

Ward 6

UPDATE

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Alan Dunn
Councillor, Ward 6

Office Phone: 464-8206

Fax: 464-8114

E-mail: dunn@strathcona.ab.ca



Strathcona
County

www.strathcona.ab.ca



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

Municipal Development Plan Review (MDP)

The Municipal Development Plan has finally come to Council and made it through first reading. If everything goes well, this may be the last time I discuss this. I do hope so. The only significant change from the point of view of Ward 6 residents is that after much seesawing, the proposed high density urban growth node is to be in the area north of Highway 16 and east of Highway 21.

While I personally mourn the prime farmland that will be lost forever, there are nevertheless some positives in selecting the north. The Colchester area, north of Highway 14, was the other contender and the choice of County administration.

Colchester will also be marked as a development area, though the type of development has not been defined. Likely it would be a cluster configuration with a density yet to be confirmed.

So, we are to have two growth areas rather than one. This will mean more choice, in terms of both geography and type of development. The disadvantage, of course, is the splitting of time and resources. Presumably, it will require twice the time, resources and money to develop two areas simultaneously, rather than just one focal point. To some extent, market demand and the development community, who will tend to gravitate to one or other of the two areas, will resolve this.

Support for the MDP is now unanimous on Council, not so much because everyone is thrilled by the outcome of the growth node discussion – I am certainly not – but because there is enough good in the document that it is worth making a few compromises.

Unfortunately, we cannot put this issue to bed quite yet. The City of Edmonton has filed a statement of concern relative to our Municipal Development Plan. The City and County are trying to address these concerns through mediation, as provided for by the Municipal Government Act. We will not be able to complete second and final readings of the MDP Bylaw until mediation is complete, or failing this, the Municipal Government Board renders a decision.

The City's concerns focus on development issues related to both Colchester and the east of Highway 21 area. In the City's view, development in these areas will have a negative impact on City infrastructure and development.

During most of this term, our relationship with Edmonton has been

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tense and it is tempting to ascribe disingenuous motives to their objection. However, our relationship has improved noticeably within the last few months, to the extent that we are once again working co-operatively at a number of levels. I am therefore reasonably confident that the latest disagreement may be resolved amicably in time to complete the MDP by the time you read the next Ward 6 newsletter!

Proposed power line to Industrial Heartland

The Alberta Electric System Operator or AESO is a non-profit, provincially mandated authority with the responsibility of operating the Alberta electrical system and power market.

Late in March, the AESO made a presentation to interested government and industrial organizations to inform us of their need for additional transmission capacity into the Alberta Industrial Heartland region in the north of the County and thence to Fort McMurray. This capacity would be, of course, required to support both tar sands development and derivative upgrader facilities further south.

Who could live in Alberta and remain unaware of the pace of resource

development proceeding from tar sands hydrocarbon extraction? Nor should it be a surprise that in addition to vast quantities of water, natural gas, labour and money, electrical power in ever-larger amounts will also be needed to support the tar sands and upgrader projects. Bitumen production from the tar sands is expected to triple within the next 10 years.

Today, most of the base load power in Alberta comes from coal-fired steam turbine generators located in the Generation Park near Lake Wabamun. Additional transmission capacity is required to move power into the Heartland and beyond. Transmission does already exist throughout the area; however, the issue is providing sufficient capacity to cover what the electrical folks refer to as "contingencies" – generation or transmission problems on the system that could strain the system to the breaking point.

The transmission system is a bit like the Whitemud Freeway. It works most of the time, but let there be one crash or stalled car, and instant gridlock results as there is little spare capacity. And to be clear, this situation exists today without the addition of new load.

Four new upgraders have requested electrical service in Alberta's Industrial

Heartland. It is expected that by 2016, these upgraders together with other industrial, commercial and residential customers will result in an increased demand of 1200 MW. Fort McMurray will add another 950 MW. This is more than five of the largest coal-fired generators we have in Alberta.

How could this affect Strathcona residents, especially Ward 6? The AESO is proposing a new transmission line to the Heartland. Two routes are possible: directly from Lake Wabamun, north of Edmonton to Fort Saskatchewan or from Ellerslie thence running southeast of Sherwood Park to Fort Saskatchewan and therefore directly through Ward 6.

