

Ward 6

UPDATE

August 2005

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Strathcona
County

www.strathcona.ab.ca

Ward 6



Distribution of this newsletter

This newsletter is intended for residents of Ward 6, as shown on the map above. To economize, it is being distributed according to delivery zones established by Canada Post, which do not coincide with ward boundaries. A limited number of households in Wards 5 and 7 may receive a copy as a result. If so, please enjoy the information and make note of the councillor for your area. Ward 5: Councillor Jacquie Fenske, 464-8147; Ward 7, Councillor Glen Lawrence, 464-8003.

from your councillor



Councillor Alan Dunn

In an earlier newsletter, I provided background on the development process in Strathcona County. I pointed out that Council must ultimately decide on whether to allow a project to proceed. Now, I would like to outline some of the process used by Council to reach a decision.

While Planning and Development Services do not advocate on behalf of developers, they are nonetheless required to bring forward applications for development that meet minimum planning and legal requirements. Support for an application is not an endorsement; it is simply an acknowledgement that minimum requirements have been met.

The evaluation of the project in terms of community benefits is for Council alone.

Council makes this evaluation at the request for redistricting the land, a request which is made during a public hearing on land use. Though formal, this is not a judicial process. Council may draw upon

whatever information sources Councillors feel are appropriate. These sources may include: conversations with residents, developers or staff; telephone conversations; letters and e-mails; presentations by community groups; public meetings and presentations at the hearing itself. The ward Councillor is expected to have done his/her homework and is therefore an important resource to the rest of Council in making a decision.

Redistricting is not a landowner's right. It is a significant change to the laws of the County and is a valid concern of every resident. This concern may be reduced to two questions:

- Is the development a net benefit to the County?
- Do the residents want the development?

Answering the first question must address three issues: economic, environmental and social. Development leads to additional costs to support new infrastructure. These costs are not covered by increased tax revenue. Some of these

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costs are borne by the developer; the rest must come from taxpayers.

Development is always harmful to the natural environment through destruction of forest, farmland and wetlands. The advantages of the development must offset inevitable environmental damage. Finally, quality of life is always impacted by development through increased population density with associated traffic, noise, vandalism and crime. If the benefits of the development do not outweigh these social costs, it should be refused.

The second question is easier. Our most important function as Councillors is to represent the residents. Residents expect us to put their wishes and vision before the business needs of the development industry. If a development is contrary to the wishes of the residents, it should be refused. All that the residents must do is to ensure that those wishes are clearly communicated to Council.



Pesticides Reduction Program

During a recent visit to the Maritimes, I learned that Halifax has not permitted the use of artificial pesticides on public lands for over 20 years. This covers herbicides, insecticides and other biocides.

Other major centres have similar programs. Winnipeg has gone so far as to ban the use of pesticides on private property. We need to be clear that pesticides are in general hazardous chemicals with potential serious consequences for health. There is already a concern about asthma and cancer rates within the County, so it would seem timely to address this growing problem.

Strathcona County is taking a leadership role in this issue by starting a Pesticides Reduction Program with respect to County lands and parks. In fact, it can be argued that the County program has already been underway for a number of years – the use of herbicides in weed control programs has been steadily declining for several years.

Growth and development

October sessions focus on planning

If you have an interest in land use planning and development, you may want to register for information sessions being held this fall by Strathcona County Planning and Development Services.

The sessions will cover a range of topics from long-range planning, to the steps in subdividing land, development agreements and permits, building permits, encroachments and much more.

The information will be useful to anyone involved with planning and development processes, whether subdividing land, constructing a building, or starting a business in Strathcona County.

The sessions will take place on two Saturdays, October 15 and October 22. The \$70 registration fee includes a handbook and copies of the materials presented at the session.

For details, or to register, call 464-8124 or visit www.strathcona.ab.ca.

Subdivision authority

The issue of whether Council or Administration should have the final say on subdivision was settled on June 28. Council voted to adopt a hybrid Subdivision Authority consisting of both Councillors and Administration officials. We believe this approach will be efficient and flexible while at the same time giving Council a needed overview of the process.

