

Loreena McKennitt (CM, OM, CD) and A. Paul Parlee  
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VIA EMAIL

Thursday, November 26, 2020

Mayor Dan Mathieson  
CAO Joan Thomson  
Councillor Beatty  
Councillor Bunting  
Councillor Burbach  
Councillor Clifford  
Councillor Gaffney  
Councillor Henderson  
Councillor Ingram  
Councillor Ritsma  
Councillor Sebben  
Councillor Vassilakos

**RE: Xinyi Canada Glass Project - For Immediate Attention**

Dear Mayor Mathieson and Stratford City Council,

From the information and documents now recently publicly made available, it appears as if the following is the chronology of known events:

**November 20, 2018**

A letter was sent by Mayor Mathieson to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting a MZO.

A Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) is part of Ontario's Planning Act and allows the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to make a ruling on how a piece of land is to be used in the province, with no public consultation required and with no chance of appeal by municipalities or citizens.

The letter states that the City of Stratford, County of Perth and Township of Perth South, has secured an agreement in principle with Xinyi Glass Canada (now referred to as Xinyi Canada Glass on City website) to build that company's first manufacturing facility in North America.

Mayor Mathieson informs the Minister that *"we have executed a Letter of Intent with Xinyi now formalizing the Agreement of Purchase and Sale with the current property owners. We have also made plans with Xinyi for future growth and site in a subsequent phase"*.

The questions that arise from this disclosure are as follows:

1. Were members of Stratford City Council aware that the City of Stratford was working with Perth County and Perth South to secure, construct and operate a glass plant by Xinyi on November 20, 2018?

2. Were members of Stratford City Council aware on November 20, 2018 that the City of Stratford had already secured an agreement in principle with Xinyi to build and operate the glass plant?
3. If members of Stratford City Council were all aware, to what extent did council debate the merits of the proposed development?
4. To what extent did members of the public have an opportunity to a) be made aware of the proposed construction and operation of the glass plant? b) to what extent did members of the public have an opportunity to make their voices known?
5. If council members were not aware of the events reported in the November 20, 2018 letter from the Mayor to the Minister requesting the MZO, why not?
6. When did each member of council become aware of the MZO?

The MZO was denied by the Minister.

### **March 11, 2020**

A letter was sent by Mayor Dan Mathieson to the Ontario Provincial Minister of Municipal and Affairs. The letter informs the Minister that the City of Stratford and two municipalities have approved the proposed annexation of lands from Perth South into the City of Stratford.

The letter from the Mayor informs the Minister that the requested MZO is “*critical in order to meet key construction deadlines, as Xinyi expects to break ground in Spring 2020*”.

The questions that arise from the events in the letter dated March 11, 2020 recently disclosed to the public include the following:

1. Were members of City Council aware that the Mayor, once again was trying to obtain a ministerial zoning order which would completely circumvent, any public hearing, be final and ineligible for any appeal?
2. If members of City Council were aware of #1, when did council members become aware that the request for the MZO (denied previously) was again being asked for?
3. Did City Council have an opportunity and take the opportunity to discuss the merits of the MZO being requested and construction of the glass plant by Xinyi?
4. Was there any public disclosure of any of these events on or prior to March 11, 2020?
5. Were members of council aware that Mayor Mathieson knew that there were “key construction deadlines, as Xinyi expects to break ground in Spring 2020”?
6. Why were none of the events in the November 20, 2018 and March 11, 2020 letters from the Mayor to the Minister made public?

### **April 16, 2020**

A letter dated April 16, 2020 was sent to the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs by Mayor Dan Mathieson. It is clear that the MZO requested by the Mayor in his November 20, 2018 and March 11, 2020 letters were denied. The April 16, 2020 letter from Mayor Mathieson is an appeal requesting the Minister to reconsider the position taken to refuse the issuance of a MZO.

This letter requests a MZO specifically and solely for the lands proposed to be used by Xinyi to construct and operate its glass manufacturing plant [111.17 hectares of 130 hectares annexed].

The following questions arise from the contents of the April 16, 2020 letter from the Mayor of the City of Stratford:

1. Were members of council aware that Mayor Mathieson would be writing the April 16, 2020 letter?
2. Did council debate the merits of the requests being made by Mayor Mathieson to the Deputy Minister?
3. Did City Council support the requests made by the Mayor to the Deputy Minister as set out in the April 16, 2020 letter?
4. To what extent was any of the contents of the April 16, 2020 letter disclosed to the public for the purposes of public debate?

As Mayor Mathieson states in his March 11, 2020 letter to the Minister “we recognize that a ministerial zoning order is only used in unique circumstances.” MZO’s completely circumvent the public process which the mayor would have to have known. The concerns are that there is the appearance of “backroom” deals and a concerted effort to hide events and information from the public and avoid any public involvement or public scrutiny.

It has only been as a result of a public outcry and media attention, that information has been disclosed.

We are therefore requesting a complete moratorium on any further activity on this subject until these issues and others raised by the public have been thoroughly and transparently addressed.

We await your response by 4:00 pm on Thursday, December 3, 2020.

Yours very truly,



Loreena McKennitt (CM, OM, CD)



A. Paul Parlee

CC: Hon. Steve Clark  
Deputy Minister Kate Manson-Smith  
Hon. Randy Pettapiece  
Warden James Atcheson – *Perth County*  
Mayor Robert Wilhelm – *Perth-South*  
Patricia Shantz - *Administrative Assistant to the Mayor of The City of Stratford*  
Chris Montanini – *The Beacon Herald*