

Seasonal Recreational Resorts Public Engagement Summary of Feedback

I. Stakeholder Meeting

A meeting was held on October 18, 2019 with two (2) stakeholders who had previously expressed interest in Seasonal Recreational Resort development on their properties in the County with the purpose of obtaining some comments from stakeholders to assist us in drafting a proposed new Minor Seasonal Recreational Resort (SRR) Zoning District in Land Use Bylaw 6-2015 (LUB) before presenting it to the general public for comment. A draft district was provided to the stakeholders prior to the meeting to review and provide feedback.

The following written comments were provided by the stakeholders following the meeting:

1.
 - *The draft provided maintains the integrity of the existing Campground Minor definition and does a good job in not confusing it with larger scale developments that should fall under a (future) Campground Major definition or an alternative DC or commercial zoning.*
 - *Under the SRR Fundamental Use Criteria (c): Sixty units as a maximum is a bit small. It works perfectly for us but I've researched other developments in Alberta and many start with a Phase 1 of 75-80 units. I just this offer this up for your consideration.*
 - *Under the SRR Fundamental Use Criteria (d): "The premises for a community, recreation use shall have a maximum gross floor area of 93m²" isn't easy to understand and may require further explanation.*
 - *Under Development Regulations – Site (c): Having a maximum of 1 residential/security operator unit permitted on site may be restrictive as summer months require peak staffing and sometimes we provide a cabin for temporary labour. Although it would be hard for you to enforce this, it reads as restrictive, even for a site of only 60 units. You may consider changing it to a maximum of two units.*
 - *Under the SRR Recreational Features and Amenity Areas (a): You may want to add Golf Courses on your list of examples in the definition of Recreational Feature.*
 - *Lastly, you asked me to put some thought into how to restrict seasonality to 240 days per year. As discussed, we believe seasonality can be adequately restricted through the combination of the following methods:*
 - i. *Having the potable water supply system not located below the depth of seasonal frost;*
 - ii. *Not plowing the roads in the winter months;*
 - iii. *Cabins not built with greater than R-40 insulation;*
 - iv. *Transparency in the rental pool booking schedule – submitted annually;*
 - v. *Limitation to a seasonal business license provided by the county – based on a declaration of what days they are opened for the year.*

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2. As discussed with [REDACTED] in our meeting the main talking points were as follows:

- The planned SRR District By Law is being drafted for a Planned Recreational Resort, minor, as an initial precursor to a Planned Recreational Resort, major. We have suggested that the policy framework for the Planned Recreational Resort, major could be developed simultaneously with the Planned Recreational Resort, Minor and submitted to the Priority Committee in January and for approval by Council shortly thereafter in February.
- We are pleased with the ability to construct 60 cabins as the first phase of the Planned Recreational Resort, minor district once approved by Council as Bare Land Condominium Lots pending approval of the Planned Recreational Resort, major by-law.
- As discussed, for the Beaver Hills to be showcased with Lost Lake, the Spruce Bog Forest, the Black Tail Prairie Dog Colony and over 15 km of hiking, riding and cross country skiing trails on site, cabins are an excellent way for the cabin owner and sub-tenants to appreciate the full impact of the Beaver Hills Moraine. Cabin size and Bare Land Condominium unit size will be critical to underwrite the infrastructure servicing costs for 60 units and the cabins must blend in naturally with the surroundings.
- Six prototype designs for cabins were originally provided by [REDACTED] ranging in size from an 800 sq. ft. Bungalows with and without a loft, to 1,000 sq. ft. Bungalows with and without a loft and finally to a 1,200 sq. ft. cabin with and without a balcony. More designs can be made available to you as the exercise evolves. The prototype models are attached for a visual should we move forward with [REDACTED].
- All cabins would be constructed to Net Zero Energy Efficiency standards.
- Since there is a large demand for equestrian trails within Strathcona County, the opportunity to create a destination for equestrian enthusiasts can be accommodated through the Bare Land Condominium concept of converting horse stalls within barns of 20 stalls each to 20 Bare Land Condominium Units. The sale of such a unit would allow for the construction of a scalable Equestrian Centre with no reliance on the public sector funding.
- Additional uses which can further enhance the public's understanding of the Beaver Hills Moraine would be some of the many artistic endeavours undertaken by the likes of the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire. Purpose built bare land condominium buildings for woodworkers, ceramicists, writers, film production, painters and sculptors could all be part of the Permitted Uses in Seasonal Recreational Resort, Major By Law resulting in the Resort in the Beaver Hills Moraine becoming an economically viable destination resort.
- Similar to many hotel developments in resort destinations, the ability of the developer to pass on the substantial infrastructure costs to individual bare land condominium units while also creating different demand generators will be critical to the economic viability of a four season resort.

