

June 12th, 2006

WHEREAS one of the recommendations of the approved GTA Agricultural Action Plan states as follows: "Encourage the Ontario Farmland Trust (OFT) to develop programs, identify securement mechanisms (including financial) and obtain support from the province, municipal Councils and agricultural organizations;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Directors of the Ontario Farmland Trust, at its meeting held on Monday, January 30th, 2006, resolved "that the Ontario Farmland Trust bring to the attention of all levels of Government the need to extend the Eco-Gifts Program to a Farmland Gifts Program, or arrange for the establishment of a similar Farmland Gifts Program";

AND WHEREAS agriculture is an important industry in Ontario earning significant export revenue for the province and providing employment in allied food and support industries;

AND WHEREAS an agricultural land base with high quality soils and a conducive climate is essential to maintaining a strong agricultural industry;

AND WHEREAS farmland provides ecological services, which sustain water and air-quality resources and provide recreational resources;

AND WHEREAS the market value of farmland is much lower than the value of land to be developed for residential, commercial or industrial purposes providing powerful economic incentives to convert land away from agricultural uses;

AND WHEREAS the Ontario Farmland Trust and other charitable trusts have been created with the power to hold restrictive easements and covenants and other interests in land donated by landowners to ensure that they remain available for agricultural use in perpetuity;

AND WHEREAS donors of interests in land which have specified ecological features qualify for significant benefits under the ecological gifts provisions of the Canada and Ontario Incomes Tax Acts,

AND WHEREAS donors of such easements make sacrifices of great value to society,

NOW THEREFORE BE AND IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED:

1. **THAT** the Town of Markham supports the current efforts of the Ontario Farmland Trust in regards to:
 - the federal and provincial governments being urged to amend their Income Tax Acts to provide the same benefits to donors of farmland for which donors of ecologically sensitive lands now qualify;
 - the federal and provincial governments being requested to consider other farmland conservation incentives to ensure that farmland remains in agriculture.
2. **THAT** copies of this resolution be forwarded to all lower and upper tier municipalities across the Province of Ontario urging their support for these initiatives.