

This is a letter of support for the Backyard Farm's Site-Specific Rezoning within the RDOS

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June 15, 2023

To the RDOS Board of Directors:

My wife and I would like to express our ongoing support for the Backyard Farm's rezoning efforts. As residents of Osoyoos, we consider ourselves extremely fortunate to live in a region blessed with an environment and climate that contribute to the cultivation and creation of excellent produce and meats.

We applaud the efforts of Chris and the Backyard Farm team to develop a sustainable model where locally- and regionally-grown produce and meats can be harvested and served locally - to locals and their guests - by enthusiastic, well-trained, local professionals. We have been extremely fortunate to share in the "fruits" of Chris' labour and believe that this carefully curated methodology should be championed by local councils in order that others may be encouraged to follow in the Backyard Farm's footsteps. If there's anything that this region need to encourage it is independent entrepreneurship in the area of food production and service.

We've all seen the commercialization of our local restaurant industry, with even our smallest communities dominated by nationally- and foreign-owned fast food chain outlets and just a handful of independent restaurants. As the economic conditions evolve to favour wine grapes over fruit, locals have seen a significant change in the landscape, with vineyards replacing orchards, ranch land, farmland and small holdings. This region needs more locally-owned and operated independents who are encouraged to develop, cultivate and source their supplies locally and regionally. We need to show these entrepreneurs that we support new models that make such efforts more financially viable, especially in one of the most inhospitable economic environments that the restaurant industry has seen in a century.

We should show the province and country that we can develop a regional economic and political environment that invites and welcomes those who wish to innovate in this area: Those - like Chris and his team - who would commit their own time and money to grow successful businesses like this.

We wholeheartedly support the successful processing of the Backyard Farm's application.

Neil and Shelley Parker  
Osoyoos, BC

Good morning-

Just a little back history. My wife and I live in Kirkland WA USA and years ago we researched an event called the FOG (festival of the grape) in Oliver. Our planning then led us to our dinner options and a chef name Chris Van Hooydonk was preparing a special dinner at Road 13 winery. I think it was 2017 or 2018. We signed up and attended this marvelous dining event.

Here's where Chris's passion, expertise and commitment to responsible food sourcing shone thru from beginning to end. His descriptive narratives surrounding each course sparked every participants curiosity and we were convinced from that point forward that this chef is different, different in the most unique way. Not only giving credit to the purveyors who provided the raw ingredients for the meal but his philosophy on where the industry is headed in the coming decades. Following the meal, we thanked him and his immediate reply was to credit the hard working staff of 2 in the background. This is just the way he thinks- It's all about passing on the knowledge and passion to the next generation, not only the next generation of industry workers but patrons also.

We have attended a handful of events that Backyard Farms has been employed to cater. I really don't like the word cater in this instance but it's the best I could come up with. A dining event with Backyard Farms is an experience of gastronomy, education and appreciation.

As I understand the current situation with his business, Chris is applying for a reclassification of his property. All one needs to do is spend an hour with him walking his beautiful garden, describing each tree, plant or flower, it's significance, history or usage. He wishes to preserve the past, embrace the present and most importantly, protect the future of all our food sources.

Thank you for listening and I hope you evaluate all the data at your finger tips and in the end, make a point to really get to know the business that Chris has created. It's like no other that I've ever seen, let alone be a recipient of it's wonderful product. His kitchen on property is idyllic for teaching the small groups that are fortunate enough to dine at his farm.

Sincerely, Robbi and Bill Denman Kirkland WA

Hi Chef Chris, the whole Backyard family, and the Board of Directors at the RDOS,

It is with great pleasure and hope that I submit this letter of support for Backyard Farm's rezoning proposal to the RDOS.

I'll offer a little of my personal story to help explain my wholehearted support for the culinary excellence Chef Chris and team are showcasing at the Backyard Farm. I'm a lifelong BC resident that has long enjoyed the Okanagan Valley as a wonderful destination for excellent wine, good weather, and great people. In the mid 2000s, I spent several years working both front and back of house in the Lower Mainland restaurant industry and developed an appreciation for good food and company. I even fancy myself a decent cook after all the meals I've made and served! These life skills have served me well in my career of helping startups grow in the technology sector. As a perk of traveling and working in the tech sector, I've had the benefit of dining and entertaining at several well-regarded restaurants in Vancouver and across North America. I can say with complete honesty and sincerity that the Backyard Farm experience is the absolute best dining experience I've enjoyed, ever. There is no equal. The setting of the farm, the GREAT team of people led by Chef Chris, their passion for local and sustainable farming, and the absolute excellence they bring to every aspect of their menu planning, food and wine pairings, and the convivial dining experience makes for a truly life-altering experience. By approving Backyard Farm's proposal, the RDOS will ensure that Chef Chris and team get the support they need to flourish in the years and decades to come which will support the growth of the Okanagan Valley as a global destination for tourism, wine, and culinary excellence.

Thank you for reading this letter and I am hopeful that my story and experiences at Backyard Farm will help you see and support Chef Chris and team as I do!

All the best,  
Sean Mactavish

Morning, looks like a great place to visit! Will follow you on Instagram.

I see you currently offer cooking demonstrations only, correct? Do you think you will be open for dinner reservations in the future? Will be in the Oliver area in September and would love to have dinner with you.

Don't completely understand your development situation, but I do see a benefit in encouraging people to live sustainably on farm land. You are "farming" the land and sharing your produce with people who appreciate the health benefits of close to home, fresh food. I grew up on a farm in Saskatchewan, we ate what we grew and considering all the dinner guests we had, we could have opened a restaurant there, if we weren't so busy farming...

What a perfect way for people to be able to live on a farm and support themselves, share the joys of their labour with others and encourage sustainable living. I would totally encourage the local Board of Directors in the RDOS to approve your application! This would also encourage growth of other such endeavours in the area, benefitting families who live and work in the region.

Best of luck and I look forward to dining with you one day!

To whom it may concern,

I've raced cars around the world and am proud to call the Okanagan region my home.

Backyard Farms is the first place I recommend to anyone visiting - if they're fortunate enough to get a spot. It's the most unique and exquisite place to get a meal in British Columbia. Chris' teams work should be broadcast throughout the region rather than being forced through ridiculous red tape.

It feels like a great deal of nonsense has delayed and hurt the business of a young chef trying to raise his family on his farm. This is a farm like no other and it should be seen as such.

Would love to see this rectified with immediate effect.

Best Regards,

Stefan Rzadzinski

To whom it may concern

I had the privilege to dine at Backyard Farms this year and have made my reservation for when we return in 2024. I have to say this was one of the best meals I have ever had in my life. Not only was the food delicious, fresh and healthy, all the ingredients were locally grown, made or sourced and the staff were knowledgeable, talented and passionate about their craft. We were also expertly advised on complimenting local wines that would pair nicely with the menu - such a unique way to highlight our experience.

The creative concept of farm-to-table that Backyard Farms shares with their guests is a learning opportunity for environmental responsibility and promotes appreciation for local foods, wines and delicacies.

I look forward to supporting and promoting Backyard Farms to all my friends and colleagues, it's so worth it!

Kind regards  
Nicky and Robert Pratt

Dear RDOS Board,

My name is Colin Worth and I am a resident of the RDOS living on Vaseux Lake. Although I am a recent resident, my family has been in this area for several generations and I have been a part of Okanagan Falls and Vaseux Lake all my life.

I am writing in support of the wonderful venture that is Backyard Farms. My wife and I have enjoyed the amazing food prepared by Chef Chris and his team on numerous occasions, most notably at Noble Ridge wine dinners. The culinary experience that Chef Chris and his team put on is simply exceptional. I have traveled fairly extensively in the past and I can say without reservation that a Backyard culinary experience is of the highest caliber.

Chris's vision and implementation for Backyard Farms is precisely what the Okanagan Valley needs in terms of exposure, travel and tourism. I have spoken to people from around the world about how the culinary culture in the Okanagan is changing in a very positive way and catching up with our world class wineries. It is ventures like Backyard Farms that add tremendous value to our growing tourism footprint.

