

## **Business Overview of Kelso Lavender (Kelso Farm Inc.)**

Kelso Farm Inc. (business name - Kelso Lavender) is a new family-owned farm business started in 2018 with about 16,000 lavender plants growing on site within the family's home property. The farm primarily grows lavender herb flowers to sell as dried or freshly harvested bundles. It also processes the lavender to create other products for sale such as essential oil or lavender buds which are also used to make other products like cosmetics, often in conjunction with other local businesses and artisans. Lavender typically blooms for a short period from the end of June to August which provides opportunities for Kelso Lavender to sell its "produce" to visitors attracted by the beautiful fields. Kelso Lavender aims to reach these customers offline in-person as well as through online means, but the majority of business is done in the short summer months making it a very seasonal business.

### **About Lavender**

Lavender herbs are in the same family as rosemary and thyme, with fascinating benefits of anti-septic, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial properties to human skin and health. The beauty and soothing aroma of lavender has been discovered since old times, making it a popular herb for stress-relief and fragrant uses. It can also be an edible herb used in cooking to give a bit of spice.

### **Snapshot of Future and Potential Projects**

1. Continue to grow a pollinating garden with native wild flowers in conjunction with Conservation Halton.
2. Work to obtain organic certification and other agricultural best practices certification
3. Continue to sell more wholesale from farm produce to other businesses, potentially to export as well. These businesses can include retail like flower shops or cosmetics manufacturing companies or perfume companies, etc.
4. Continue to hire seasonal employees, potentially year-long employees as business grows, making use of government programs like Canada Summer Jobs which supports local priorities. Employees can help with field labour such as harvesting and processing of lavender or help in the sale of the harvest and production of such.

### **Examples of Lavender Products Created**

1. Sale of fresh or dried lavender bundles/bouquets, flower pots, herb seeds, wreaths. Customers often wish to pick the lavender for their bundles to take home while taking pictures on the lavender field.
2. We process and clean the lavender bundles into lavender buds which can fill up sachets, pillows or used in cosmetics like soap bars.
3. We also distill the lavender to make lavender essential oil and hydrosol, used in various products like room sprays, sanitizers, candles, lotions, creams, or cleansers. These are made in small batches on the home property.
4. Lavender buds can be used in culinary products like tea, cookies, ice cream, or drinks which we currently do not but wish to sell especially to visitors to the farm.


## End Notes – Our Hopes and Dreams

Kelso Lavender was born out of a dream of not only wanting to grow and sell crops but to share this experience and the beauty of lavender and the surrounding region to people from all parts of the world. Kelso Lavender aims to be a sustainable farm and business while respecting the local environment and community, including employees and customers. What was once a small hay field can be a greater source of happiness and economic productivity to society, providing knock-on effects in local employment, business, and well-being. With this philosophy, Kelso Lavender has always wished to abide by local regulations such as planning and zoning rules with honest intentions. Our family has inquired in the past about agri-tourism and its potential on the farm with the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) all the way back since 2017. At the time we have been led to believe it was possible, where it was said that there could be a small-scale commercial use accessory to an existing agricultural operation, with at least 50% of our sales being grown from the farm property (e.g., the produce). At the time, we also talked to the Town of Milton planning department as well but they said it was up to the NEC. Anyhow, we have been so busy with all the work in growing our farm while working other jobs to help pay for our investment and effort that we were overwhelmed. We wish we could have been speedier in going through the whole process, yet at the time we did not even know if our lavender crop would survive or if Kelso Lavender would have any visitors at all. The covid situation as well as our own procrastination and uncertainty about business and timelines has also made things slower, with numerous drafts of development applications made. We would have paid someone with expertise in navigating the process for us if we could have as we were so busy, but even that information seemed difficult to find.

Did you know it takes three years for lavender to grow and mature? As with anything great, it takes a lot of time and work. We have wanted to give up so many times and just leave the field as an unproductive hay field, but now we can see how much our lavender field means to people. The name Kelso in Kelso Lavender comes from the area it is in called Kelso village, which derives its name from the Scottish town also named Kelso. The town was named Kelso because it was settled on chalky outcrop, which is apparent in both places. The rocky limestone terrain makes it very difficult to do conventional farming but is perfect for drainage and soil nutrients suitable for lavender. Kelso Lavender would find it hard to grow lavender in other areas.

If we were only allowed to sell lavender itself to visitors without allowing them to walk and tour the field it would be a difficult proposition as people are simply so attracted in looking at the beautiful lavender. We would have to constantly turn away requests and inquiries to see the field, which would be sad for all. Agri-tourism plays a large role with most lavender farm operations, which in Canada are small farms like ours due to economics and environment. If Kelso Lavender were to be primarily a wholesale farm operation it would be much more difficult to operate and survive as a farm business and may have to close down and stop farming. We hope there is consideration for small-scale farms like Kelso Lavender as we wish to be part of Halton Regions' push for agri-tourism and be a net benefit to the region and our local community.

