deny Halton Place was a beautiful equestrian facility—it’s just in the wrong place, he said.

“It’s not just a Mickey Mouse horse show any more ... it’s a large commercial operation not necessarily limited to horse shows,” he told NEC commissioners, noting there was increased equestrian traffic and noise issues last year. He sent a letter representing 14 Halton Place neighbours supporting the NEC recommendation of refusal.

But Arnold pointed out that Halton Place has complied with noise monitoring conditions, supervised by Town by-law enforcement, and there were no issues.

NEC planner David Johnston recommended refusal based on “general level

of intensity of use and permanent nature of use. This is no longer an occasional/temporary use but has become a permanent recreational use.”

Halton Place is designated within the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) as Escarpment Rural Area, which permits horse shows as an accessory to the agricultural operation. And it was on that basis it had received the past permits for the horse shows, provided the shows remained incidental to the operation, and did not permanently change it from one primarily agricultural (breeding horses) to a commercial, recreational or destination-type land use.

According to Johnston, Halton Place is sanctioned by Equine Canada and FEO (a France-based international equestrian federation), as a Level 1B facility—the second highest available ranking, only surpassed by a few other facilities in Canada including Spruce Meadows in Alberta. “This is indicative of how ‘different’ this facility is from a normal farm/agricultural operation involving horses,” said Johnston in his report.

The shows attract about 500 competitors and visitors per day, with about 325 cars and trailers per day.

Halton Place can also appeal this ruling of the NEC, but it is unlikely that appeal could be heard before the scheduled dates of the Canadian Classic shows, Johnston said.

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