I urge the Board to pass the required amendments/proposals/motions to make Backyard Farms in compliance with RDOS regulations. They are already there in spirit!

Yours truly,

Colin

Dear planning department,

My name is Kerry Liu and I don't live in Oliver or even your larger beautiful region. I live in Oakville, Ontario. I met Chef Chris two years ago at a dinner and have made it my mission to come back every year for at least one unforgettable evening/dinner at Backyard. Every time we come, we are treated to not only an unbelievable meal, but the warmest hospitality ever and a greater appreciation for local wine (I usually end up buying several cases from those presented every time). Chris is the reason my wine fridge has cases from Fairview, Blue Mountain, and River Stone.

I literally brought home a suitcase of bread from Chris's kitchen the last time I visited.

For whatever it is worth, I hope this letter helps in your zoning decision for Chris's expansion plans. Can't wait until the next visit!

Kerry



Hello,

The following is meant to be a letter of support for the Day-Van Hooydonk family and team at Backyard Farm/Chef's table.

I will soon be lucky enough to bring my Grade 2 class to the farm to learn from not only a primary source of information about sustainability, but from valued members of the community and business owners who support other local businesses and community members.

We have been learning about the pillars of food sovereignty at school, so who better to learn from than a food provider? BYF/CT provides knowledge of regional produce and products, and an unparalleled dining experience here in the South Okanagan. Something that this region so desperately needs. If there is anything I have learned as an educator, is that diversity and innovation are meant to be celebrated!

The passion and care in their work from winery events, to private functions is evident in the happy memories that so many people share, and I'm certain if you take a further look at their Google reviews and other testimonials you will see what a novel and enriching experience they provide to this region. To lose such a knowledgeable name in the hospitality industry would be no favour to our communities here, let alone the aspiring chefs, service staff, and other employees who are part of their daily operations.

I do wholeheartedly hope that their application is approved so that they can continue to do the wonderful work they have put in the time for. We cannot wait to celebrate their future successes.

Best regards,

Roxanne Ilagan & family  
Oliver, BC

Dear Members of the RDOS Board,

I am writing this letter to extend my heartfelt support to Backyard Farm, a standout local business that has contributed significantly to the community and the surrounding region. Their dedication to promoting sustainable farming practices and elevating the local food culture is both inspiring and noteworthy.

As a regular patron, my family and I have been fortunate to experience first-hand the care and dedication that goes into every meal served at Backyard Farm. The food is not only delicious but also a testament to the exceptional standard of their farm produce. Their operation is a superb example of sustainable agri-culinary practices, beautifully bridging the gap between the farm and the table.

Backyard Farm has played a pivotal role in the regional hospitality industry, promoting local produce, and championing agri-tourism. Their commitment to mentorship, fostering growth within the community, and promoting local support has been influential in shaping the industry standards in our region. Their influence extends far beyond their business, helping to shape the broader food and wine culture, and the development of farm culture in the region.

Their application for a Site Specific Rezoning with the RDOS and non-farm use applications deserve full consideration, in recognition of the valuable contributions they make to our community. By granting these applications, the Board would be endorsing a sustainable, community-centered business model that positively impacts the economic and cultural fabric of our region.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight that my support for Backyard Farm is not only as a satisfied customer but as a community member who believes in their vision. The future of their humble family business represents a crucial component of the larger picture for our region, and I am confident that their success will continue to benefit us all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

James Moore

As relatively new BC residents, my wife Karen and I invested our life savings to build a new home in The Meadows in Oliver and a new hangar at the Oliver airport. We have been exploring the region and getting to know the special places and business that make this valley so unique. One outstanding business and group of people that we discovered was Chris and his team at Backyard Farm.

Their vision towards food, agriculture, community, and service is outstanding and is a business model that should be followed throughout the region. We have been very disturbed at the push back this world class organisation has been getting from the local administration (RDOS) regarding the plans for their business that will help ensure its sustainability and create a positive ripple effect that benefits us all in the valley.

Please take this letter as Karen and my show of our support for Backyard Farm, and know we are not alone in our opinion as to the importance that Chris and his team are allowed to develop their business following their vision. We will all benefit from it. If the RDOS does not allow it, that will be a great disservice to our community.

Sincerely

Dave and Karen Gillespie

To the RDOS Board of Directors, and others who may be involved in determining the future of Back Yard Farm.

We have been fortunate to have several experiences at BYF over the years, and just want to throw some support their way as well as share our reasons.

We live in Vancouver, and travel extensively, but not often within our province. The presence of this enterprise is so special we go out of our way to choose to visit the area and spend our money at restaurants, wineries, hotels and retail establishments. BYF is THE reason we make these trips, and yet it has introduced us to the many other wonderful reasons to visit the area.

BYF is a true farm-to-table experience. It feels nothing like a restaurant, and that does not dispute the chef's stellar talents. We always enjoy learning about the food preparation, but more importantly it has inspired us about the possibilities of growing our own food and focusing on supporting local businesses. Admittedly we took for granted the bounty of food around us and are frankly concerned that a business such as this is being challenged for its right to exist considering the times. It provides jobs and meaningful training to locals, creates a draw for locals and tourists, is fair and kind to the land, and climate aware in a way that is lacking in many places around our province and indeed many locations we visit around the globe.

Passion and care pours out of Chris and all of his colleagues. We truly hope to have many more opportunities to enjoy this BC gem in the future and ask you to support their continued success.

Sincerely  
Theresa and Kevin McCabe

To whom it may concern,

I believe the proposed use of the property is perfect. Chris has built a beautiful business that showcases the South Okanagan in all its glory. The unique way he shares the story of the food he creates for his guests and the way he compliments the local wine industry is magical.

I have enjoyed the incredible experience of dining with Chris and his team and it was magical!

Please allow this incredible business to grow and thrive.

Best regards,

Audrey Mayer

June 18, 2023

To the attention of:

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen / Provincial Agricultural Land Commission

Regarding:

Backyard Farm Chef's Table - Site Specific Rezoning: 3692 Fruitvale Way, Oliver, BC, Canada, V0H 1T1

My name is Simon Grant,

I am a resident of Electoral District C, and a business owner registered from Oliver BC with the inter-community licensing program for horticultural services dba. 'Carbon Cut Horticultural Services'. For the past twenty years before moving to Electoral District C, I lived in Kelowna on a similarly small AG-1 property within the ALR, and witnessed various developments and rezoning of agricultural land adjacent and nearby my farm on the McKenzie Bench. Now a resident, business owner, and labourer in the area of Electoral District C, I support the site specific Rezoning of 3692 Fruitvale Way, Oliver, BC, Canada, V0H 1T1.

I also work in the wine industry, with the main production location proximate to the rezoning application, and with several vineyards between Osoyoos and Oliver, and more extending up to Naramata and three tasting rooms/ brands representing the company I work for. Our company executive proudly chooses Backyard Farm Chef's Table to prepare/produce whole foods locally sourced to match our wines and present the best quality experience locally for our exclusive events, and for staff functions. The preparation and quality of food from Backyard Farm Chef's Table is exceptional, and makes for a memorable experience of the South Okanagan in its own right.

From my direct experience having attempted to produce organic foods on a small non-conforming property in the ALR, I believe this application C2023.006-ZONE is a remarkable solution that enhances the Agricultural Land Reserve in demonstrating how intensive organic farming on non-conforming parcels predating the Agricultural Land Commission Act can enhance the experience and understanding of locally produced and prepared whole culinary foods. Limited to

three nights per week, and to a maximum of twenty people, this application is a positive example and reasonable use of land in the ALR and will not negatively impact other properties and production when formalized as an eating and drinking establishment specific to the farm-to-table culinary experience.

The farm-to-table model of Backyard Farm Chef's Table is well executed and much needed in the heart of Wine Country, and their produce/product is exceptional for any market. As a resident, business owner, and employee of the wine industry in Electoral District C, I wholly support the approval of application C2023.006-ZONE.

Sincerely,

Simon Grant

Dear Ms. Duong,

I am writing this letter of support for The Backyard Farm's application for zoning amendment to allow an eating and drinking establishment on their property.