While various alternatives are being proposed, the clear front runner is a 500kV (500,000 volts) overhead line. There are only two power lines built to this standard at present in Alberta – the BC Inter-connexion and the line running from Wabamun to the Ellerslie Substation. These are very large structures with a major physical and visual impact upon the surrounding terrain. In addition there are alleged health issues associated with voltages at this level.

We need to pay attention to this. The impact on lifestyle, property values could well be significant and it is worth noting that very few new transmission lines have been built in North America over the last two or three decades for the simple reason that they have such a profound impact on the people around them. There will have been a first round of public open houses in April, and more are planned for May. I urge everyone to learn about this and to make your views known.



Posting your address: a matter of safety

Strathcona County's Addressing Bylaw requires addresses be posted clearly in front of each residence. This ensures that in an emergency, responders can find your house without delay.

Seeking members for new committees

Two new committees recently established by County Council need public members who are willing to contribute their time and ideas. The **Rural High-Speed Internet Committee** will explore options for making high-speed internet service available to residents in rural areas. Five members of the public are needed for this committee. Further information: Kelly Rudyk, 464-8089.

The **Seniors Advisory Committee** will provide advice to Council regarding the needs, concerns, and ways to enhance the quality of life for seniors in the community. Seven members of the public aged 55-plus are needed for this committee. Further information: Dodi Barnard, 464-4044.

Regional cooperation

The long awaited Report by the Minister's Council on Municipal Sustainability has finally appeared in draft form. This document is a first formal attempt to free the logjam of inter-municipal relationships that has plagued us over the past few years. As there is a noticeable thaw in these relationships, I'll refrain from going over the sordid history of who started it.

The report got off to a bad start simply because of a process heavily slanted towards large cities as opposed to rural municipalities. It was prepared by Edmonton, Calgary, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties, basically, three of the four authors representing large cities. This flaw will have to be redressed before any of the recommendations could be considered.

Some of these recommendations relate to: Inter-municipal Development Plans, cost and revenue sharing, regional service delivery, additional internal revenue sources, and provincial funding.

All of these must be dealt with, but of course, the devil is in the details, and, in the degree to which the province is prepared to listen to Strathcona County and to the scores of other municipalities potentially impacted by this process.

Council is adopting an attitude of wary optimism and a willingness to allow the process to evolve.

Residents test out roll-out carts

Until the end of May, 600 households in Strathcona County have volunteered to test out a new way of waste collection. Residents from selected rural and urban areas will use roll-out carts for their weekly waste collection.

Part of the pilot will be to determine whether Strathcona County will offer this service County wide. The County would most likely purchase and distribute the carts to waste collection customers, with the cost included as part of the utility fee.

The pilot project is part of an extensive review of Strathcona County's

waste management programs including recycling services. Recommendations for changes to waste services are expected to be presented to Council

this fall for implementation in 2008.



Roll-out carts are being tested as part of the County's waste collection system.

Highway 628 (Whitemud Extension) access

It is an unusual week when I don't hear from a resident about the difficulty of getting onto Highway 628 from the range roads. With the increased traffic in the area, this situation can only worsen.

Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation (AIT) has planned to twin this road for some time and has therefore put off spending much time and money on the existing configuration. Now, it would appear that twinning could start in 2012 and I believe that AIT realizes that waiting that long is not an option. Improvement is required now. AIT has engaged a consultant to carry out traffic counts; the work and results were to have been complete about the time this newsletter went to press. I hope to be able to provide a bit more information within the month as to what solution they propose.

The access issue has another

dimension. In preparation for the twinning of Highway 628, AIT will be closing off a number of access points to the highway affecting country residential subdivisions.

Aspen Heights, Chrenek Acres, Sconaglen and Park Estates will be affected. In most cases, the choice will be between cutting a new road access into the subdivision from one of the range roads, or, allowing for a single in/out to the subdivision rather than two.

For Emergency Services access, Strathcona County favours the former; however, a number of residents have forcefully stated their opposition to the addition of new roads, particularly when they impact private lands. Although the actual changes will not come about for quite a few years, it is never too early to make your views known and I welcome your comments on this issue.