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Regarding the proposed SRR (minor) zoning that was prepared for discussion at the meeting [REDACTED] offers the following summary of our comments from a sophisticated Planner's perspective for your records:

Purpose:

We agree with the stated purpose and agree with the overall objectives stated in the Purpose except for the scale of development. Our interest is more towards large and medium scale nature based tourism development as discussed in Policy 22 of the Beaver Hills Moraine Policy Area. The purpose should also include a reference that conventional resort financing and ownership will be applied to accommodation and recreational facilities to support financing the resort development. While we would interpret this statement as acknowledging that Bareland Condominium units are appropriate for any land use in this zone, including an Equestrian Centre, we would also ask for your opinion on this and would welcome additional wording as required to permit us to apply a Bareland Condominium to equestrian or other facilities that can be developed within this new zone.

The development concept for [REDACTED] was to establish a resort that would provide seasonal, but year round accommodation that would appeal to specific groups wishing to undertake their recreation activities in the Beaver Hills Moraine. The specific recreational activities [REDACTED] identified was for equestrian activities including the boarding of horses and storage of tack. The market for this activity is very strong in the County and the people who enjoy it are capable and prepared to spend and invest significant dollars in doing so. The world wide standard for financing major resorts is through strata titles or condominiums. We would like to innovate on this standard and further develop it for equestrian specific use to also sell units for stalls and equipment storage to enthusiasts. We believe we can provide significant savings to horse owners through this approach and that there will be very good uptake by the market once the units become available. In discussions with County staff, this approach would require adjustments to what is permitted to be put into a condominium in a development. This adjustment is a necessity if Wild Splendor is to be permitted to be developed. It is not an understatement to identify it as the key to the success of the entire development.

Permitted and Discretionary Uses

Permitted and Discretionary Uses should likely include Planned Recreational Resort Major and not just Planned Recreational Resort Minor, as discussed at the meeting. Brad and Todd demonstrated that there are current plans for a broad range of concepts. This could also be better defined through reference to the Strathcona County MDP, which specifically describes Seasonal Recreational Resorts (Policy 18) and large and medium scale nature-based tourism or commercial recreation.... developments. The former is likely the type of use that best accommodates Brad's type of development (a recreational area with RV's, Trailers and campsites, smaller site) while the latter better addresses the requirements sought by [REDACTED] with what is now 450 acres and where we have proposed an equestrian centre, artist studios (we assume this falls under Recreation, Community definition) and cabins and a small, final phase with a bare land condominium hotel. There also appear to be ready market opportunities for a

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variety of recreational activities that focus not only on natural features, but other activities that would enhance the appreciation of the Beaver Hills Moraine through further development and investment. We note that Hotels are missing as a Permitted land use and an Equestrian Centre is a separate category under the Strathcona County LUB and therefore separate from Recreation, Community and Recreation, Outdoors land uses. We think Hotel is an obvious use that permits short term visitors to experience the Beaver Hills Moraine first hand. The Equestrian Centre land uses should be included as Discretionary Uses because it is a recreational use that would allow many more individuals to better appreciate the Beaver Hills Moraine and provide a different experience from hiking, biking, skiing and running related activities. The many kilometres of trails in existence and additional planned trails would provide a positive addition to the options available through development of Seasonal Recreational Resorts. Further, the Strathcona County MDP identifies the development of equine and equestrian facilities as land uses that should be encouraged in Rural Service Areas under Policy 5 of the Beaver Hills Policy Area.