As a passionate supporter of local, organic and regenerative agriculture, I am inspired every day at the ingenuity and tireless work ethic of those at the grass roots level of this movement. It is these people who are the backbone of our communities, as they foster land stewardship, community connection, sustainable food production, increased biodiversity, and local economic contribution. The incredible impact that this little farm is making should be celebrated and encouraged by our local governments, not stifled. It is frustrating to me that these innovative, forward thinking citizens have to fight so hard to be able to provide for themselves while actually improving the environment and the community.

This is an easy decision to make if you value people and the environment over bureaucracy and antiquated regulation. I look forward to Chris and his business continuing to thrive and make positive impacts on the community in so many ways.

Sincerely,

Dana Saretsky

Kelowna, BC



To whom it may concern:

I'm writing in support of Backyard Farm in Oliver, BC. When people know where their food comes from, they appreciate it and respect the land it came from. And the most delicious food I've ever had is at Backyard Farm. After dining there and visiting the farm, it makes me want to visit every fruit stand from there to Keremeos because Chef Chris and his team educate the diner about what they're eating and the passion for the land where the food comes from is contagious. I have dined and visited the farm three times and have brought friends from the Lower Mainland, Washington State, New York, and the Okanagan. Not allowing Backyard Farm to continue would be a huge loss for the Okanagan, one of the finest agricultural areas in Canada.

Sincerely,  
Angela Hot

Hello All -

Once again, I'm writing with my support for BACKYARD FARM.

I'm happy to do this, because I love BACKYARD FARM, and I'm going to encourage all my friends that feel the same way - to do the same thing.

I understand the Approval Applications to both the ALC and RDOS are pretty much in the same.

I don't understand the delays, continual demands, stalling, run-arounds and obstructions blocking the Vanhooydonk family from moving forward and focusing on keeping their business alive, and prospering.

I suggest the RDOS take a page from the Cutting Red Tape Bill, passed in Alberta in 2019. It was implemented to cut Red Tape and speed up Regulatory processes and attract investment. To date, over 575 Red Tape Reduction Initiatives have been passed, with another 100 to be completed this year. To date, Cutting the Red Tape has saved the people of Alberta, and Alberta Businesses over \$2.1B!

As a property owner in Osoyoos, I experience a lot of company year round, and I take great pride in the fine dining and wine and farm culture in this locality....there is none other like it!! The "Similkameen" has become a mecca of vineyards, wineries and fine dining.....all of these establishments use the verbiage "Farm Fresh", "All Natural" "Free From" and "Grass-Fed".....**WE SHOULD BE CELEBRATING BACKYARD FARM AND DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO KEEP THIS LITTLE GEM ALIVE!!!**

This makes me question....is the RDOS just a group of people trying to justify their jobs? The Cutting Red Tape Bill not only speeded up processes and saved Alberta money, but also eliminated employment positions that had become redundant.....

The CBC is going to love this story.

Best Regards,  
Patti Stephens

We would like the RDOS to know we fully support Backyard Farm's application for Site Specific Rezoning for all the reasons outlined below.

Chris and Backyard Farm have always been passionate about using his farmland's sustainability. He has always supported local growers and suppliers and, if requested, will suggest local wineries' products to go with the food prepared. It is a joy to hear Chris talk about the local food he uses and we have learned so much from him and it is now important to us to buy local food and produce that is grown sustainably.

Backyard Farms is a place where you can go and experience a wonderful meal and learn about using the produce and food of the area.

Chris and Backyard Farms have always supported local causes and we will never forget what he did during the Covid crisis of Spring 2020 and 2021. What he did was amazing - he came up with an idea (his Black Box packages) that not only kept his staff working and local suppliers too, he gave all of us who were lucky enough to experience them, the most incredible feeling of joy and something to look forward to when we got his Black Boxes, we will never forget that.

Whether going to Backyard Farms for a meal or to just dropping by to buy some of his products you learn something about the land, the produce and sustainability and come away thinking "aren't we lucky to be able to experience this area".

Charlotte and John Burbeck

Dear RDOS Board of Directors.

I'm writing this letter in support of a Site Specific Rezoning with the RDOS, pending ALC approval, by Backyard Farms, Chef Chris Van Hooydonk, and his family.

As proprietors of Painted Rock Estate Winery in Penticton, we aim very highly, from a quality perspective, trying to raise the Okanagan's profile on the international stage.

We're making wonderful traction now and regularly host visitors from the U.S, Europe, Asia and our exports are becoming quite significant.

In order for our region to really be successful we need to support likeminded creative entrepreneurs and leaders like the owners of Backyard Farms.

What they offer is a wonderfully unique, world class culinary experience focused on local, sustainable production, that we can send our enthusiastic customers to.

As longtime customers we enthusiastically support their application and hope you understand the important leadership role they play in growing our regional, national and international wine and culinary profiles.

I sincerely hope you support this application.

John

John W. Skinner

Proprietor

Painted Rock Estate Winery Ltd.

2020 Decanter "Canadian Wine of the Year"

Cell: (604) 306-1107

[www.paintedrock.ca](http://www.paintedrock.ca)

twitter @paintedrockjohn

To Whom it May Concern,

We would like to express our support for the application Back Yard Farms has made to the RDOS. This business venture is a valued and excellent addition to our community and should be encouraged to continue to grow and provide the wonderful experiences that they have offered for the past several years. We have been privileged to spend several evenings with Chris and his gang and plan to do this again in the future. It offers a wonderful and unusual experience to all who utilize his services.

Hilary Drummond and Tom Walsh

Hilary Drummond

Oliver BC  
V0H 1T8



June 16, 2023

Shannon Duong - Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Please accept this letter of support for **Chef's Table/Backyard Farm** and **Chef-Proprietor Chris Van Hooydonk**.

For close to a decade Chef Van Hooydonk has poured his passion, experience and energy into building a business that exemplifies the future of agri-tourism in the Okanagan Valley.

For a multitude of reasons, a lack of mentorship among them, the culinary industry is facing an unprecedented shortage of skilled employees. Operations like the Backyard Farm/Chefs Table offer young cooks unrivalled opportunity and inspiration to learn and develop their craft in a setting that would be the envy of any professional chef.

Acting in various capacities, Chef Van Hooydonk has been a valued supporter of the Culinary Arts training program here at Okanagan College for many years. From substitute instructing to his role as a guest chef for our student-led winemaker dinners, Chef has also graciously donated his time to host experiential tours at Backyard Farm with our students on their field trips.

The international media attention and high praise that the Chef's Table/Backyard Farm experience has earned only shines a brighter light on the immeasurable potential of this amazing valley we all call home.

I wholeheartedly endorse Chef Van Hooydonk's vision and applaud his commitment to nurturing and growing this unique, world class business.

If I can be of any further assistance, or provide you with any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

*Chef Couper*

**Geoffrey Couper**

Culinary Arts Instructor RSE  
Chair, Culinary & Pastry Arts  
**Trades & Apprenticeship**

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*Okanagan College respectfully acknowledges that our Penticton, Kelowna and Vernon campuses are located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan, our Salmon Arm campus is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Secwepemc, and our Revelstoke Centre is located on the traditional and unceded territories of the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc, Sinixt and Syilx.*

Dear Backyard Farm and RDOS planners and directors,

Our area of the Okanagan is a critical place for tourism and agriculture. Backyard Farm is filling a need in the community by producing high quality, organic vegetables, nuts, and fruit, honey and poultry, and creating superb meals.

Food sustainability is threatened by climate change and when someone is stewarding food production on a couple of acres and making a huge positive difference, it is incumbent on our regional leaders to judge each zoning request individually, supporting local initiatives.

The Okanagan needs creative farmers and chefs to move us into a sustainable future, educating the public, partnering with wineries in hosting visitors, and highlighting our agricultural bounty.

Please allow Backyard Farm to continue its mission and values to partner with other local producers to create high quality preserves and marinades and to feed our neighbours.

Limlēm̓t- Thank you  
Lori Goldman, Penticton



Dear RDOS Board of Directors,

I'd like to extend my support for any rezoning and related applications being sought by Backyard Farm.

