

Clean Environment Commission Hearing April 11, 2007

My name is Bob Schinkel. I am a real estate agent/ Broker with Prudential Riverbend Realty in Steinbach. I have been in the real estate business 30 years, 10 months, and 25 days, and 6 hours. Some people say I have 1 year experience repeated 30 times. I have spent my total career selling real estate primarily in Southeastern Manitoba.

I thought a highlight of my career would be selling a large tract of land south of LaBroquerie. We started marketing this property in 1984 and 1985, with no success. This property was owned by an Italian firm which they purchased from the Ansel brothers. The Ansel brothers leased the property back for 10 years with an agreement to clear the land and then farm it. The Ansel Bros., as they attempted to clear the property and start farming it, proceeded to go bankrupt. It was marginal, stony, treed land. The Italians were attempting to dispose of it and as a last resort we attempted to auction the land in blocks of 80 and 160 acre parcels. This was in the spring of 1986. We marketed this land extensively with full page ads in the Carillon News, and advertisements in the Winnipeg Free Press, etc. I thought this would be a milestone in my career and propel me to ultimate success.

We had set very low reserved bids. After the first 3 properties did not meet the reserved bid, the owner representative, in desperation, said "We are selling the next properties no matter what the price." As I recall the price ended up being about in the range of \$27 to \$35 per acre. The properties were sold prospective hobby farmers, farmer want to bes, and speculators. We didn't sell all the land at the auction, however, after the auction and in the subsequent years we ended up selling all the land. At the time the roads were poor, and the property was basically undeveloped and had poor drainage. I saw many people attempt to earn a living there with beef farming with limited success. Over the years we resold a number of these pieces. These properties eventually ended up in the hands of hog farmers that built new hog barns on the properties. The area was remote to developed housing and seemed to be an excellent location for hog barns.

As this area developed with hog barns it gave the RM of LaBroqreire a tax base and allowed them to improve the roads and drainage. This improved the land value and the manure applied to the land made this marginal land more productive. Cattle capacity was increased, and some of the land was opened up and seeded into hay. Today land values in this area are in the range of \$500 to \$600 per acre. I attribute most of this to the hog farming and the increased productivity of the land due to the hog manure being applied to the land.

Let's look a little further south to the town of Zhoda. There is a rural 2 acre development that was developed by a Jake Wall, locally known as "square deal Jake". Jake had a vision for Zhoda and the area and spearheaded developing an airport there. He developed a subdivision, built roads, and attempted to market these properties. He

had very limited success, early on these lots were offered at about \$1000 per lot. This was in the early 1990's. There was very little in the way of jobs in the area. Today these very same lots, are selling for in the range \$9,000 to \$12,000 per lot. Some of the people work in the surrounding hog barns gravitating to the area. Census Canada tells us the R.M. of LaBroquerie had a growth rate of 26.4 percent from 2001 to 2006.

Now let's compare this to the LGD of Piney. Piney had net people population growth of 67 people from 2001 to 2006. The LGD of Piney lies east of the RM of LaBroquerie. Myself, and I think every other real estate agent in Steinbach will attest, that the agent's car usually stalls out at the boundary of the LGD of Piney. The chances of selling a property in Piney are very low. It's extremely difficult to tell a senior farmer in his late 60's or 70's that the farm he's labored on all his life, on maybe 160 or 320 acres is often not worth as much as a modest house on a small lot in Steinbach. Much of this can be attributed to the lack of jobs available in Piney. The LGD of Piney basically has an anti hog policy. I chuckle when I see the sign on HWY #12 going into the L.D.G. of Piney, where it says, "Welcome to Piney, No Hogs, No Smell". I was often tempted to add to that sign, "No jobs, No Schools, Last person out turn off the lights". I'm not saying that every place needs hog barns to have jobs, but hog barns do create jobs, and jobs increase the value of real estate. Once you have jobs, you need schools, hospitals, infrastructure and that what makes a community.

Not long ago I met an acquaintance, a young blond lady, whose name will go unmentioned. The last time we talked she was working at a radio station, selling advertising. The conversation led to her present employment. She said she was working in a hog barn. She said "the pay is better and the customers don't talk back". I didn't ask her which customer smelled better – I didn't want to know.

The last point I want to make is about water, particularly well water. There has been a lot of talk about hog and agricultural operations contaminating the well water. As a course of practice and as a requirement by banks, we test the water from the wells on the properties that we sell for e coli and fecal bacteria. In the 30 years that I've been a real estate agent neither I or anyone in our firm has ever had a drilled well that was contaminated from the source. In my experience, the modern hog farmers are generally very good stewards of the land and make an effort to conserve the land they make their livelihood on.

I short, I feel the hog industry has been an asset and a benefit to our area and has added to our real estate values and increased local wages.

Thank you being able to express my opinion.

Bob Schinkel