April 7th, 2021

  
8649 Appleby Line,  
Milton, ON L0P1B0

Cameron Curran,  
Niagara Escarpment Commission  
232 Guelph St.  
Georgetown, ON L7G4B1

RE: NEC Development Permit for Accepting Visitors to the Lavender Field

Hello Mr. Cameron.

First, I would like to express my sincere thank to you clarifying the situation regarding our proposed development application through your written correspondence and your kind telephone conversations with me and my son. You really helped us understand the situation better and many things become more clear for us now.

Up until recently, we haven't made much progress with this application at all because I was unable to follow up with many things by myself. In fact, I think this is confusing and difficult process for any ordinary person who has no experience in this sort of process.

However, during the last several days, I spent lots time reading materials from internet sources mainly from Ontario government web sites as well as Niagara Escarpment Commissions web site to familiarize myself with policies regarding agricultural zone, land use, development, planning guidelines, PPS 2020 etc. Now I know we are in Escarpment Protection Zone according to NEC map, and at the same time, our property is not designated as Prime Agricultural Area under the provincial farm land classification. Instead, we are designated as Rural Lands.

From the list of the permitted use on Escarpment Protection Zone, On-Farm-Diverse-Use (OFDU) is allowed only if the property is located within Prime Agricultural Area by some reason. Everyone will wonder why OFDU is excluded from RURAL LANDS while it is allowed even in the PRIME AGRICULTURAL AREA. On the other hands, the Provincial Planning Act (PPS 2020) clearly permits more broad uses on RURAL LANDS in addition to the uses permitted on the Prime Agricultural Area (please see section 1.1.5 of PPS,2020). In fact, **OFDU is not only allowed but it also emphasize that recreational and tourism should be promoted in this non-prime agricultural area(Rural Lands)**( see section 1.1.5.3). However, I recognize that it is important for us to follow and comply with NEC guideline fully even though it may sound not consistent with provincial PPS. I hope NEC could revise and update the permitted use in the future so it can align better with provincial policy.

I am humbly request NEC a special consideration for our application and allow us a **limited tourism** on the following grounds and **conditions**

- A. Just like fruit farms, lavender plants need about 3 years to get mature. So, for the last 3 -4 years, we spend all of our financial resources and efforts to prepare the land, to purchase equipment and to plant and care the lavender plants. If we cannot accept visitors to the farm field, we will face very serious financial difficulties.
- B. We already arranged employment of ten(10) University of Guelph agriculture majoring students for this summer jobs. We provide summer employment and educational hand-on farming experience to these young students. Although these employment opportunities are very important to these students, we can only afford to provide this program if we can generate enough revenue.
- C. Having people into the lavender field will not increase any danger to the natural features of the escarpment because our property is isolated and surrounded by many existing developments and infrastructures. That is, our property is adjacent to the highway 401 to the north, many residential houses and active railways to the south, Appleby Line street to the west, Kelso park and recreational complex to the east.
- D. There are already many tourism and recreation related facilities are developed and actively promoted by various public and private agencies around the area. Glen Eden skiing, Kelso Park and beach, Hilton Falls, Woodbine Mohawk racetrack, and quarries are all within walking distance. On the other hand, we are after all a small farm and it requires little or no physical construction and our scale of operation is negligible compared to these mentioned neighbouring tourism and development activities.
- E. We are environmentally conscious and nature loving farmers and proud to be located in beautiful Niagara Escarpment Area and intend to do everything we can to protect the natural heritage, as such we all completed Environmental Farm Plan course offered by the public agency and our farm has 'ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN'.
- F. Our operation is seasonal.  
Lavender is blooming from July to mid August, so the visitors will be allowed to go to the field during that period only. Although people can still come and buy products from us during other days, it will be strictly purchase purpose only and no one will go to the field anyways.
- G. During the blooming season, we will not offer normal typical lavender farm tourism.  
**But we will offer only minimal and limited service.**

We will accept visitors to the field to view and to take picture of our farm

but

1. We will not provide any sort of guided tour.
2. We will not host any event.
3. We will not host wedding and functions.
4. We will not accept any tour bus.
5. We will not allow vehicles other than small passenger vehicles.
6. We will not host any show.
7. We will not offer festival or yoga or spa programs or services.
8. We will not play any music.
9. We will not use any microphone or amplified sound system.
10. We will not allow people to smoke or do any dangerous activities.

We will not do anything considered as tourism except for entering into the field and shop.

**Once again, I kindly request NEC to consider our circumstances and allow  
'LIMITED AND CONDITIONAL' permit for us.**

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me via email or phone.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Date: April 7, 2021

Date: APRIL 7<sup>th</sup> 2021