

OUR MEETING WITH DR POLONSKY

On November 18, we met with Dr Gary Polonsky, the Independent Advisor to the Minister of Transport, and presented our position on the future of the remaining Federal Lands. During a wide-ranging, open, and frank 2-hour conversation, we responded to Dr Polonsky's prepared discussion questions, presented our Submission, and laid out our blueprint for job creation here *now* – not in 10 or 20 years' time (if then): a blueprint for capitalizing, responsibly and sustainably, on Durham's finest natural asset, for creating a food hub to provide fresh local produce to the ever-growing GTA and building long-term prosperity here. We were tested and awarded an A+ for knowing our facts and getting them exactly right. Always our aim.

We urge you, our supporters, to read our Submission, which has been garnering accolades and attention from all over. It's supremely readable, the prose as compelling as the data. See sidebar on p. 2.

You can help protect this prime foodland by adding your voice to ours. On our website you'll find our Submission, the discussion questions and our responses, and a template letter you can use as the basis for your own submission, which can be as long or as short as you like –one sentence, even! **All letters/submissions should be sent to leanna.joslin@tc.gc.ca. Thank you so much for participating in this important action!**

ANOTHER GREAT SCHOOL TOUR OF THE LANDS

After weeks of meetings and computer-screen time, the election, and its aftermath, what a treat it was for us to get out on the Lands with a busload of Grade 12 students from Whitby.

Their teacher, Cam Scott, grew up in Pickering and teaches the story of the expropriations and the ensuing fight for the Lands with infectious enthusiasm and vision.

Hang-gliding instructor Michael Robertson shared his memories of People or Planes as we drove around the countryside. In Altona, the students were witness to changing geography as they walked across a dam where the millpond had become a wetland and then a water course controlled by beavers. On Altona Sideroad, empty of houses, they met a man who had grown up in Altona and who poignantly described how this “had been a street you could trick or treat on.” Now there's nothing. That's what expropriation did here.

FIELD TO FOOD BANK



Jay Reesor

On a cold November morning, several of our members were among the volunteers who answered a call from Reesor Farm Market, north of Markham. Well bundled up and in rubber boots, we headed into the field with Jay and Miriam Reesor and, in the next 2.5 hours, harvested about 70 bushels of pepper squash left over after the Market closed for the season.

Instead of ploughing the squash under, the Reesors donated this final harvest (about 1 ton, the equivalent of some 6,000 servings!) to the Stouffville and North York Harvest food banks.

Think about it: Beautiful fresh squash harvested from the Class 1 soil of the Reesor Farm, home to generations of that family, expropriated in 1972 for an airport that was never built, and now protected in the Rouge National Urban Park. And still feeding Ontarians. Sweet! All that's needed now is maple syrup and a bit of butter:-)



AlexisEdghill-Whelan



We stopped at one of the few original family farms on the Pickering Lands, where Cam was reunited with Keith Tapscott after 35 years. Last time they'd spoken, they'd said "see ya 'round," at their adjacent lockers at Pickering High.

The tour ended with a potluck lunch and a taste of what the Brougham Hall used to be and what we'd like it to be again – the heart of our rural community.

POST-ELECTION, WE'VE BEEN BUSY!

The election was barely over before we were writing to new and departed MPs, thanking those who'd helped us over the years and welcoming new MPs we hope will take up the cause.

We were pleased that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has been mandated to "develop a food policy that promotes healthy living and safe food by putting more healthy, high-quality food, produced by Canadian ranchers and farmers on the tables of families across the country". Sounds like a national food policy to us!

Minister MacAulay was one of several new Cabinet ministers who attended Eat Think Vote events such as the one we held in October. Another was the new Transport Minister, Marc Garneau. The best part of his mandate letter, from our perspective: no mention of a Pickering Airport! And as we said in our letter to him, surely a former astronaut "will recognize that a Sixties plan for an airport will not fly?" We've also written to the ministers of Environment and Climate Change; Innovation, Science and Economic Development; Infrastructure and Communities. The unmuzzling of scientists, the focus on climate change, and fact-based policy making should all support our arguments for protecting the Federal Lands.

OUR FEDERAL MAP TODAY

The federal election changed everything here. Really!

Our neighbour and supporter, Jane Philpott, was elected in Markham-Stouffville and has been made Minister of Health. Two long-time allies of ours are now on the Hill: former MP Mark Holland is back, representing Ajax this time, and former Pickering Regional Councillor, Jennifer O'Connell, is now MP for Pickering-Uxbridge. *We are guardedly optimistic.*

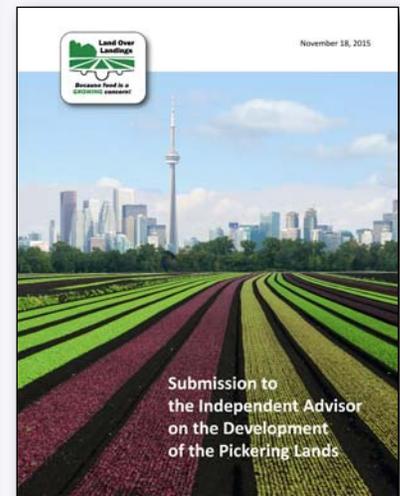
"Because it's 2015!"

~ Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
at the swearing-in ceremony, Nov. 4

*(Isn't 2015 a good reason for saving
our best-quality farmland, too?)*

READ OUR SUBMISSION

at www.landoverlandings.com



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landoverlanding@gmail.com

www.landoverlandings.com

905-649-2433

