



SOUTH PEACE FRINGE AREA OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
Minutes - Community Advisory Committee Meeting- Dec 3, 2009

Date: December 3, 2009

Time: 7:00 pm

Place: Peace River Regional District office

Committee: Linda Fontaine
Ian Marchuk
Judy Madden
Barbara Swail
Rod Kronlachner
Frank Breault
Kerry Clark
Iva Tuttle

Director: Wayne Hiebert, Director of Electoral Area 'D'

Staff: Debbie Kunz, Assistant Manager of Development Services
Bruce Simard, Manager of Development Services

NH Sheila Withrow, Northern Health

1. CALL TO ORDER - meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.
2. BACKGROUND - brief update of last months bus tour, meeting and surveys
 - Nov. 5th Advisory Meeting and Bus Tour of planning area
 - It was noted that the southern boundary of OCP area has been expanded to include areas west of Tomslake, encompassing Fire Protection and Building inspections areas.
 - Survey responses are coming in, with a reminder of the Dec. 8th deadline - but will allow an extra 4 or 5 days for late responses. Committee members to put an extra push on neighbors or friends for replies
 - Focus will soon be working on tabulating the Survey results.
 - Committee members viewed School Kids 'I love my Community because...' art work.
 - Both Debbie and Jodi McLean have been out to a number of other community groups to speak to them and gather their input on local community planning issues - Upper Cutbank, Bessborough (these communities share a close boundary between the South Peace Fringe Area and Rural Area OCP's.
 - Resulting from member requests at the Nov. 5th Committee meeting, this is the 1st of several Information Sharing and Gathering Sessions.
3. INTRODUCTIONS - those present introduced themselves.
It was reminded that the purpose of these Information sharing sessions is to better

understand existing provincial legislation within the context of preparing an Official Community Plan. We are not here to debate the regulations. Once the OCP is prepared it can be reviewed with a broader understanding of other Agency regulations and influences.

4. NORTHERN HEALTH (NH) - Rural Sewage Waste Disposal Standards (Sheila Withrow) Sewage Disposal Regulations were revised in 2005.
- Prior to 2005 - rural land owners required a Sewage Disposal Permit for new developments. Sewage systems were installed and NH inspected and signed off on the system for use.
 - IN 2005, the Province revised the Sewage Disposal Waste Standards.
 - NH submitted recommendations for systems that would best suite the northern area however; the new standards do not ideally suit the climate and soil conditions of the Peace Region.
 - New sewage systems can be installed by:
 - o BC Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) or;
 - o Professional Engineer
 - New systems are designed, installed and maintained by one of these persons.
 - NH is now removed from any involvement of these standard requirements, except for the holding of these records.
 - Costs to meeting these new Sewage standards are significantly higher for both the land owner and installers. Extra costs to installers; training, certification and insurance coverage which are in turn passed on to customers.

Peace area Issues with current design

- The newly designed sewage systems for rural acreages are a challenge for the Peace area, due to the new systems being too large and shallow, resulting in freezing problems. However, to date none are causing health hazards.
- Peace country soils are predominately clay based which are ideal for lagoon systems. Some soils are sandy and allow for alternative type sewage systems. i.e. Hudson Hope, Chetwynd, and some lake or river front properties have sandy soils.
- There has been concern expressed by the installers of the new sewage standards for installing independent private land owner systems.
- Within the Oil and Gas industrial camps, high level Sewage treatment package plants are being installed.

Standard Practice Manual

- ROWP cannot deviate from the Provincial Standards; however Professional Engineers can request a deviation on sewage standards on site specific areas, based on soil conditions, etc.
- There have been some lagoons installed, based on approved deviation requests.
- Possibly the professionals should approach the Province to consider amending the Standard Sewage Practice Manual' to allow for conditional provisions for Northern installers to deviate from the provincial standards, in cases where a traditional lagoon systems would be more suitable based on a set of pre-determined site conditions.
- There are times and cases when provincial standards exceed Peace River area needs.

Summary / policy direction:

- All sewage systems installed must meet Provincial Sewerage Disposal Standard...
- Sewage systems requirements - limit the approved Parcel size. Currently 4 acre is a minimum parcel size with approved sewage disposal systems.
- Improperly installed sewage systems are a Public Health Issue.
- Sewage disposal is directly linked to the amount of water used.
- Potable water should NOT be used for the purpose of filling or replenishing sewage disposal systems. This is 'irresponsible' use of water!
- To work collaboratively with prov. government towards addressing the Northern BC sewage system standard alternatives.

