

TBM COUNCIL MEETING MARCH 10th, 2025.

Madame Mayor, Members of Council, Municipal Staff.

My name is Robert Ketchin, representing Georgian Hills Vineyards Inc.

MY DEPUTATION TODAY IS TO REQUEST EXEMPTION OF NOISE BY LAW RELIEF REQUESTS FOR GEORGIAN HILLS VINEYARDS EVENTS SITE FOR 2026 and GOING FORWARD.

Initially we were planning for a request for approval of 15 Saturdays for the year 2026 much like we did last March of 2024 for eleven dates in 2025. You may have already seen those dates for 2026.

However, we all know that blanket dates will never fit exactly and there will always need to be changes which can cause undue work for the amendment and re-approval process, resulting in labor cost for the town and stress for ourselves and our neighbours.

So, I would like to suggest a new strategy in a moment, but before I do, I would like to share some background information and quick review of the past.

To begin may I remind everyone here that we hold our events outdoors under a large 30 x 60-foot tent and additional tents if needed. Wedding ceremonies and pre dinner receptions are outdoors on the grass and in the meadow lands.

This past year to meet Noise By Law requirements we had to be compliant in the following.

We instigated DJ only policy, no more live bands, and whereby only pre-approved DJ's are given a very clear briefing and set very specific decibels levels for speeches and music at all times and at even lower levels after 11 pm. The DJ's are handed a large desk top sound meter that must be positioned on the DJ's table and can be seen by both the DJ and the onsite Events Manager at all times. We asked all DJ's to reduce all base amplification after 9pm which helped immensely.

The outcome this past year was no noise complaints, and feedback has been positive on the improvement from previously concerned neighbours.

Georgian Hills was also required by the Town By Law and Licensing Director to arrange for a direct phone line to be available at the event site and for the event manager to be accessible if there was ever a noise complaint from a neighbour. There were none.

Finally last year the Town By Law and Licensing Director also requested that we monitor all events with a decibel reader for each and every event at our property line, both at the north east and north west boundaries of the property, closest to neighbours. So, for every event we had two sound monitors recording decibel readings from 6pm to midnight. Four recordings for specific dates were required and requested and submitted to the Town for reference. All were at or below the Ontario Environmental Noise guidelines of 45 decibels.

So that is an overview of our past year, we met compliance required by the Town, we continued to learn more about sound and accomplished some very positive outcomes. And no complaints!

That said, we know we can still do better. We learned that sound still travels especially on the quietest of nights no matter how low the decibels we can still be heard ... if you listen carefully. The reality is it is hard to keep people quiet all the time and especially if they are enjoying themselves.

SUBSEQUENTLY WE ARE MOVING OUR MUSIC AND DANCING INDOORS!

Georgian Hills vineyards as you know is a working winery and during harvest and winter, we use it to crush, ferment and blend our wines and ciders. However, during the summer we do not use the winery building and in the past few years it has been used by the caterer for food prep for weddings.

Georgian Hills has decided that any new bookings for 2026 and onwards will be capped at maximum of 90 people for weddings. This means smaller weddings, which will make it feasible after dinner and speeches are over, that the dancing and DJ music will now be relocated inside the winery building. So will be going indoors after 9:30pm! We will be creating a dance space for wedding guests and the newlyweds. The winery building has insulated walls, windows and doors that will considerably reduce noise and allow people to enjoy themselves to dance and sing.

So, no more outdoor DJ music and dancing under the tent! Which will make a huge difference.

By this deputation I am asking Council and By Law and Licensing to please consider this request that Georgian Hills Vineyards be exempt from having to apply for Noise By Law Relief for any future weddings or events. That Georgian Hills Vineyards be considered the same as private ski club or resort that holds weddings and events indoors without having to request Noise by Law relief.

A reminder that we understand compliance, we live everyday within the jurisdiction of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission, the LCBO and Government regulatory bodies.

We do appreciate that from time to time there are exceptions such as our charity fundraising event Vinestock Music Festival that is held outdoors and runs from 12 noon to 6pm on the third Sunday in July. We presume we will need to request for Noise by Law relief for this occasion.

Also, a reminder, for this coming year 2025, we will still be hosting wedding events with dancing and music outside under the tent, that is the expectation from couples who have already booked. To ensure compliance for this coming year, we are prepared to still monitor DJ's and record our sound decibels, to submit recordings for any four events requested by the town, and to have a direct phone line available to the event site manager in the event of a noise complaint.

I would very much like your consideration and Council's approval of this request and would be glad to take any questions.

Please note I have not mentioned Agri Tourism and the contribution to our local economy by having people come to visit the region and attend weddings at Georgian Hills Winery. I believe we all are very aware of the importance supporting tourism and local Ontario businesses in these times and we do appreciate it very much.

Thank you.

RK

NOTES TO SUPPORT TODAY'S REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT DATES FOR 2025:

I wish to support my request last week to the COW to ask for Council's support and approval for amendments to the dates for this coming year 2025. The initial dates were submitted for Noise By Law Exemption approval back on March 11, 2024, and whereby the Committee of the Whole made a motion and approved eleven dates for 2025. Ten were wedding dates plus one charity event date.

Since that time, now almost a year ago, we have confirmed weddings for most of those dates requested, however we also learned that two couples requested Friday weddings, therefore this request today is for the amended dates of Friday June 20th and Friday July 25th in exchange for the two Saturdays June 21 and July 26th which are to be removed from the original submission.

In addition to these two dates changes, we recognized that there were Saturdays that were still open that could still possibly appeal to a last-minute event or celebration and so we requested Saturday June 7th and Sat June 28. Which are now in front of you for your final approval today.

Please note it is our intention to only have this one amended request and we will not come back for other dates as we do appreciate the effort and hours that is taken by the Municipal Staff and council to process Noise By Law Exemption Approvals and that any request for additional dates imposes stress on our neighbours to which we would like to avoid and thank them for their support.

Thank you

RK