Of particular importance to me was that by adopting this approach, Council retains the right of appeal, a power that would have been lost otherwise.

Ad hoc Traffic Safety Committee

On June 14, Council established a Traffic Safety Committee to address the concern about the increasing rate of collisions together with aggressive and incompetent driving within the County.

The committee is made up of two members of council, RCMP members, administration and a member at large from each ward. Contact this committee with your concerns and ideas for traffic safety. Acting Chair is Brent Jewell at 464-8005.



Centre in the Park

Strathcona County

Discussions continue on the proposed civic centre

You may be aware of a proposal for a County-owned building complex within the Centre in the Park project and located immediately north of County Hall. The purpose of the civic centre would be to provide a focal point for the community, improved access to municipal services and expanded space for Council and administration.

In addition, there would be space for commercial and cultural activities as well as downtown parking. While these are all worthy goals, the cost is, well, scary. In 2005 dollars, we are looking at a project cost of over \$30 million. This is more than Millennium Place, though to be fair, inflation has made some of that difference.

Council has made it clear this project will not proceed without a lot more study and public dialogue.

Household Hazardous Waste Roundup—September 24

Car batteries, antifreeze, lawn and garden chemicals, cleaning products and paint—these are examples of the materials that will be accepted at the annual Household Hazardous Waste Roundup and Paint Exchange. It takes place Saturday, September 24.

Watch for details in *Strathcona County This Week* and on the Web site at www.strathcona.ab.ca.



Roads and highways

Highway 21 twinning

This has been delayed once more by land acquisition and changing priorities. It is safe to say that there will be no significant work in 2005.

The overpass structure at Highway 16 is still the first item that must be completed. Design for the bridge and ramp structures will be in 2006 with the actual work, which could take up to a year, being done in 2006/2007 as part of a current three-year construction program.

Twinning and construction of a service road will be after that and therefore likely 2009 and beyond. One design change that appears certain is that intersections along this portion will be at grade rather than provided with diamond flyover structures as originally understood.

Like all such decisions, this will no doubt be subject to review. Alberta Transportation appears to be doing their best to keep these projects moving; however, the final schedule depends on Cabinet and changing political priorities.

Highway 628/Whitemud extension twinning

This is another potential project that has local residents worried. Twinning of this road would result in a loss of access to Highway 628 from subdivisions between Highway 21 and Highway 216. There could also be access impacts for the off-leash area/reserve and the three range roads: 231, 232 and 233.

My view is that it is very unlikely that this project will go ahead in the near future. It is likely that Alberta Transportation will wish to complete the twinning of Highway 21 first (see above) as well as other priorities before taking on 628. I think little will happen for a few years yet.

Anthony Henday

Another provincial project affecting our community is the construction of the southeast Anthony Henday Drive project to tie in with Highway 216 near Township Road 520. This project is ongoing and still scheduled for opening in fall 2006.

Road projects in Ward 6

If you notice road work activity in your area, it may be due to some road resurfacing that the County has planned for this construction year. The following areas have been scheduled:

- Lina Country Estates
- Best Estates
- Bracken Woods
- Range Road 225 between Township Road 520 and 522
- Range Road 225, Boag Lake to Township Road 530 (Baseline Road)
- Range Road 233 between Township Road 520 and 522
- Township Road 530 (Baseline Road) between Highway 21 and Range Road 224

Should you have any questions or concerns about the work being done, please contact Transportation and Agriculture Services at 417-7100 (24-hour phone line).

Ecoscaping

More homeowners are choosing to “ecoscape” their yards—in other words, landscape in a way that minimizes the need for watering. Common techniques include the use of native trees and plants, and the replacement of lawn with rocks, wood chips or other materials.

To help build awareness of ecoscaping, during the summer, the County holds a contest and awards monthly prizes for homeowners whose yards demonstrate outstanding examples of ecoscaping.