My wife and I are not big wine drinkers. At times, it feels like there are no agri-tourism destinations for us to visit in BC. Backyard Farms is a notable exception. It's a truly unique operation that offers the type of an agri-culinary experience that I would normally only be able to experience at the private residence of a friend who owns a hobby farm. In my youth, I had the opportunity to visit, help with chores, and eat at the property of family friends who owned a hobby farm and those early experiences permanently changed my relationship with food. I think it is interesting, and a little scary, that such a large percentage of our population has never eaten a vegetable or an egg on the farm where it was grown. I believe that this operation plays a unique role in the tourism industry in the region and I am hopeful that it will receive all appropriate approvals.

Sincerely,  
Steven Jones  
cc

Dear Shannon,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the rezoning application put forward by Chef Chris Van Hooydonk and the remarkable team at Backyard Farm Chef's Table. In this letter, I will share my personal experiences and professional insights that underscore the vital significance of Backyard Farm Chef's Table in the South Okanagan ecosystem.

Since relocating to the Okanagan with my husband in February of 2023, we have become proud full-time residents. Our businesses now thrive in the city of Penticton, and we have invested in several long-term rental properties in Osoyoos. We firmly believe in the region as a place where opportunity and well-being converge. Over the past year, I have had the pleasure of dining at Backyard Farm Chef's Table on multiple occasions. The knowledge, warmth, and hospitality exuded by Chef Chris, his family, and his team are truly exceptional. From the moment you step foot in their establishment, you instantly feel connected to the surrounding area, the ingredients, and the vibrant community. These dining experiences have not only enriched our businesses but have also deepened our personal relationships, fostering a sense of belonging in the place we now call home. The dinners have granted us invaluable insights into local ingredients, artisan food suppliers, sustainable farming practices, and wineries—knowledge that we will continue to share with friends and family for years to come.

Chef Chris brings with him a wealth of skill and experience gained from prestigious restaurants, expertly combined with a genuine love for the region. This unique blend contributes to the economic prosperity of our area, offers professional development opportunities for the team, and creates unforgettable experiences for both tourists and locals. As a qualitative market research expert, I have had the privilege of collaborating with Canadian destination marketing organizations, providing insights and strategic guidance. Research uncovered several recurring themes among our target markets and audiences. Firstly, guests visiting Canada often arrive with limited knowledge of Canadian cuisine, yet possess a curiosity to explore it. Secondly, they seek unique ways to connect with their destination, aiming to create transformative memories. Thirdly, high-value guests value exclusive, immersive travel experiences that allow for deeper exploration. Fourthly, although the Okanagan is considered, at best, a secondary destination compared to major cities in Canada, it offers year-round experiences. Lastly, guests are increasingly mindful of their travel footprint and seek trips that enhance their own well-being. All that is to say that the agri-culinary intersection where Chef Chris and his team create, dovetails into the desires of guests visiting Canada and will continue to attract tourism and drive economic prosperity for our region.

I have been fortunate enough to experience chef's table offerings in various destinations, and I can confidently assert that the genuine, farm-to-table atmosphere cultivated at Backyard Farm is unparalleled. What Chef Chris has created is truly one-of-a-kind in our valley—an extraordinary gem that plays an integral role in our local community, as well as in the broader regional and economic tourism

strategy. Allowing the requested zoning change to support the continuation of this tangible connection to our terroir through farm-to-table dining is not only desirable but imperative.

Chef Chris' commitment to sustainable farming practices and supporting local producers is an important message. We need a diverse food-sustainability strategy that supports food production (farm to table) as well as beverage production (wine) for tourism but also for the land itself.

In conclusion, I implore you to consider the tremendous value that Backyard Farm Chef's Table brings to our region. By granting the rezoning application, you would not only support the growth of our local economy and foster professional development opportunities but also contribute to the creation of unforgettable and sustainable experiences for visitors. I wholeheartedly believe that Backyard Farm Chef's Table deserves the opportunity to continue to flourish where they cultivate and serve as a beacon of excellence in our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I eagerly await a positive outcome in support of the rezoning application for non-farm use.

Sincerely,

Catriona Adam

Dear Ms. Duong,

I am writing you this letter on behalf of Backyard Farm Chef's Table to show my support for his Agri-Culinary Farm to Table business in the South Okanagan. I believe Backyard Farm is a crucial component to the tourism industry in our region as food security here and abroad is slowly diminishing. Chris, his family, and staff are incredibly passionate about educating people on the experiences they offer, so much so that many of their guests specifically return to the farm each year to experience new offerings and often share their own stories of growing and creating food from their gardens at home. Backyard Farm has created a community of people who have become inspired by his and his family's passion for creating nutritious food. This phenomenon is the exact reason why Backyard Farm is so important to our region, they are single handily showcasing what the Okanagan has to offer. Not only does this allow our own community to become educated about their health but it also allows people from all over North America to become educated as well. Having Backyard Farm advocate for the importance of food security and showcase it in the way they do will only benefit our region. With so much fertile land in the Okanagan and around the world being bought up by corporations it is key to remind people that access to locally grown food is a basic human right.

Another reason Backyard Farm should be supported is simply because they are a small business. Not only do they support other local businesses such as farms, wedding vendors, wineries, grocery stores and deli's but they also promote our local economy by drawing in guests from around North America keeping money in our communities. Local hotels, taxi's, shuttle services, winery tour services, private accommodation rentals, and restaurants among other businesses are directly benefitted by Backyard Farm as they are fully booked for the summer seasons. The Okanagan depends on tourism, and as our community is still dealing with the effects of Covid-19 it should be a top priority to support all small business within our region. To my understanding the application for the Farm to be rezoned by the ALC has already been approved and I believe it would be a great disservice to our community for the RDOS to not comply with the rezoning.

Lastly, I think it should be said that organizations such as the RDOS, ALC and local governments are put in place to better our communities. Rules and regulations must be updated and changed with our ever-growing world, and it is the responsibility of the people in these positions to approach each situation with an open mind set. For these reasons I hope you consider Backyard Farm Chef's Table rezoning application. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,  
Jovia Barnett

To the RDOS Board of Directors

Re: Backyard Farm

We are writing to you to express our support for Backyard Farm's applications for rezoning and non-farm use.

We have had the pleasure to enjoy the culinary and educational experience and farm to table approach of Backyard Farm on several occasions. We cherish the very infrequent opportunities when we get to enjoy the unique culinary experience that Chris and his team provides. These rare occasions have been as part of a small group of individuals who frequently travel together to the dinner using one of the local tour bus operators. Arrangements for these gatherings are made months in advance because Backyard Farm is in such demand and consequently has limited dates available for dining opportunities. This is an indication of the popularity of Backyard Farm as a culinary destination in our valley. It is a perfect example of the type of culinary tourism that we should be developing. In our opinion, it is also one of the reasons that the level of dining in The Okanagan is flourishing to the extent it is today.

Being able to sit with a small group of friends while the meal is prepared in front of us and learn how it was prepared from locally sourced ingredients is unlike any restaurant we have visited. The experience is like attending a cooking class or cooking demonstration and then enjoying the most delicious meals.

Sharing the bounty of produce from Chris' farm, both fresh from the field and preserved, is truly a unique opportunity. By attending these dinners, we have learned about many other small local businesses that Chris utilizes to complete the dining experience. Our introduction to these other businesses has resulted in us and others frequenting them for our own needs. These local businesses may also suffer if Backyard Farm is not allowed to continue to operate as they won't get the same exposure.

We hope the Board of Directors recognizes the value that Backyard Farm adds to the community and approves the applications for rezoning and non-farm use.

Backyard Farm is a perfect example of the type of small family run businesses that our community should be encouraging.