As noted at the meeting, while the Beaver Hills Moraine is a significant natural resource for nature based tourism, there are many instances of recreation oriented businesses failing because they have a single purpose and are not resilient enough to survive on the market strength available to one activity alone. Multiple activities are often necessary to maintain a strong and resilient business even in such a beautiful and pristine environment. The feeling we got through discussions at the meeting were that we will require a Planned Recreation Resort Major designation to allow adequate financing and phasing of development over time. It is doubtful we could build an entire resort all at once and that phasing is a necessity. This is particularly important with the [REDACTED] concept. We have conducted environmental studies looking at the impact of our resort plans, but often the details require a form of prototyping, flexibility for implementation and consideration of feedback to get things right. Phasing enables this to happen and supports preservation of the resource while the business establishes and develops. We feel 60 units would be appropriate for a first phase of development, but that the cost of service provision would necessitate a larger overall development that may approach three such phases in total. The maximum number of units that might be accommodated for the total resort could be limited to 180, permitting three phases of development. This spreads the cost of servicing across a larger pool of units but with the density of accommodation and related units, will not consume inappropriate amounts of land for development. The hotel component is critical for shorter term stays, management of the cabin rental pool and management of activities at the resort.

We have noted our interest in fixed structures (cabins) for the near residential product, but also wish to point out that our interest in quality, energy efficient structures may lead to plant built housing that can be erected on site and then finished for the client. These types of units may fall into the category of manufactured home which are limited by replacement only restrictions for discretionary uses. We would also want to be able to have the option to stick build on site as we will likely not want to restrict buyer options to only one or two builders. In spite of the seasonal nature of the use, it would likely fall under the County definition of a permanent dwelling to accommodate the needs of our purchaser/visitor. Our visitors would have a permanent home elsewhere in the

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County or region, and would have to demonstrate this to qualify for purchase, but the market we propose to target would want and would pay for dwelling quality accommodation to stay in, well above the standard suggested by a rustic cabin. The quality of units constructed on site should be reviewed with the objective being to allow a more luxurious accommodation unit within the seasonal and non permanent constraints established for the land use. The two elements are separate and should be treated as such in the zoning regulations.

Servicing

Servicing requirements for seasonal water, full sanitary, shallow utilities including power, gas and communications and paved roads establish an expensive base cost for the condominium units on the site. A single phase of 60 units is insufficient to pay for all these services. While each development is different, a multiple phase development is required to support a reasonable cost per unit for these services. Servicing should also be operational for the full year (four seasons). The choice of the seasonal use should be given to the visitor. Often, winter is one of the most beautiful times of year to be in the Beaver Hills Moraine. It is also a time when a visitor has the least environmental impact when travelling through the Beaver Hills. The costs of putting in a seasonal water supply for three season use is only marginally less than a full four season water supply. The seasonal, non permanent nature of visitation should be addressed through other measures. In fact, the water supply network for any permanent development in the County is scaled based on what is required for fire suppression and limiting the water supply poses a serious risk to long term use. If only permitting a seasonal water supply was interpreted as leading to a loss of property as a result of a fire, there might be Risk issues for the County and the developer. We would rather supply full water for four seasons and have resources available for full fire suppression. Seasonality can be adequately addressed through other means.

To that end, the seasonality and non permanent nature of our guests (owners) can be adequately addressed and monitored by the condo association, reporting to the County. The development will be marketed with signage and literature as well as presentations that confirm the development as seasonal and non permanent. Purchasers will be required to have a permanent address elsewhere and will not be permitted to purchase without a permanent address and a signed acknowledgement that the facility is for seasonal, non permanent use only. If someone chooses to ignore this ruling, there are more direct ways of limiting occupancy, (removal of occupancy permits, limiting or turning off services) but this can be worked out with the County to ensure all are satisfied we are achieving our goals. The association would report back to the County on this, because it is so important.

A Good Start on Development Regulations

We are satisfied that the proposed development regulations for the unit lots, site and principal and accessory buildings are workable. The other regulations in the zoning are appropriate to the objectives contained in the Strathcona County MDP and the stated purpose of the SRR zone. Our key issue with the proposed new SRR zone is scale and breadth of permitted land uses.

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We welcome the new approach outlined in the draft zone taken by the administration and look forward to providing support to its passage into the Land Use Bylaw throughout the approval process, subject to our above comments being incorporated into the final version.

II. Public Open House #1

A Public Open House was held jointly with the Solar Collector Systems initiative on November 25, 2019 with the purpose of informing and gathering feedback from the public regarding a proposed new Minor Seasonal Recreational Resort (SRR) Zoning District in Land Use Bylaw 6-2015 (LUB), the purpose of which would be to allow consideration of SRR development on a small scale in association with a recreational feature(s) to allow for seasonal non-permanent accommodation and tourism in the Beaver Hills Policy Area (BHPA) of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Bylaw 20-2017. The meeting was held at the Ardrossan Recreation Complex from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Advertisements for the meeting were placed in the November 12, 2019 and November 19, 2019 issues of the Sherwood Park News.

