

JANUARY 8TH COUNCIL UPDATE

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BEARSPAW HEIGHTS APPLICATION GRANTED REDESIGNATION

Council unanimously approved an application to redesignate a 19.75-acre parcel on Bearspaw Road (north of Township Road 262) from R-2 to R-1. Councillor Jerry Gautreau was absent.

The Bearspaw Heights (previously Bearspaw Meadow's Edge) conceptual scheme would allow for the creation of up to eight 2-acre lots. Administration believed the application was compliant with policy.

Procedurally, the application was interesting. Prior to the 2017 election, Deputy Reeve Al Schule had acted as the applicant's consultant. However, Schule publicly chose not to recuse himself on the logic that the application had changed since his involvement and he had removed himself from the file upon being elected. Schule made this decision despite the fact that the majority of the technical studies for the application were completed before the 2017 election, while he was still involved.

The application was for the property immediately south of my own property. As an affected landowner, my husband chose to speak to the application. I made it clear that, although my husband would be speaking to the application, his opinions were his own and were based on his attendance of the applicant's open houses. Moreover, I had an open mind and was amenable to persuasion.

It is interesting to note that, when asked at the beginning of the hearing, the applicants stated that they had no concerns with Schule's participation, even though Schule had been directly involved through the project's formative stages. However, at the end of the hearing, the applicant's consultant, Bart Carswell, (Councillor Schule's replacement on the application) indicated that I should recuse myself since he believed I had a conflict of interest both because my husband had spoken and because, as an immediate neighbour, he felt I had a pecuniary interest in the outcome of the application. Given that he was aware of both these facts from the beginning, his timing was odd to say the least.

I do not believe it would have been appropriate to recuse myself. How can one possibly draw a line between applications – how close is too close? And what does close imply? If I am to represent the residents of Bearspaw, it is important that I vote on redesignation applications in our division. If I don't, residents could accuse me of not doing what I was elected to do – represent their interests.

I was a member of the Council that recently approved two separate R-1 applications - one for a neighbour's property that is next door but one to my property and the other for the property immediately south of this applicant's property. No one questioned the appropriateness of my participation in those hearings. Ironically, the applicant used the R-1 zoning of these properties as a reason why their application should succeed. What's more, he attended both of those hearings. In terms of any pecuniary interest, I have no financial stake or shares in the applicant's property nor do I stand to monetarily benefit from its redesignation.

The application had numerous letters of support, all of which were a form letter on the consultant's letterhead. The majority of those in opposition made it clear that they were not opposed to the underlying application – the creation of additional 2-acre lots in the area. Instead, they raised concerns about stormwater management, the impact of the development on ground water and potential conflict with the Bears paw ASP requirements regarding distances between road approaches.

Regarding distances between roads, the Bears paw ASP stipulates that there should be 400-800 metres between existing intersections and new roads. In contrast, the County's basic servicing standards only require 235 metres. It was concluded that this discrepancy could be resolved at the subdivision stage.

The concerns regarding storm water focused on the application's lack of clarity concerning its stormwater discharge pipe – exactly where it would go, how well it would function given the inadequacy of ditches along Bears paw Road, and whether the storm water discharged from it would ever actually reach the Nose Creek tributary as intended. Those speaking in opposition were concerned that, because of non-existent ditches, the run-off would end up flowing either onto their own properties or into the field at the bottom of the hill that is part of the Locke's feedlot.

Concerns were also raised about whether potential storm water ponding on the site left sufficient dry land to accommodate the requested eight 2-acre lots. The applicant had multiple versions of a map outlining the extent of potential ponding – the differences between the versions made it rather confusing. In response to these concerns, Administration stated that the actual number of lots would be determined at subdivision and, if these concerns proved valid, the final number of lots would be reduced.

After hearing all the information presented, I believed that the information provided by the applicant's engineer and County Administration had generally satisfied my ability to allow the application to proceed with first reading. However, because I still had concerns about how the water would in fact make it to the Nose Creek tributary and not cause a potential problem for the landowners downstream of the outflow pipe, I asked my fellow Councillors to delay approval beyond first reading until those uncertainties were addressed. My reason for this was that the applicant and Administration's understanding of whose actual responsibility this was conflicted greatly. I felt there should be some consensus determined prior to moving forward.

Only Councillors Kevin Hanson and Crystal Kissel supported my motion. The others all felt that this issue could also be resolved at the subdivision stage. I find this troubling given that just a few months ago, all of Council supported Councillor Kim McKylor in holding back final approval for an application in Division 2 until she received confirmation of information that could also have been resolved at subdivision.

Kissel, Hanson and I voted against second reading. However, seeing there was no ability to sway our colleagues further, we gave the application third reading and the application was approved unanimously.

MARCOM GOLD AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Rocky View County's Marketing and Communications department won a Gold Award of Excellence from MarCom for its work on the move to the new County hall.