To find out more, or view some photos showing ecoscaping in action, visit the Web site at www.strathcona.ab.ca.



Country residential wastewater service

On July 5, 2005, Council passed several resolutions dealing with wastewater disposal in Country Residential areas. All new subdivision developments in the Country Residential area will be required to connect to an offsite wastewater treatment system. Wastewater transportation systems planned for the future will be based upon a maximum of 50 lots per quarter section in keeping with the current density standards in this area.

This decisive initiative on the part of Engineering and Environmental Planning is an excellent response to the growing issues of crowding and health in the rural areas. Septic tanks, tile fields or Minnesota mounds were valid responses to sewage disposal at a time when rural densities were low and three acres was the minimum lot size. Neither is true today, and it is time to recognize that we can no longer tolerate a large population dumping raw sewerage into the

environment only metres from the neighbours. Fields and mounds have a limited life expectancy and both maintenance and inspection are usually marginal.

Existing developments will eventually require offsite wastewater disposal also. A strategy as to how to complete these retrofits will be developed in such a way as to maximize the investment in existing on-site systems, without creating a financial hardship to the resident.

Wye Hall renovations

Council has approved a \$100,000 upgrade to the Wye Hall. One of three community halls in Ward 6, Wye is the last for renovation.

Congratulations to the Wye Community League Executive and members who lobbied hard for this work for a number of years and who also secured most of the required funds through provincial grants. Work is to start in August and should take a month or six weeks to complete. For information about activities and rentals at the hall, contact Liz Koch at 449-6848.

Residential developments proposed for Ward 6

Sconadale

A Conceptual Scheme has been prepared, in support of two redistricting applications that would allow for the resubdivision of two parcels of land in the east half of the Sconadale subdivision (NE 13-52-23-4), located on the west side of Highway 21 south of Wye Road. A public meeting was held on the Conceptual Scheme at the County Hall on June 7, 2005. The redistricting bylaws and the Conceptual Schemes go to a public hearing before Council on Tuesday, August 23 at 7 p.m.

Crimson Leaf

1107844 Alberta Ltd. has applied for Area Structure Plan approval and redistricting on a quarter section of land (SW 8-52-22-4) on Range Road 225 south of Township Road 522. Density, servicing and preservation of environmental features will be key issues for Council when it considers this project.

The developers held a public information meeting on July 26, 2005 and their applications could come to Council at a public hearing in September. If so, neighbouring residents will be notified by mail, and the general public will be notified through newspaper advertising.

Meadow Hawk and Uplands

The proposed Meadow Hawk development is located on the west side of Range Road 231, south of Wye Road.

The proposed Uplands development is in the vicinity of Big Island Lake on Range Road 225. These two cluster proposals were submitted to the County some time ago, and have been on hold since then pending the completion of a report on sanitary servicing in the rural area, and completion of the Municipal Development Plan.

Although Council recently adopted Administration recommendations on Country Residential Wastewater Servicing, both projects are likely to remain on hold until the completion of the Municipal Development Plan.

Wideman and Daly Drive

Conceptual Schemes had been prepared to go with the redistricting applications submitted by these two applicants. The Wideman application proposed to redistrict about 14 acres of land at the corner of Range Road 225 and Township Road 522 to allow for subdivision of additional residential lots. The Daly Drive application proposed to redistrict an 18-acre parcel, north of Wyecliff on Range Road 225, also to subdivide for additional residential lots. Both bylaws were considered by Council after public hearings on June 14, 2005. Council gave two readings to the redistricting bylaw for the Wideman application and approved the Conceptual Scheme by resolution. Council defeated the redistricting bylaw for the Daly Drive application.

Looking for information about Strathcona County?

Here's some of what you'll find on the County Web site at www.strathcona.ab.ca.

- frequently requested bylaws
- Council agendas and minutes
- fire permit application
- jobs with the County
- schedules for recreation facilities

www.strathcona.ab.ca



so quick with a click!