Approximately thirty-five (35) members of the public attended the joint Public Open House. The four primary topics that came up in verbal discussions at the Open House were in relation to:

- a) concerns regarding potential limiting of SRR operations to three (3) seasons as several proponents indicated the desire to operate in all seasons including winter;
- b) concerns regarding the requirement for on-site servicing, including the proposed requirement for servicing to be located above the frost line to ensure seasonality of the development from those interested in pursuing development of an SRR in the future;
- c) concerns regarding impacts to the environmentally sensitive areas in the BHPA from SRR development and associated increase in visitors to the area; and
- d) concerns regarding increased nuisance and traffic from potential SRR development in the BHPA from landowners in the area who felt they may be affected adversely by such development.

Comments forms were provided both at the Public Open House as well as on the County website. A total of four (4) completed comment forms were received from the public. The following is a summary of the written comments received from the public up to December 2, 2019.

Written comments received:

1. *We attended the open house at the Ardrossan Rec Centre on Monday, November 25. We were apprised of the proposal, checked out the viewing boards and read the handouts. We also discussed the proposal with the County planners and Councillor Lawrence.*

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This is a terrible idea! The Beaver Hills Moraine is a distinct and pristine area of our county. It includes rare and varied flora and a multitude of fauna. Its knob and kettle terrain make it unique among the flattened lands that surround it. For these and other reasons, it has even been recognized by UNESCO.

We don't really understand the "tourism" aspect of this proposal. We already have the Strathcona Wilderness Centre, Elk Island National Park, The Blackfoot Recreation Area, The Ministik Bird Sanctuary and the Biodiversity Trail, among others. Soon to be included in the rural area is the new agricultural facility. At least three of these areas already permit camping or other overnight accommodation. The more "tourism" you add, the more cut up and destroyed our beautiful Beaver Hills Moraine will become.

Another of our major concerns is that this proposal will pose a nuisance to adjacent properties. People buy country properties to enjoy the solitude that they offer. An adjacent campground/recreational facility could disrupt this with increased traffic and noise. The County already has a number of these facilities, (like the aforementioned Blackfoot Recreational Area, Elk Island National Park, Half Moon Lake and Strathcona Wilderness Centre) in areas that do not infringe on the privacy of adjacent homeowners. We have first-hand experience with this as the County approved a dog kennel next to our 40 acre property. Since the kennel became operational, seven years ago, we have had nothing but trouble with ongoing noise coming from the facility, which has been accompanied by the inability of the County to enforce the conditions of the development permit.

We also understand that bylaw enforcement of "discretionary usage" permits is "complaint-driven". This is unacceptable, as it pits neighbour against neighbour and is unfair to the people actually making the complaint. In our experience with the kennel next door, there are 12 conditions that the owners are expected to follow, but nobody ever checks up on them, so what is the point?

We understand that most of council is made up of people from the urban area and we get it. To somebody who lives on a subdivision lot in town, the idea of 5, 10 15, 20, 40 or more acres must seem HUGE....a paradise.....which it is, until people who don't live out here get to decide what happens next door. Because the properties are often large, many people don't realize that there is still the need to be considerate of your neighbour.

In conclusion, we feel that the idea of county "tourism", especially in this capacity, is unwarranted and unfair to the people who have settled in the rural area. We would ask you to please consider us when making decisions that affect us.

2.

- *Water lines should be below frost line.*
- *Cabins should have solid foundations or screw piles to prevent frost movement.*
- *Cabin should be 550 square feet to 1200 square feet.*

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- *Seasonal must include winter or whenever owners would like.*
- *We should be able to build cabins for rent if we decide to go that route.*

3.

- *Add hotel/motel use as a permitted use rather than taking it out of the existing C6 zoning.*
- *Water services must be below the frostline. Winter is six months out of the year and a distinct season. Cabins must be rentable year round to pay for all of the servicing costs.*
- *Cabin size needs to be up to 1200 square feet. Different sizes range from 540-800-1000-1200.*
- *Add in the ability to do bare land condo equestrian stalls potentially tied to cabin ownership.*
- *Full services including gas year round is an absolute necessity in our climate.*
- *Foundations should be permanent – cabins can be moved if needed.*
- *You have my other comments from [REDACTED], 3 weeks ago.*

4.