Sincerely,

Karen and Gary Brown

[brownkg@shaw.ca](mailto:brownkg@shaw.ca)



June 19, 2023

(Original Letter of Support sent November 17, 2021)

**Board of Directors**

**Regional District Okanagan Similkameen**

**101 Martin Street**

**Penticton, BC V2A 5J9**

Email to Shannon Duong at [sduong@rdos.bc.ca](mailto:sduong@rdos.bc.ca)

**Re: Backyard Farm Chef's Table and Small-Scale Sustainable Farming**

Dear RDOS Directors,

On behalf of the South Okanagan Chamber, we are writing a second letter of support for Backyard Farm Chef's Table (Backyard Farm) as they are a remarkable success story and example of entrepreneurial, small-scale, sustainable farming that we are extremely fortunate to have here in our South Okanagan region. As a community, a region, a province and a country we need to strongly support entrepreneurs in the small scale agritourism space to ensure diversity and the uniqueness that small independent farms and businesses bring to our economy.

We fully support Mr. Van Hooydonk and his business model and there is considerable admiration for what Mr. Van Hooydonk and his wife, Mikkell, have accomplished as demonstrated by the numerous local, national, and international articles written about the farm. As you are aware, there have also been many letters of support for the farm sent to your organization previously.

This business is a working farm, a culinary educational experience, and an amazing example of how small plots of agricultural land can be profitable and sustainable for food production. It is also an Agri-tourism destination that allows the family to share its knowledge, expertise, and passion for growing sustainable food with responsible farming practices. The family's collective efforts are then used for high-end catering, private chef services and workshops, as well as for value-added production such as jam, pickles, and sauces.

As our chamber has stated previously, we believe that there is considerable urgency to resolve the matter of Backyard Farm, as the unfair burden financially and emotionally is too great for any entrepreneur to absorb. This is particularly the case as businesses are just trying to recover

from several challenging years and Backyard Farm has had additional challenges that are putting them at risk of closing or just leaving our region which would be a terrible and preventable situation. We are hopeful that all levels of government are proactively giving thoughtful consideration before placing extra administrative and financial burdens on small businesses and instead are looking for more ways to be supportive and create a business friendly climate in our communities.

Growing food locally, agricultural diversity, water conservation and food security are critical for the future of the South Okanagan, and that is why small, locally owned, businesses like Backyard Farm are important to our Chamber and our network. Now is the time for leadership and finding a reasonable solution that preserves and inspires small scale sustainable farming. We also believe there is an opportunity to work collaboratively with the RDOS, the Chamber network, the Province of BC, and the Agricultural Land Commission to update policies, so they are more adaptable, less prescriptive, and inspire more farm and food focused businesses like Backyard Farm.

Many of our local farmers, fruit stand and small business owners could benefit from minor revisions that would approve a broader spectrum of ancillary uses for their agricultural land. We are committed to working with you to support our region in becoming leaders in small scale agriculture, local food production and security, and agritourism.

Sincerely,

President  
South Okanagan Chamber of Commerce  
[manager@sochamber.ca](mailto:manager@sochamber.ca)  
250-498-6321

Michelle Pidduck

Kelowna, BC V1W 3B9

June 19, 2023

Board of Directors  
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen  
101 Martin Street  
Penticton, BC

**Re: Backyard Farm**

Dear Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen:

I am writing to you to express my support of Backyard Farm's application for Site Specific Rezoning. Myself and my family believe that Backyard Farm is a valuable resource to the South Okanagan offering a truly unique experience.

Four years ago our family had a reunion where family members from across Canada came to celebrate my Grandmother's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. The evening following the celebration we were able to experience the magic of Backyard Farm. Being able to watch Chris and Kyle cook and learn from them as they prepared our meal was a real privilege. Not only did we enjoy their culinary skills, but we also had the opportunity to learn from them about their sustainable practices and the significance of local produce. Trying new foods and gaining insight into sustainability became cherished memories for all of us. Even now, when we reminisce about that evening, it brings smiles to our faces.

Backyard Farm is so much more than a place to go for a meal, it serves as a platform where the farm is brought to life. It is a place where you can see the farm in action, it shines the light on the region, showcasing the true essence of the Okanagan. Particularly in this era of climate change, it is crucial to comprehend the impact of food on the environment. Chris has a remarkable talent for imparting knowledge on those seemingly insignificant moments. By visiting Backyard Farm, people leave with a deeper understanding of the surrounding areas and a greater appreciation for local food producers.

Furthermore, Backyard Farm fosters a sense of community. When my father was still with us, he relished spending time with Chris at the farm. They would exchange knowledge, and my father not only felt a sense of purpose but also a true sense of belonging. He often returned home brimming with excitement about a new technique or a particular type of pan he was eager to try.

Backyard Farm is a true gem in the region, bringing people together and leaving them yearning to return. This is not only beneficial for tourism but also for local engagement. Therefore, I sincerely hope that you will give careful consideration to the preservation of Backyard Farm for many years to come.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



To whom it may concern.

I am sending this email in support of the unique farm to table facility in our town of Oliver, called Backyard Farm. On several occasions, I have had the pleasure of experiencing the Chef's Table that Chris Van Hooydonk and his team have offered. Chris and his wife Mikkell have worked incredibly hard to establish a sustainable small business that is gentle to the environment and informative. Early on as they were still growing their clientele, I was able to work with them for two seasons and in that time, I feel that I learned a great deal from both Mikkell and Chris. It truly is a fantastic operation.

Sincerely  
Allison Perran

Oliver B.C.

It would be greatly appreciated if policy was more accommodating to small Agro businesses that are trying to pivot and provide more community services; especially in these difficult times. Anything that builds community and brings more variety to Oliver is worthwhile. Please allow backyard farm to move forward with their plans.

Best,  
Sarah Elson

This is a letter of support for the rezoning of Backyard Farms property.

I have only experienced the amazing education that Backyard Farms presents to their clients once, and I feel ever so lucky to have been able to do so. With terms like 'farm to table' being slung around at every wine event hosted in this valley, it is important to discover what that actually means as far as food production and the relationship that it entails with local businesses and individuals. Rarely do these experiences include actually reaching down into a garden patch and retrieving some of your dinner ingredients with your own hands, nor does it include knowledge of those ingredients from locals who grew them.

Backyard Farms offers a very personal look at what is put in our bodies, where it's from and how it changes from plant, to ingredient, to meal. My own experience actually gave me goosebumps and an amazing appreciation of our local foods, their sources and value in our society. No other venue in the Okanagan offers this education of food and wine culture, agri-tourism, and farm culture.

Please consider the rezoning of Backyard Farms as an investment in the education of future visitors and an invaluable part of the Okanagan experience.

David Brooks

June 20, 2023

Debbie Day and Dr Christopher Gingell

White Rock, BC

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing this letter in support of Chris Vanhooydonk and his business, Backyard Farm.

We have known Chris for over a decade and followed his career since he was a chef at Burrowing Owl. We have dined at Backyard Farm on many occasions with our wine club who travelled to the Okanagan to enjoy the experience as well as visit the local wineries, shops and restaurants.

Our understanding is that the RDOS approved the initial application which was then sent to the ALC for approval. These two applications were successful and fully supported by the ALC and the RDOS. In addition, the ALC designated Backyard Farm a "special category-agriculinary dining and catering operation" in order for the business to proceed. Now it seems, it is back in the hands of the RDOS for final approval. We don't fully understand the process but it appears to us as rather redundant. Likewise, it is also our understanding that Backyard Farm is referred to as a restaurant which is far from the truth. When one goes to a restaurant, the diner is handed a menu and a wine menu to select their food and beverage. At Backyard Farm, a menu is prepared for the guests well in advance taking into consideration dietary restrictions and allergies. Second, the guests bring in their own beverages to pair with the menu. The room is allocated only for the group of diners for the evening. The diners spend the evening with friends and/or family and there are not any other diners present other than the booking group. This is a catering experience, not a restaurant experience. Third, the produce is locally grown and sustainable as much as possible, as are the proteins.

It behooves us that the RDOS has approved a prison, a race track, and a winery that the owner reportedly built as a competition between two friends to see who could build the finest winery with monies coming from offshore. Backyard Farm's employees are local and the monies earned are spent within the community. Nonetheless, the racetrack, prison and winery bring people to the Okanagan and promote the local economy, as does Backyard Farm.

