

FEBRUARY 20TH UPDATE – COUNCIL REVIEW FEBRUARY 13TH

- **VOTERS' LIST APPROVED**
- **DIVISION 4 REDESIGNATION GIVEN 1ST READING**
- **SUBDIVISION IN DIVISION 8 GRANTED – BEARSPAW**

VOTERS' LIST

As many of you are aware, my motion to have a voters' list was approved on a vote of 7-2. A voters' list not only lends itself to a reduction in the ability to commit voter fraud, but it also allows for a streamlined, more expedient voting process on Election Day.

Due to the Province's review of the Local Authorities' Election Act, Administration had recommended refusal of the motion in favour of waiting for the review's results. The County's lawyer, Angie Keibel, had indicated that this review should be complete by 2019. However, when I spoke to Municipal Affairs, I could not get confirmation that a voters' list would be included in the review nor that it would be completed by 2019. When one considers there may be a provincial election in 2019, the chance of these changes being adopted is further reduced.

That said, a friendly amendment to the motion was introduced by Councillor Kevin Hanson. The amendment was worded to read that if a voters' list is not provincially mandated by a "drop dead" date of October 2019, then Administration will go ahead and create its own list. Meaning if the Province mandates a voters' list before 2019, the county will piggy-back the Province. Despite recent comments made by County lawyer Angie Keibel, in a [Rocky View Weekly article](#), at no point did Council provide Administration with an option to abandon the voters' list.

It was stated by Councillor Kamachi, one of the councillors in opposition to the list, that the penalties for voter fraud were strong enough to deter fraudulent behaviour. However, as Ms. Keibel stated in the above mentioned [Rocky View Weekly article](#), even when charges are brought forward, they can be dropped. This may occur for all sorts of reasons, including our over-burdened judicial system. Combine this with the fact that contesting an election means bringing it to a costly judicial review at the Court of Queens' Bench, I feel confident in disagreeing with the sentiment that the existing penalties for voter fraud actually work and that the process for challenging an election is accessible to those without deep pockets or connections to them.

In terms of streamlining the voting process, a voters' list eliminates the need to fill out and swear on a Form 8. It also reduces the ability for electors to cast a ballot in the wrong division. When we consider the small margins that some candidates win by (four votes in one division in the 2017 election), eliminating a simplistic error like this becomes crucial.

Voters' lists have been the norm at the provincial and federal levels, and in municipalities throughout Canada, for decades. While Rocky View may be the first county to have a voters' list

in Alberta, I don't think of this as first, rather as bringing the County into the 21st century. While no system is perfect, a voters' list helps level the playing field and increases voter confidence.

It was encouraging to see this Council's willingness to advance the merits of a voters' list as it was not the first time a voters' list had been brought to Council. Councillor Jerry Arshinoff had tried unsuccessfully under the previous Council.

DIVISION 4 – RANCH AND FARM TO BUSINESS/INDUSTRIAL GIVEN 1ST READING

An application to allow redesignation for commercial/industrial development on the Calgary border received first reading on a vote of 7-2. Administration had recommended refusal as the lands did not belong in any area structure plan and were part of the Rocky View/Calgary joint expansion corridor. Reeve Boehlke and I voted in opposition.

The city had asked that the application not be approved pending completion of the RV/Calgary Intermunicipal Development Plan. It was stated that if Council approved the application the decision could later be found inconsistent and the bylaw would be invalid. The application was held at second reading as the applicant was advised to address the city's concerns.

Speaking on behalf of the applicant, commercial realtor Steve Grande acknowledged that the application was caught between two plans (the property is adjacent to the Janet Area Structure Plan). He felt this proposal was the best use of this land as it would act like a buffer between commercial and industrial space, thereby improving the area. This may be true, however, in my opinion, this was not the time to do this. We have agreements that need to be worked out with all members of the Growth Management Board and those should be finalized, or at least be well on their way to being finalized, before we start approving developments on lands identified as "Joint Industrial Corridor" and within the industrial portion of the "identified city of Calgary Growth Areas."

Furthermore, the County already has areas of approved growth identified in the County Plan, these lands do not fall within such an area. To preserve the integrity of those who have already bought into identified growth areas, I do not believe we should allow development ad hoc nor should we amend policy on the fly.

SUBDIVISION APPROVAL OF 2.29 ACRE PARCEL ON BEARSPAW WAY

Council unanimously approved the subdivision of a 2.29-acre lot, leaving a 6.98-acre remainder along Bearspaw Way. The 2.29-acre lot is where the existing home is situated. The applicant previously indicated that he wished to divide the 6.98-acre remainder into three more lots and was therefore advised he would require a concept plan. However, the applicant has since abandoned that plan in favour of the creation of the two parcels instead.

There were no letters of support or objection and the parcel is within an area designated for two-acre parcels (R1). I asked a number of questions about how future subdivision, specifically

road access and storm water management, would be handled and was satisfied that the approval conditions would sufficiently address any future concerns. As such, I recommended approval.