

OCTOBER 16TH COUNCIL UPDATE

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October 16th marked our first day in the new County Hall. It was a short meeting followed by an opening ceremony attended by VIP's present and future. It was a great turnout.

REPORT OF THE INTERIM-CAO

When Interim CAO Rick McDonald was hired, Council requested he perform a governance/organizational review to address challenges and weaknesses in Administration and the delivery of County services. On Tuesday, McDonald provided an overview of his findings.

He concluded that Rocky View County has changed. We are no longer rural, rather we are becoming increasingly urbanized. Expanding development and regional pressures forced the County to respond, however, it did so somewhat haphazardly. Up to now, the County has been reactionary not proactive and this needs to change.

McDonald cited the need to embrace social media – people's need for instant information is forcing leaders to think differently. He identified the need to improve, adapt and evolve in our service delivery. Meaning we need a new style of leadership with a modern design that provides a service culture, streamlined processes and identified key performance enhancements.

To do this, McDonald identified the need to redefine our leadership to reflect a corporate model. He will expand the current structure from a Senior Leadership Team of 4 to an Executive Leadership Team (ELT) of 5. This will include the CAO, a new position of chief of staff (Deputy CAO), and 3 executive directors – community and development services, operations, and corporate services.

The ELT will be the big picture thinkers who engage and follow the corporate plan and County vision. They will lead the management team, those below the executive, but their focus will be to align the long-term strategy.

Council will set the framework for the ELT to work under. The ELT will focus on the direction of Council with a commitment to: being accountable; operating with sound performance measures; providing solid data; ensuring citizens are informed; and, creating mutually beneficial relationships with all County partners. The County will be run like a business with processes that make business sense while recognizing we are a municipality whose core focus is service delivery.

One of the greatest takeaways was his emphasis on the need to engage the public. McDonald mentioned repeatedly our need for increased transparency and the recognition and acknowledgement of citizen expectations in our service model.

The changes have started already. McDonald has chosen Kent Robinson, Byron Riemann and Sherry Baers as his Executive Leadership Team. In the coming weeks, he will hire the Chief of Staff (Deputy CAO). He has also let go of four managers – Senior County Manager, Chris O’Hara; Legal Services Manager, Angie Keibel; Engineering Services Manager, Rick Wiljamaa ; and IT Manager, James Pinkett.

Mr. McDonald also has a commitment from our newly hired permanent CAO, Al Hoggan (previous CAO for Kneehill County). Hoggan, who will start in December, has committed to following McDonald’s plan for at least one year. This provides some assurances that McDonald’s hard work will be continued long after his departure. McDonald’s report was supported 8-0. Councillor Kim McKylor was absent.

AMENDING TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INTERMUNICIPAL COMMITTEES

First, the Division 8 councillor was added to the Cochrane Intra-municipal Committee (IMC). While Division 8 does not border with Cochrane, it is recognized that Bears paw residents identify with the town and utilize many of its services. Until now, the Division 8 councillor has been attending the Cochrane IMC meetings as a guest, so it was nice to be recognized as a permanent member.

Second, was the need to identify which member of Council should chair IMC meetings. Should it be the Reeve, the Deputy Reeve, or the local councillor? The rationale for the latter was that the area councillor would likely have more knowledge of the issues raised at the IMC meetings. Not to mention, the Reeve and Deputy Reeve are ex-officio and are free to attend any and all IMCs, do they really need to chair them all? One of the key arguments was that allowing local councillors to chair IMC meetings provided those other than the Reeve and Deputy Reeve with the experience of chairing meetings.

On a decision of 5-3, with Councillors Mark Kamachi, Al Schule and Deputy Reeve Jerry Gautreau in opposition, it was determined that meetings would be chaired by the local councillor. In cases where there is more than one local councillor, it would be determined at the first meeting of the year. If the local councillor was not present, then the meeting would be chaired by the Reeve or Deputy Reeve.

DIVISION 4 REDESIGNATION APPROVED

An application to redesignate a 20-acre parcel with a 20-acre remainder in Division 4 was approved 4-3 with Councillors Kevin Hanson, Crystal Kissel and I in opposition. Councillor Kamachi was unable to vote as he was absent from first two readings.

The original application was heard on September 25th but was held from third reading by the three of us in opposition. We were hoping that at least one of our fellow councillors would have a sober second thought and consider voting against the application.

The application was not supported by the County Plan and was within the city's future growth corridor. As Councillor Hanson stated "the city of Calgary actually called us out on our own plans here and suggested that we follow them. It's not inline with the inter-municipal development plan." I couldn't agree more. The need for Council to follow our own policies is paramount.

The local area councillor, Al Schule claimed that it wasn't really farmland and that it fit within the area as "It's ideal for smaller agricultural types. Boarding horses, grass, haying...it's not really farmland. It's nothing but smaller holdings." He also didn't see it as interfering with Calgary.

CANNABIS CONSUMPTION BYLAW APPROVED

At the October Policies and Procedures Committee Meeting, Council was given a presentation on the consumption of cannabis and the potential options for a County cannabis bylaw. On Tuesday, these options were brought forward to Council for consideration. The three options were:

- 1)Light regulation– there would no consumption bylaw – the County would follow the provincial government guidelines;
- 2)Moderate regulation – only prohibited in certain areas; or
- 3) Strict regulation – only permitted in private residences

County lawyer, Angie Keibel advised Council that most other municipalities are following Alberta Health Services recommendation of Option #3.

In a survey conducted this past summer, the overwhelming majority of County residents who responded indicated they preferred rules in alignment with option #3.

There were concerns with our enforcement department being able to lay any charges and actually enforce a cannabis bylaw. However, County Enforcement Manager, Lorraine Wesley-Riley assured us that there were rules that could be followed and mechanisms in place to allow our peace officers to enforce the bylaw.

There was also concern about why the County was creating rules around cannabis consumption when we currently do not have any restrictions on alcohol consumption. It was determined that the province's rules on cannabis consumption were far less strict than their rules on alcohol consumption and that it would be in the County's best interest to go with option #3.

After asking for a clear definition on what constituted a private residence, Council unanimously voted for option #3 to permit cannabis consumption strictly in private residences. To avoid potential misunderstanding, Council also clearly defined private residence as *“any building or structure, and the land associated with it, used principally for human habitation on a permanent or temporary basis, but does not include common areas within campgrounds, such as playgrounds, kitchen shelters, washrooms, parking areas or roads.”*

While the above definition does not supersede provincial or federal law, Council also acknowledged that as the federal and provincial rules around cannabis consumption may change the bylaw will be subject to review.