It would be a travesty to lose a business such as Backyard Farm as it offers a unique experience which one cannot find elsewhere in the South Okanagan. The family works hard to preserve the integrity of their land, through ethical orchard and farm practices to provide their guests with the freshest and most wholesome food possible. The family is committed to the community and the resulting economic growth. Mr. Vanhooydonk has been featured in multiple media productions including National Geographic. We believe Mr. Vanhooydonk is a

fabulous ambassador for not only the region but for agriculture and agricutinary tourism as a whole.

We sincerely hope this matter is settled expeditiously and in support of the continuing operation of Backyard Farm.

Sincerely,

Debbie Day and Dr. Christopher Gingell

To RDOS

I am writing in support of Backyard Farm. My wife and I have dined there on numerous occasions and totally support what Chris and Mikkel are doing. They practice good farming skills and integrate it into a great dining experience.

Thank-you for your time.  
Bernie Stuckey

June 22, 2023

I would like to start off by saying that Chris and his family have been an integral part of this community. Not only have they supported other local businesses, but they have successfully started a business so unique and creative which marries perfectly into what our South Okanagan region is about. Chris's business plan and intelligent vision on Backyard Farms is like none other; and allowing an eating and drinking establishment on the property would allow them to continue working and expanding, all while supporting local farmers and other businesses. I truly believe that allowing for this change would potentially open the door for so many other positive opportunities in our community that may follow suit to Chris & Backyard Farms.

Thank you,  
Danielle & Ricky Dhaliwal  
Osoyoos, BC

I am writing this letter of support for Backyard Farm as I very strongly believe we are lucky to have them in our community, and it would be a considerable loss if they were unable to continue their business.

I was fortunate enough to enjoy a wonderful evening at their establishment. It was an experience I will never forget. The farm to table concept is so commendable, and should be the future in our Valley with the abundance of wonderful agricultural products we have here. Chris shows how this admirable concept is so achievable and so successful. His passion is very evident in everything he does, and he should be an inspiration to us all.

The quality of the food and the wonderful experience of a visit to Backyard Farm is much appreciated in this community. As I think back, I do not recall a single negative comment from friends/acquaintances after a visit there.

I truly believe we are very lucky to have such a unique and wonderful business in our community. It delivers a culinary experience second to none. I only hope more chefs are inspired by Chris as Agritourism is growing in the Okanogan and we would all benefit from more businesses like this!

In closing, I implore the decision makers to let this wonderful business keep working its magic in our community. Kudos to them, and may we all learn from them.

Sincerely,  
Susan Capyk



To whom it may concern:

I'm writing in support of your local treasure "Backyard Farm" in Oliver, BC. My husband and I live at Predator Ridge in Vernon and have made specific trips on numerous occasions to enjoy outstanding dinners with Chef Chris at Backyard Farm. It is truly an amazing experience to enjoy local food and be educated on every ingredient in the meal. Sitting in an intimate setting watching the chefs go out into the farm to select the finishing touches on the plates, hearing about exactly where all the local ingredients come from (which farm, fruit or vegetable stand), and then eating the delicious food is a treasure. Although we come specifically to have dinner at Backyard, we also visit the other wineries and farms in the area when we are there. It really adds to the tourism experience in the region.

This special farm and what it brings to Southern Okanagan tourism is irreplaceable. It would be a huge loss to lose such an amazing gem and I personally think it would be a huge oversight not to encourage this type of agri-tourism in the region.

Best Regards,

Tara Terins

Michael Calisto  
DeVino Wine Tours inc. 955 Morningstar Rd Oliver BC, V0H1T6  
[DeVinowinetours@gmail.com](mailto:DeVinowinetours@gmail.com) 604-649-1315  
June 24,2023

To: RDOS Board  
Subject: Rezoning Support for 3692 Fruitvale Way BC,

Dear RDOS,

I am writing this formal letter to express my strong support regarding the proposed rezoning application at 3692 Fruitvale Way Oliver BC, that is scheduled for a hearing on rezoning to allow Farm to Table Eating and Drinking for private experiences. As a Community Partner to Backyard Farm, I firmly believe that this rezoning application should be considered and approved due to its positive impact on the community, the environment and future sustainable practices that are needed in promoting local,organic and biodynamic farming.

I would like to emphasize the importance of preserving an existing small business that maintains the character and integrity of the neighborhood. The proposed rezoning of the land use plan will pose a significant benefit to the quality of life for residents and prosperity for businesses in the area.

DeVino has provided safe transportation for guests during some time now with many customer testimonials about the experiences at the farm being extremely positive for community exposure with links to Agri-tourism, Viticulture and Viniculture. Our community prides itself on its commitment to environmental sustainability, and we should prioritize and support Ethical and Socially Responsible small business owners like Chris Van-Hooydonk ,for long-term economic prosperity of the Area. In addition to the aforementioned , I believe that the rezoning application will consider my opinions and feedback about the affected property. The overwhelming community support and engagement for Backyard Farm is evident and raises the need for transparency and fairness of the decision-making process.

It is crucial for the Regional Board to thoroughly evaluate all of the Letters and Emails of support from Residents & Businesses before reaching a final decision. Given the reasons mentioned above, I urge the board to prioritize the long-term well-being and interests of the community. Please include this formal (In favor) letter as part of the record for the upcoming rezoning hearing.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

I trust that the RDOS Rezoning Board will give due consideration to my feedback and make an informed decision that will safeguard the best interests of the community.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Calisto

Owner/Operator  
DeVinowinetours

To those regarding this message, I Kyle Campbell would like to show my support of backyard farm and its continued operation as is. As the first employee of over 9 years at backyard farm I have seen it grow and change over the years; one thing that has not changed is the operation and continued care of the farm with the orchard containing fruit trees much older than me or my parents. As a life long born and raised member of our community of Oliver, over 34 years, I have been raised on a farm worked in vineyards and orchards including backyard farm. From the private dining room to the orchard my hands have been on every plant, whether it's pruning, thinning, picking, or even mowing/weed-whacking, to caring for every fruit and vegetable that I cook for our clients. The utmost respect anyone could give to our agriculture and food in general is practiced at backyard farm. There is little waste in comparison to any other dining establishment as we compost and grow everything organically. Chef Chris and I have also been trained by several notable organic farmers as to how to tend to the heritage orchard with the understanding that it's not a high volume cash crop, it's about maintaining the trees of our ancestors in a way to show others what is possible when you put in the time and care to keep something from being lost. Furthermore, it baffles me that anyone would want to stop us from sharing our love of this region's diversity in agriculture and farming actual food instead of just alcohol. When it's probably the most important thing everyone should be focused on....I could talk about the importance of food safety for days, but in the end, the status of backyard farm chefs table should be an easy decision, as the ALC unanimously approved us whilst making a category just for us! Why would anyone want to delay a prime example of a small family feeding not only my family, but the minds of others to consider how important food really is. My love for farming is as strong as my love for cooking, without one you don't have the other. Please set every personal and professional aspect aside to consider the reality of what backyard farm does for the community and the betterment of humanity.

June 26, 2023

Shannon Duong, Planner II  
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen  
101 Martin St.  
Penticton, BC V2A 5J9

**RE: 3692 Fruitvale Way, Oliver, BC. PID 008-139-121 (Backyard Farms)**

Dear Ms. Duong,

We are writing to you to express support of an application from the above noted parcel to permit the operation of a farm-to-table foodservice business.

As a Community Economic Development organization, we see a need to support increased opportunities for our region's farmland including processing, and other value-added activities (i.e. Agritourism). With some of the country's highest-value farmland, it is essential to support ancillary revenue opportunities to ensure continued viability of agriculture in our region.

We also feel that the application should receive support as it fits the RDOS' Regional Growth Strategy - specifically Pillar # 5:

5-C Support and promote tourism and tourism-related activity. Supporting Policies

5C-1 Support regional tourism marketing efforts.

5C-2 Support agri-tourism and other rural tourism initiatives.

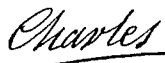
5-D Support local agriculture and related businesses.

5D-1 Support the local agriculture industry and associated value-added agricultural processing and production.

We have been monitoring this particular file since 2021, and would very much like to see a successful resolution for the property owners and the Backyard Farms business.