- *It is very important to preserve the remaining natural areas in the Beaverhill moraine. Maybe your policy could include a statement that cabins and/or RV sites should be grouped together to leave as much natural area as possible intact*
- *Also important to look at proximity to other permanent dwellings due to noise and traffic so that our county tranquility is not disturbed.*
- *Cottages and RV sites should be useable in the winter. Sites could have solar heat and electricity, chemical toilets and pump-outs and cisterns and/or water tanks. Winter recreation is huge in the County including XC skiing, snowshoeing, outdoor skating and ski-dooing and would attract lots of visitors*
- *An equestrian based development with cottages around an indoor and outdoor arena with some stabling would attract lots of visitors especially in an area with riding trails and maybe an obstacle course. Clinics, lessons, shows, and horse boarding etc. would attract visitors from the region.*
- *Question: Would landowners be able to build a seasonal cottage or have an RV/Park model that could be rented for a Bed and Breakfast or a Bales and Breakfast for visitors with horses. I.e. It would not be a full development?*

III. Public Open House #2

A second Public Open House was held on February 24, 2020 jointly with the Solar Collector Systems initiative to gather public feedback on a draft of a proposed new Minor Seasonal Recreational Zoning District. The meeting was held at the Ardrossan Memorial Hall from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Advertisements for the meeting were placed in the February 11, 2020 and February 18, 2020 issues of the Sherwood Park News.

Approximately twenty-eight (28) members of the public attended the joint Public Open House. Comments forms were provided both at the Public Open House as well as on the

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County website. A total of thirteen (13) completed comment forms and two emails with comments were received from the public. The following is a summary of the written comments received from the public up to March 2, 2020.

Responses to questions:

1. Where do you live?
Sherwood Park (0)
Country Residential Strathcona County (4)
Rural Strathcona County (8)
A Hamlet in Strathcona County (0)
Outside of Strathcona County (1)
2. To what extent do you agree with the concepts of the proposed Seasonal Recreational Resort zoning presented at this open house?
Strongly Agree (12)
Somewhat Agree (1)
Neutral (0)
Somewhat Disagree (0)
Strongly Disagree (0)
3. Would you be interested in developing a Seasonal Recreational Resort within the County?
Yes (6)
No (2)
Maybe (3)
4. Any additional comments?
 - 1) *As my property border on a hamlet that has water at the road, we should be able to access the water so that we keep water track off our road, as our road is already in bad shape. We should also be able to pump our grey water into the grey water system from one central tank on the property for motor coach development.*
 - 2) *I will be out of town and unable to attend the open house on February 24,2020. Is there any new information you will be presenting at this meeting? It seems ludicrous to me that council would declare the Beaver Hill Policy Area an environmentally sensitive area and then allow this type of insensitive development. The message they are sending is contradictive and therefore their actions declare them not environmentally sensitive. Obviously, I am against this re zoning bylaw and want to be recorded such.*
 - 3) *I think it is forward thinking for the County to give consideration to sharing our rural area with both local and tourists. We have much to offer with wildlife and ecotourism that many would enjoy. Its also good to provide jobs, increase the tax base that will assist people growing up and staying in the Park. Look forward to the future of this rezone.*

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- 4) *This is a much needed addition to Strathcona County as it will help drive tourism and entrepreneurship from resort options to grocery delivery services to tour operators. Love it!!*
- 5) *Would hope that the year round seasonal under SRR would allow C6 operations the same respect.*
- 6) *Does previous zoning (C6) get Grandfathered in? If not, what would the costs be to rezone to SRR (considering the costs associated in getting zoned to C6 originally)?*
- 7) *Would like to offer a year round facility for condo supplying our own water and sewage would be too costly.*
- 8) *Every other county allows for this type of development. It is about time Strathcona County did the same. This will allow my kids to live, work and play in our community and not have to move to the city. This bylaw will drive tourism and investment opportunities.*
- 9) *We are now zoned to C6 and have everything that would fit within the SRR requirements. Our biggest issue with the C6 zoning is that we are limited in the operational dates, there by affecting our revenue. Being able to operate year round is what appeals to us with the SRR zoning.*
- 10) *Development by a developer or builders appears to be the way to develop this property.*