Wiping out graffiti – how you can help

For anyone who takes pride in their own property as well as public spaces, the recent increase in graffiti in our community has been troubling. To deal with this, the RCMP set up a task force, Operation Wipeout, and as of late April, had laid 20 charges in connection with 95 incidents in Sherwood Park. They are continuing to investigate and will charge those responsible.

As with any community concern, the involvement of residents and businesses is also a key part of the solution. Strathcona County has contacted Canada Post, Fortis, Shaw and Telus, encouraging them to set policies to deal with graffiti on their property within our community. We are also asking businesses to cover graffiti on their property promptly.

As residents, you play an important

part. If you find graffiti on your property, report it to the RCMP so they can check and photograph the scene. It is then important to remove or cover the graffiti as soon as possible.

Anyone with information on specific incidents is asked to contact the police at 467-7741 or Crimestoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.

Reducing our reliance on pesticides

Over the past several years, Strathcona County has taken steps to reduce pesticide use in parks and rural roadside maintenance programs.

Between 2000 and 2005, Recreation, Parks and Culture has reduced pesticide usage by over 45 per cent in its parks maintenance.

Transportation and Agriculture Services has increased spot spraying and introduced low-volume herbicides. Our 2007 Vegetation Control Program goes even further to reduce herbicide use and minimize impacts on the environment. This will include changes in the types of herbicide used, application techniques and control measures.

A successful Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program within a community needs to be two-fold. It requires a responsible approach to reduce the amount of pesticides used on both public and private properties.

County Council understands the value and supports public education about the difference each homeowner and business can make by choosing alternatives to pesticides.

Caring for lawns using better horticultural methods, choosing the most environmentally friendly products and services that promote natural and healthy lawn and garden care are easy steps to take to reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides.

Beginning this spring, Strathcona County is pleased to partner with the City of Edmonton to pass along *Good Growing tips* for a healthier yard and environment.

Also, the County will conduct a survey to establish a benchmark to measure change in homeowner lawn and yard care practices. It will also help gauge the effectiveness of the pesticide reduction education program.

Good Growing tips can be found at www.strathcona.ab.ca, or by calling 464-8493.

Pesticides include herbicides for weed control, insecticides for insect control and fungicides that control plant diseases.



Councillor Dunn with Aurora and Borealis, Games mascots, at the launch of the culture program for the Western Canada Summer Games.

Take care in outdoor burning

You might be tiring of the wet spring, but when it comes to deterring wildfires these damp conditions are favourable. However, if drier conditions prevail, rural and forested areas are at greater risk for wildfires.

In rural and ravine areas, grass and brush provide a ready source of fuel for a fire. Residents living in these areas need to control brush and be extremely careful with any outdoor fire.

Types of burning allowed in rural areas only (Strathcona County fire permit required)

- Open fires (grass fires, brush fires, bonfires) are permitted
 - Incinerator burning (burn barrels) of household refuse is permitted on lands greater than five acres in size
- Prior to each burn residents must call 464-8464 to confirm that weather and fire hazard conditions allow for burning and that your fire permit is valid.

Fire permits are free

To obtain a fire permit, apply at:

- Fire Station #1 - 1933 Sherwood Drive in Sherwood Park
- Fire Station #4 - Heartland Hall
- or, on the County website www.strathcona.ab.ca

Recreational fires

Fire pit burning is allowed without a permit. The fire must be totally confined within a non-combustible structure or container and covered with a heavy-gauge metal screen.

Fire smart tips

- never burn in windy or extremely dry conditions
- limit outdoor burning to a mesh-covered noncombustible container or fire pit
- always keep a close eye on your fire
- make sure your fire is completely extinguished before leaving the area
- follow all fire permit rules and regulations

Phone: 467-5216

E-mail: emergencyservices@strathcona.ab.ca

Are you new to rural living?

Have you recently moved to the rural area? Did you know that you have the option of receiving weekly waste collection service from Strathcona County?

If you would like to receive garbage collection from Strathcona County, call Utilities at 449-5514 to set up your account. Garbage collection is \$11.25 per month.