We do appreciate that the RDOS has been very supportive of the business thru issuing TUP's, and hope that support will continue.

Sincerely,



---

Charles Cornell  
General Manager  
Community Futures Okanagan Similkameen  
102 - 3115 Skaha Lake Road  
Penticton, B.C. V2A 6G5

Cc: Chris Vanhooydonk

RDOS

May 31, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

We have lived in Oliver for the past four years and have enjoyed Chris' meals and Burrowing Owl Winery when he was the head chef there, at Hester Creek Winery as a guest chef for a cooking experience and at Back Yard Farms for a private dinner with friends.

The organic farm to table experience that Back Yard Farms provides our community is very valuable. Chris uses his own fruits and vegetables grown on the farm. He supports local farms for items he does not produce himself. While there you can watch him cook, ask questions and learn about what he is preparing for you. His sour dough bread is without a doubt the best in the valley.

Back Yard Farm's is not open to the public, nor do they sell any alcohol.

Back Yard Farms has received international recognition from National Geographic and the New York Times for its creative use of our local agriculture. He is also an award-winning chef that people come to our area *specifically* to enjoy his food and home.

We believe that Back Yard Farms is a wonderful addition to our community. It would be a shame for this lovely small farm to not be allowed to continue its current operation. We hope RDOS will see this and allow it to continue operation.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at the address below.

Rick and Pat Martin

Oliver, BC V0H1T2

June 17, 2023

RDOS Board of Directors:

I'm writing in support of one of our favourite experiences in the Okanagan Valley/Oliver area  
**BACKYARD FARM CHEF'S TABLE.**

It's an extremely unique one of kind experience that Chef Chris Van Hooydonk and his team put on for all of their clients. It's one of the reasons we travel to the Okanagan every May & book a year in advance!

The passion Chef Chris puts into his craft and his farm, shows in everything he does, from ensuring the highest quality local food & always explaining where the food was purchased or grown (which is also from his farm), to the presentation that is always amazing and must be experienced – as no words can ly describe the experience you will have after an evening at his establishment. We always leave with both our hearts and bellies full! Also I'd like to touch on the pure dedication Chef Chris, his family and team have to ensure a LOCAL FARM TO TABLE experience. It's an incredible food journey that keeps us coming back and telling all our friends (which boost tourism)! It's really a labour of LOVE for them and not just a job!

I commend **BACKYARD FARM CHEF'S TABLE** for the support they give the community and believe that the Community should support Backyard Farm Chef's Table as well and approve the application for a Site Specific Rezoning they have applied for. This will help to achieve years of Sustainable farming, a thriving business that supports other local businesses and employs local residents. It's a WIN – WIN situation!

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter.

Sincerely,

Sid & Dana McCaw

Soqutiam, BC V3C 3W8

James McConnell

Oliver BC

June 15 2023

### **In support of Backyard Farm**

I write in support of Backyard Farm in its application for ongoing operating status. I know Chris Van Hooydonk and am fully aware of the work he does.

The Oliver region is now considered to be one of Canada's top tourist destinations, and the title *Canada's Wine Capital* is objectively justified. In the 20 years we have owned a home here we have seen not only a growth in the winery industry, but in the sophistication both of the wines themselves, and the way wineries interface with the public.

This growth has been seen in other major wine regions in the world. And it is inevitable that along with the development of a strong wine industry, we are seeing the development of a significant food service business. Several wineries have excellent restaurants. The rebranded restaurant at Spirit Ridge, *The Bear, The Fish, the Root and The Berry*, is an example of pushing the culinary envelope in the South Okanagan. Indeed, it appears we are entering a period where people travel here for wine and food.

There is no better example of this transition than is seen at Backyard Farm. Mr. Von Hooydonk and his staff have created a culinary experience that is second to none in the province. I have heard of comments of diners who travel the world that the food served at Backyard Farm is at the top of their experiences. It is a business like this that draws people to the area.

I have friends who have come to Backyard Farm for the past few years, bringing nine other couples for a special dining experience. While here they stay in hotels and they visit wineries, different ones each time. They return home with cases of wine, having injected thousands of dollars in our economy. As an economic development exercise, I would be interested in what the economic impact to the region Backyard Farm has made. I would think it would be significant.

Of course, Backyard Farm is not a restaurant. Clients cannot phone and make a reservation. They cannot drop in. They come as a group, having reserved up to a year in advance. They come for a memorable private 'Chef's Table' experience. They enjoy food, wine (which they bring themselves) and company for four hours in an atmosphere that is decidedly not like a



restaurant. They come to enjoy local produce; indeed, much of what the chef serves is from his own back yard.

Backyard Farm is exactly what this region needs as it ascends a path of increasing culinary sophistication.

It is hard to imagine the objections to the Backyard Farm operations. It sits in a quiet rural area, off the highway. There are no close neighbours. Clients generally are shuttled, so there is rarely a presence of cars. They generally operate during a four hour envelope, so the impact of neighbours is negligible. The facilities are top notch and professional. The staff is well trained. Local farmers are supported.

It should be noted as well that Backyard Farm enjoys a strong connection to many of the local wineries, catering to small events at the Farm, and for larger wine dinners at the winery. These events sell out, helping promote the winery and increasing the winery's following. Many people attend because they know that Backyard Farm will be delivering a spectacular menu for the evening.

I have had the privilege of dining at Backyard Farm a few times. Each time I go I am proud to see a place of this standard in the Oliver area. Indeed, I was fortunate to be invited to a dinner that was served to a National Geographic film and photography team who featured Backyard Farm as a special BC attraction.

Backyard Farm is a gem. It is, in itself, a tourist destination. Its impact on the community is positive. Its reputation reaches well beyond the province of British Columbia. It should be permitted to continue to operate for years to come.

Sincerely,

James McConnell

Tracey Lapointe & Bernie Krause  
Former Guests of Backyard Farm

June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Chris Van Hooydonk  
Backyard Farms  
3692 Fruitvale Way

Dear Chris & Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS)

Subject: The Treasure of Backyard Farms

As previous guests of Backyard Farms I cannot express how much your establishment brings to the Okanagan. I first read about the experience years ago in a magazine and decided right there and then we needed to experience this when visiting the Okanagan.

There are many talented "Chefs" in the Okanagan without a doubt, but they are mainly faceless behind a restaurant or winery name and come and go without adding anything lasting. Chris, you live and breath the Okanagan, its ingredients, its sustainability, it's abundance of culinary possibilities. You showcase this to the world when they're visiting the Okanagan. Backyard Farms is something completely different to anything else going on in the region. It's unique offering and your passion for the region and its sustainability cannot be lost. Anyone who gets a seat at your table is truly in for a special evening and will walk away having more respect for the Okanagan and her offerings.

Sincerely,

Tracey Lapointe



From the Desk of Steve Magown

**S.R. MAGOWN AND ASSOCIATES LTD.**

Ste. 720 • 999 W. Broadway St. • Vancouver • BC • Canada • V5Z 1K5

Mobile: (604) 290-6600 • Email: [srm@magown.com](mailto:srm@magown.com) • URL: [www.magown.com](http://www.magown.com)

Date: 15 June 2023  
To: Backyard Farm – Chef's Table  
Chris Van Hooydonk  
Via: [info@backyard-farm.ca](mailto:info@backyard-farm.ca)  
CC: [sduong@rdos.bc.ca](mailto:sduong@rdos.bc.ca)

Dear Chris,

I have recently been made aware that there may be a few more obstacles to cross in getting your final complete approval for your multi-faceted farm project.

Back in 2021, I had written an email of support to J. Peachy at RDOS expressing how impressed I was with your formidable concept of introducing us to a remarkable farm to table culinary experience.

I have had, in my lifetime, the opportunity to travel to over 40 countries and have enjoyed food prepared by great chefs all over the world. In my humble opinion, you are the very best of anything I have ever experienced. Your skill and talent to showcase British Columbia's products grown on your own farm and magically converted in your kitchen is and will continue to be for me the most creative and sensational food extravaganza. Your passion for bringing an astonishing creativity to simple items taken from your farm is a true inspiration.

