

October 23rd Council Update

- **Organizational Meeting 2018-2019**
- **Economic Development 2017 Update Report**
 - **Snow and Ice Budget**
- **Friends of Westbrook School Capital Adjustment**
 - **Cochrane Annexation Sent for Approval**
- **Springbank Redesignation Approved Unanimously**
 - **Bragg Creek Subdivision Approved 8-1**

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING 2018-2019

The Municipal Government Act mandates that a Council “must hold an organizational meeting not later than 2 weeks after the third Monday in October.” Council held its meeting on October 23rd.

Greg Boehlke will remain as Reeve, despite my nomination for Kevin Hanson. Al Schule was chosen as Deputy Reeve, beating out Jerry Gautreau and Kevin Hanson. I was hopeful that Council would make a change in its leadership to reflect the changes that will result from interim-CAO Rick McDonald’s organizational review. Unfortunately, this was not the case. This will be Boehlke’s fourth consecutive year as Reeve of the County; his second year with this Council.

Regarding the Policy and Priorities Committee, Kim McKylor will continue as Chair and I will remain Vice-Chair. I had put my name forward for Chair but was unsuccessful. I also remain on the Policy Review Committee with Kevin Hanson and newcomers Crystal Kissel and Al Schule. Dan Henn replaces Kevin Hanson on the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board.

On the local front, the Bearspaw/Glendale Recreation Board will remain in good hands. Suchetna Channan and Kris Reinhardt will maintain their positions on the Board for two more years.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 2017 UPDATE REPORT

A presentation was made to Council by Dave Kalinchuk, the County’s manager of Economic Development. Kalinchuk cited that despite the challenging economy, Rocky View was doing well and its residential/business tax split goal of 70/30 was on track.

He cited the County's low property taxes and lack of business tax as competitive advantages over our neighbours. He also noted that our assessment base was steadily increasing, both residentially, but more so commercially.

The report was quite lengthy, providing information on a national, provincial and municipal economic scale. However, in my opinion, it was missing some key considerations.

In order for Council to understand our direction and where/how the County should be growing, we need to have an economic plan. I asked about where the County's current economic development strategy stood and was advised it was currently in draft form at the staff level. Of note, the County's last economic development strategy was released by Kalinchuk in 2003. For a County of this size and our proximity to so many urban centres, this is not only unacceptable, it is unfathomable.

Kalinchuk stated Rocky View's strongest sector is transportation warehousing and logistics - particularly large distribution centres that service the needs of western Canada - think CN, Walmart, Sobeys and, most recently, Amazon. As well, thanks to CrossIron Mills, retail and entertainment are also growing business sectors in the County. While this could be considered a good news story, they are not replacing the caliber of jobs that the region has lost over the past decade.

Kalinchuk acknowledged that businesses come to Rocky View for cheaper land and/or lower taxes. He also recognized that the employees these industries do attract do not reside in the County where the average property is valued at close to a million dollars. Instead, he stated that 90% of jobs in the above mentioned sectors are held by Calgary residents with the other 10% held primarily by Airdrie, Chestermere and other surrounding area residents. It is good that we are providing jobs for our neighbours, but it raises a whole other topic - that of transportation and whose responsibility is it to provide it? Not only that but improved road networks and connectivity between communities.

Up until now, CrossIron Mills has been transporting its employees privately, while the city of Airdrie provides busing servicing to the area. Understandably, Amazon has expressed an interest in transportation, given the 1000 jobs it will be creating. But at whose cost? There has been little discussion of any potential solutions.

We have invested tens of millions in water/wastewater infrastructure in the east side of the County. It would be nice to see a more diversified portfolio of businesses, specifically those industries with higher paying jobs like tech and health care, come to the area.

Cochrane recently became home to Garmin's Canadian Headquarters, how do we attract something similar, or better yet, on a larger scale? It's difficult without a solid economic development plan. Thankfully, as part of Rick McDonald's organizational review, this department is being expanded beyond its current staff of one. Once this occurs, perhaps the County can create a comprehensive plan that not only Rocky View residents can buy into, but that the region can, too.

SNOW AND ICE BUDGET

Council unanimously approved a \$1.2 million budget adjustment from the tax stabilization account for snow and ice control. Due to the severe winter we faced in early 2018 and with the snow in September/October, it was easy to understand how the County was caught with insufficient funding in this department.

COCHRANE ANNEXATION SENT FOR APPROVAL

A 159-acre quarter section to the NW of Cochrane was approved unanimously for annexation to the town. Earlier this year, the town of Cochrane held open houses regarding the annexation and the idea was well received. The proposal will now be sent to the Province for approval.

FRIENDS OF WESTBROOK SCHOOL CAPITAL REQUEST

Council directed Administration to send a letter to Rocky View Schools (RVS). The letter will ask RVS to convene the Reserves Coordinating Committee to discuss a capital funding application made to the Ranchlands Recreation Board for \$100,000 to offset the cost of an expanded gymnasium design for the Westbrook School in Division 9.

RVS sent a letter to the County explaining that the larger gym space would be a benefit to the community as a whole. The gym would be available for public use during off-hours and on weekends.

Administration stated that convening the Reserves Coordinating Committee would allow for the Reserves Agreement to be updated - updates that would prove useful in assessing numerous additional applications throughout the County. The motion succeeded 8-1 with Councillor Gautreau in opposition.

SPRINGBANK REDESIGNATION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

An application to redesignate a 5+ acre parcel in Springbank from R2 to R1 to create a 2.5-acre lot with a 3.18-acre remainder was approved unanimously. The application was previously heard at the September 25th Council hearing but was put on hold as area Councillor Kim McKylor had requested additional information.

The north side of the property is located along the Bow river and has setbacks from the escarpment. In addition, almost 1/4 of the south side of the property is under restricted covenant and cannot be built upon. McKylor wanted to ensure there was sufficient space for 2 homes, 2 wells and 2 septic fields on the lots should they be granted redesignation.

The original application had interesting lot-lines, however, the applicant decided to rejig the lines and divide the property straight down the middle instead. Administration confirmed that despite the setbacks and the restrictive covenant there would indeed be sufficient space to build the two homes, wells and septic fields on the lots.

SUBDIVISION IN BRAGG CREEK APPROVED 8-1

An application for the subdivision of a 2.32-acre lot with a 2.53-acre remainder in Bragg Creek was approved 8-1. The area is identified for infill residential and the application fit within the density requirements for the area.

The applicant had asked to have the Transportation off-site levies waived on the original parcel. Councillor Hanson was the lone opposition.