5. Alternative Sewage Disposal System Study - PRRD, Bruce Simard

- In 2008, the Regional Board approved a study to research the opportunity to provide information to assist property owners with on-site sewage disposal options for lots less than 4 acres. The scope of the proposal included:
 - a) Identify opportunities and barriers for compact development, related to rural sewage disposal challenges in the Peace region;
 - b) Research alternative onsite sewage treatment/disposal options for rural lot development that will enable approval of Type II or Type III sewage systems on lots less than four acres in the Peace region;
 - c) Partner with Northern Health;
 - d) Produce a publication for developers to use as a resource in creating new small lot subdivisions.

Concerns regarding climate change and energy emissions have raised public concern about community form. Opportunity to develop smaller rural lots will help the development potential for rural communities; facilitate more compact development (compared to current standards); enable some re-subdivision of existing residential land to increase the stock of rural residential lots, without the need to expand residential areas into farm areas. The ability to make smaller lots may also provide greater flexibility and opportunity for farm estates.

This study is set out in two primary phases:

- The first phase involved a brainstorming session with consultant experts such as, BC Sewage Association, PRRD, Northern Health, and MOTI to discuss reasonable options.
- The second stage is now moving forward whereby detailed design options are to demonstrate the ability of alternative designs to meet provincial regulations.

A combined version of a 'Mound and Septic Treatment package system' (Minnesota Mound) is getting the finer design details completed.

- It is not known yet how much land area will be needed for this type of system, but it is hoped that a parcel size of less than 4 acres is practical.
- Once the alternative system is completed, a 'pilot project' is planned.
- If a suitable sewage disposal system is achieved, this alternative system would be added to the provincial Sewerage Disposal Standard Manual.
- An alternative sewage system will assist with achieving a higher density, lower costs for infrastructure and services such as; natural gas, telephone and roads.

Community Sewage systems

- Shared sewage disposal systems were briefly discussed where two or more parcels share a common sewage system.
- Such common sewage systems are designed and used in Manufactured Home Parks.
- It was noted that there are numerous under sized parcels in the rural area, which were subdivided prior to any provincial sewage standards. These existing under sized lots have difficulty meeting sewage requirements.

6. Agricultural Land Commission / Agricultural Land Reserve - presented by Debbie Kunz
A presentation of the ALC and the ALR was reviewed highlighting the following topics:

- Who are the ALC and what is the ALR?
- 5% of province land base is within the ALR (4.7 million hectares)
- These ALR lands are located in the same area that settlements, roads and utilities are concentrated. How much ALR and Class 1 to 3 lands are in the Peace country?
- ALC Act was revised in 2002, but has been in existence since 1972

The Northern Panel representatives are:

- William Norton, Chilako Lake, west of Prince George
- Denise Dowswell, Vanderhoof, east of Prince George
- leaving the Peace Country seat currently vacant

It was noted that the representative for the Peace Country will soon be filled.

On a recent visit the Land Commissions said, this position has not yet been filled due to too much training time required to get this person up to speed.

Purpose of the ALC - to preserve agricultural land

- To encourage farming on agriculture land
- To encourage all users to accommodate farm use of agricultural lands and uses compatible to agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies

Two main functions of the ALC are:

- o Application processing
- o Local government (and others) plans and bylaw review.

Types of Applications

- o 20% are ALR Inclusion and Exclusion applications
- o 80% are Subdivision and Non-farm use applications within the ALR.

List of Permitted Farm uses and Non-farm uses were discussed, noting that the complete lists of use are best referenced within the ALC Act

- when developers come into the office, proposals are checked against the ALC Act and then checked with the local area by-laws (OCP's , Zoning, Building Inspection)
- Any question of how a proposal is affected by the ALC Act, the Commission is contacted directly.
- Agricultural Advisory Committees have been established and may review controversial applications that may affect the ALR and agricultural land related issues
- Application process and ALC decision criteria were briefly reviewed, noting that the ALC provides each land owner with a decision and reasons for that decision.

Local government continues to be a partner with the ALC in agricultural land preservation.