What is interesting is that you perform this on a small piece of land that is well appropriated and cleverly organized. Since my email of support to you back in 2021, I have had the privilege of enjoying several other dining experiences at Backyard Farm and can only add that your creativity and passion continues to elevate my level of excitement in seeing your concept and imagination expand on to something out of this world. The mixology of simple ingredients showcases your brilliant talent and the excellent produce of the region.

In addition, I am aware that Backyard-Farms also attracts focus to other small entities in the area that are farming and supplying you with items like meats and seafood. Your introduction to us of Artic Char being raised in the desert by Road 17 immediately comes to mind. Apparently, UBC farms are now looking at this innovation as a sustainable farming approach. Your contribution to the overall economy of the region of small businesses is nothing short of honorable. When visiting Backyard for a true "Foodie- Experience", we travel from Vancouver, stay in hotels for several days, take advantage of the wonderful hospitality of the region and come home talking about it to everyone.

I would be very saddened and disappointed to see your project interrupted and am prepared to lend any form of support you may require to see you pursue this magical dream and continue to express your talent as a farmer and a chef.

Respectfully,

Steve Magown

June 19, 2023

Re: Chef's Table Backyard Farm, RDOS Application

To Whom it May Concern:

We have known Chef Chris Van Hooydonk for the past 8 years as proprietor of Chef's Table Backyard Farm in Oliver, BC. Our family has travelled annually from Vancouver, Utah and California to meet and celebrate our family reunion with Chris. Backyard Farm is a special place.

Chris's business is everything that we hope a business will aspire to. Backyard Farm is local, self-sustaining and supportive of other locally produced sustainable products. Chris and his family organically grow the majority of his fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices at his "backyard farm". In addition to educating his culinary guests at Chef's Table, Chef Chris mentors new-to-the-business apprentices and trains them in sustainable food production, i.e. farm-to-table.

Backyard Farm is not a restaurant. It is clearly a family-run business that centers on agri-tourism and education for Backyard Farm clientele. The business is not out to make a profit and is certainly not in the mindset of "build and sell" profiteering. Chef Chris's Backyard Farm is his life and his family. He has the highest ideals and principles pertaining to bringing farm-to-table food for his clients.

We whole-heartedly support Chris Van Hooydonk and Backyard Farm. Chef Chris has been a pioneer incorporating culinary education with local sustainable farming. We believe our communities need to move toward his business model now more than ever before. Please support Backyard Farm by assuring the ordinances and by-laws enable Chris Van Hooysdonk and allow other first-rate small family-run business proprietors to follow his lead.

Thank you.

Todd and Liz (Bohm) Fallis  
Summerland, BC, and  
Park City, Utah

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Bruce and Lesley Bohm  
Vancouver, BC

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# *Burrowing Owl Estate Winery*

June 19, 2023

## **Comments Regarding the Backyard Farm Rezoning Application.**

To the RDOS Planning Department:

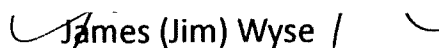
We are the founders and owners of the Burrowing Owl Estate Winery. For the record, our company, top to bottom, fully supports the proposed site-specific rezoning that will allow the Backyard Farm (BYF) and Chef Chris van Hooydonk to continue his agri-culinary business on his current site.

It may seem a little unusual for a company like ours, that might arguably be seen as a serious competitor to this kind of fine-dining food service, to be supporting this rezoning. But that is not the case at all. We are very familiar with the BYF owners and the services they provide, and we know that they are absolutely world class purveyors in the fine-dining category. Chef Chris van Hooydonk is passionate about his work, and offers a personalized agri-culinary experience on his farm that is unequalled in the Okanagan Valley and probably in all of BC.

The south Okanagan has become a world-class wine region, attracting tourists from everywhere, and it is the kind of beautifully crafted dining experience offered by BYF that will bring them back. Or better still, that will have them tell their friends and associates about their surprise and delight in "discovering" an off-the-beaten-path establishment like BYF. That's the kind of word-of-mouth messaging that our community should be proud of and should be supporting.

The Agricultural Land Commission has given its blessing to the BYF operation and why wouldn't they? This is a wonderful example of farm-to-table agriculture on a very small parcel (1 acre). BYF is an unbelievable package and deserves the support it is getting from so many sectors including tourism, agriculture, jobs and even potential competitors like ourselves.

Burrowing Owl Estate Winery

 James (Jim) Wyse /

&

 Midge Wyse

June 19, 2023

Aaron Stuart

Osoyoos, BC V0H 1V4

To: Shannon Duong  
Planner II  
Regional District of the Okanagan-Similkameen

File No: **C2023.006-ZONE**

RE: **Okanagan Valley Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 2800.28, 2023**  
**3692 Fruitvale Way – Lot 2, District Lot 2450S, SDYD, Plan 19063**

I am formally expressing my support for the proposed rezoning of the subject parcel and its continued operation as Chef's Table Backyard Farm (the Farm). I am proud to work with Chris and Mikkel at the Farm, creating truly memorable experiences and showcasing the region's best farm produce paired with its best wines.

That is what Chris and Mikkel excel at, showcasing their farm products. There is no restaurant, just a retail sales area where during regular business hours you can purchase a variety of farm preserves, salsas, hot sauces and many other items made at the farm. This area, which is under 300 m<sup>2</sup>, is also used for limited capacity service and consumption of hot and cold food items. This agri-culinary experience is provided by a couple farmers and a few staff. So pre-booking and careful planning are needed since they occur only once per day, only on certain days and typically not during regular retail hours. Unlike restaurants, Chris and Mikkel do not sell alcohol or beverages, but do provide fresh locally roasted coffee and teas made from a variety of herbs grown on the farm. They recommend local wines guests can bring to pair with farm produce prepared specifically to enhance the selected wines. Responsible transportation is encouraged and the Farm has relationships with local shuttle and accommodation providers. Whether the days are filled enjoying the local lakes, golf courses, race tracks or wineries, great food at the Farm is the best way to end a summer day in the South Okanagan.

As a new apprentice this is an overwhelmingly inspiring and rewarding experience. Responsible farming yielding high quality ingredients used in laborious culinary methods to deliver an unrivaled experience guests routinely laud as world class. Farming and cooking food in meaningful ways based on seasonally available produce and a collaborative menu setting approach to help maximize the guest's experience. A stark contrast to a restaurant, which typically provides static menus with boring and predictable dishes. This is exactly what is needed, when it is needed. When farmers are moving away from ground crops and flocking to grapes, when enrolments in culinary schools are decreasing and interest in the established restaurant experience is dwindling. The Farm's business model is also fundamentally tied to promoting other local businesses. Everybody wins. Our guests see it. The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) sees it. Locally elected officials see it.

Unfortunately, Administration at the Regional District of the Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) does not see it. They have created unnecessary "road blocks" for Chris and Mikkel while adopting a combative approach during this lengthy process. From the recommended denial of the withdrawn Temporary Use Permit application two years ago, to the begrudging recommendation on the current site specific rezoning application. Support, but only because "*the Board previously supported this application and that the ALC subsequently approved the proposal*". They still have many concerns, stemming from mischaracterizing farming as an extremely secondary activity, discouraging peripheral growth outside of primary growth areas and creating imaginary conflicts between farming and non-farming uses. I find this shocking, especially when the Okanagan Valley Zoning bylaw allows for retail sales of farm products, which includes the service and consumption of hot and cold food items in Agriculture One zones. I do not understand why any additional permit or application is needed when the current zoning bylaw supports the Farm's activities. Then factor in the Farm meets almost all of the South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy goals, and the Agriculture objectives outlined in Electoral Area C's Official Community Plan. Two years ago hundreds of letters of support were sent to the RDOS regarding the Farm's application at the time, which is ultimately for the same purpose as the current application. That support is simply being disregarded.

I support this rezoning application because I support Chris and Mikkel's vision. Local agriculture supporting local communities. That is sustainability. That is what Chef's Table Backyard Farm is all about.

Sincerely,

Aaron Stuart, CPA, CA, CIM, BCom