The County created over 50 individual communication pieces to address the needs of all the audiences to ensure a smooth transition and uninterrupted service as the new County Hall was commissioned. The awards program judged over 6,000 entries from a dozen countries.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

Based on Council's direction at previous meetings, Administration presented a number of revised Terms of Reference for various Boards and Committees of Council. These key revisions included:

- Amending the Bragg Creek FireSmart Committee to increase the term of appointment for members from one year to four years (reflects current election cycles)
- Amending the Assessment Review Board Bylaw to delegate the appointment of the Chair by the Board itself (not Council) and to create a vice-Chair position
- Repealing Policy 500 and Procedure 500, Operation of the Ag Services Board and replacing them with Ag Service Board Terms of Reference
- Repealing the current PPC Terms of Reference and replacing them with new GPC Terms of Reference
- Repealing the current Committees Bylaw and replacing it with the Boards and Committees Bylaw

The change of the name from Policy and Priorities Committee(PPC) to Governance and Priorities Committee(GPC) was done to reflect the true intent of these meetings. GPC meetings are where Council hears presentations from the public and stakeholder groups on matters affecting the County, reviews and approves Council policies, reviews governance related bylaws, and, receives updates from Administration on projects and initiatives. It used to be that only the Chair was appointed to GPC at the Organizational Meeting, however, that has now been expanded to include the appointment of the Vice-Chair.

These changes came about as the County is currently in the process of overhauling all policies. Before these policies come to Council, they are vetted by the Policy Review Committee that

consists of myself as Chair, along with Councillors Hanson, Kissel and Schule. Many of these policies are outdated and the goal of the Committee is to ensure that Council policies are relevant and necessary in today's times.

BRAGG CREEK HAMLET EXPANSION STRATEGY

In 2007, the Greater Bragg Creek Area Structure Plan was adopted. As per the policies of the existing ASP and the direction of the Hamlet of Bragg Creek Revitalization plan, it was necessary for Administration to present Council with a Terms of Reference to guide the preparation of amendments to the GBCASP for the purpose of creating a Hamlet Expansion Strategy.

The ASP encourages the expansion of the hamlet boundary to include properties located immediately south of the hamlet between Hwy 22 and Bragg Creek Provincial Park. Now that municipal water and wastewater systems are in place, the potential for service extensions are being investigated and the Expansion Strategy can now explore potential development scenarios and establish a land use strategy.

There was some debate amongst Councillors as to the merits of a steering committee. Given that the lands discussed involved 20 land owners, area Councillor Mark Kamachi felt it would be a good idea. However, in making his motion he neglected to include having a steering committee. Instead, the Terms of Reference were unanimously adopted as presented to Council by Administration.

BEARSPAW AREA STRUCTURE PLAN TERMS OF REFERENCE APPROVED

Council approved the Bearspaw Area Structure Plan (BASP) in 1994 – it has not been comprehensively reviewed since. In 2017, the lands for the Glenbow Ranch Area Structure Plan were removed from the plan, however, the BASP still contains over 25,000 acres.

The goal of the review is to explore potential development scenarios and to establish a comprehensive land use strategy for these lands in accordance with the BASP's visions, goals and policies. The review will also identify: carrying capacities and servicing options for existing and future development; current and planned transportation infrastructure; the appropriateness of gravel extraction within the plan; recreational servicing; institutional development; and, other required physical services.

Administration will conduct a project initiation and background analysis this Spring. The terms propose that community consultation and plan writing will occur as early as April and be completed by January next year. The goal is to have it completed by July 2020.

Both Councillor Kissel and I would really like to see the process streamlined, as well as, ensure that the public engagement sessions are as productive and effective as possible. One of the options we are exploring is dividing the BASP into two, however, this requires public feedback. The reasoning for this is that east and west Bearspaw have different needs and a one-size-fits-all policy may not accurately reflect the needs of each community.

We hope that you will consider attending these sessions and participate in the process. This is your Bears paw and you have a right to provide input into how you would like to see our community evolve.

HIGH-SPEED INTERNET SERVICING MOTION UPDATE

As mentioned in my last update, Councillor Hanson and I brought forward a motion to have internet servicing improved in Rocky View County. There has been a lot of talk about doing this, however, to date there has been no clear direction of Council to see that this happens. This motion aims to change that.

Council directed Administration to prepare a report for Council's consideration. The report will evaluate the activities set out in the motion and will provide an estimate of the resources required to achieve the strategic direction provided by the Notice of Motion. Council unanimously supported asking Administration to have the report completed by April 1st.

The goal of the motion is to have downloading speeds of 50 mbps available to all Rocky View residents by 2021. There are a number of available grant opportunities from both the federal and provincial governments and we want to make sure that Rocky View is able to access its share of that funding.

Internet servicing has been declared an essential service by the Federal government. Given our proximity to the city, there is no excuse for the current servicing levels many of our residents are experiencing.