Delegation Agreements - between the Land Commission and local government are pursuant to Section 26 of the ALC Act

- These are a voluntary agreement
- Commission may delegate decision making to local government
- applies to applications for subdivision and non-farm use
- Does not apply to applications for Exclusion or Inclusion

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It was noted that to date, this Regional District has not taken on a Delegation Agreement, however during the development of the South Peace Fringe Area OCP - this may be an opportune time to consider options for such an agreement.

Advantages of Delegation:

- Simplifies the application process, faster turn around - one stop shopping
- More local government accountability
- Improved ability to meet the applicants
- Closer working relationship with local government
- Retention of fees and penalties

Principles of Delegation

- Independent decisions by local gov. in terms of the ALC Act
- Voluntary mutual agreement between local gov. and ALC
- No appeal to ALC
- Opportunities for stakeholders and public input
- Faster more efficient Information transfer

To date Fraser Fort George and the East Kootney Regional District have taken on a Delegation Agreement with the ALC - for parts of OCP area or for specific uses.

The ALC and OGC Delegation agreement was briefly reviewed as follows:

3 main parts to the agreement

- a) Exemptions for oil and gas non-farm use of ALR (similar to old Gen. Order)
- b) OGC Applications delegated for oil and gas non-farm use decisions to OGC Commissioner
- c) ALC Applications - some oil and gas non-farm use still go to the ALC via the Local government office

See the attached Appendix 1 from the OGC agreement for details on applications.

The following is a list of ALC/OGC Delegation conditions

- surface landowner consent or MAB order (mediation and arbitration board)
- advice of reclamation specialist obtained
- Schedule A pre-site report / reclamation plan developed in consultation with surface land owner
- Area reclaimed as per Schedule B - submit prior to COR (certificate of rrestoration) with 24 month pipeline
- Maximum total area used for oil and gas is 7 ha per quarter section OR an application for a non-farm use to the ALC via the local government (refer to Non-farm use #10 on Appendix 1).

7. NEXT STEPS

- Continue Educational/Information Sharing Sessions - Key speakers
- NEXT speaker and DATE - TBA

- Survey closing date Dec. 8th with a weeks late grace time.
 - Focus will be working on tabulate/analysis the Survey results.
 - Building Profile - gathering and collecting background information and demographics to establish framework of OCP.
8. Community Energy Plan (CEP) - Bruce briefly explained that the province has set a province wide target to reduce our total Green House Gas (GHG) emissions by 33% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 (from 2007 levels). The PRRD has signed on to the BC Climate Action Charter where our challenge will be to reduce our energy consumption and GHG. GHG reduction targets will be established and incorporated into the policies of this OCP.
9. MEETING was terminated at 9:10 pm.



Debbie Kunz, Recorder

APPENDIX I

Responsible Agency for Applications under the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
	Non-farm Use	ALC Act Application to OGC	ALC Act Application to ALC via local govt	Exempt from ALC Act Application*	Application to OGC under other Acts
1	Geophysical exploration projects			X	X
2	Pipelines and surface facilities directly related to operation of the pipelines			X	X
3	Wells on existing sites			X	X
4a	Up to 3 stand-alone well sites per quarter section or equivalent area, including access roads & facilities directly related to operation of the well			X	X
4b	4 th stand-alone well site per quarter section or equivalent area, including access roads and facilities directly related to operation of the well	X			X
4c	5 th or greater stand-alone well sites per quarter section or equivalent area, including access roads & facilities directly related to operation of the well		X		X
5a	Change in use from a well to an activity described in item 6 (<450 sq. m.)	X			X
5b	Change in use from a well to an activity described in item 6 (>450 sq. m.), 8 or 9		X		X
6	Batteries, compressor stations, drilling and production waste handling, produced water and gas handling or processing facilities, and the combined area of associated buildings and structures on the quarter section or equivalent area is less than or greater than 450 sq m	X Bldg area less than 450 sq. m.	X Bldg area greater than 450 sq. m.		X
7a	Electric power lines immediately adjacent to access roads			X	X
7b	Electric power lines not adjacent to access roads	X			X
8	Commercial waste handling and disposal, including deep well disposal projects		X		X
9	Other facilities not exclusively related to oil & gas production, including material & equipment storage		X		X
10	Proposed oil & gas activity on a quarter section or 65 hectare parcel in which the combined total area occupied by existing and proposed activities is greater than 7 hectares (or 17 acres)		X		

* Exempted uses are subject to specified conditions of reporting and reclamation set out in this agreement.