



MEMORANDUM

TO: CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

FROM: JAMES VAN HEMERT, CONSULTING TOWN PLANNER

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT AN APPLICATION TO THE AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION FOR A NON-FARM USE AT THE FORMER AB GREENWELL SCHOOL SITE

DATE: 2/18/2022

Background

The Town has previously sought an exclusion from the Agricultural Land Reserve for the use of the former AB Greenwell school site for a Public Works Facility. The application was denied, and a subsequent appeal was also denied.

Staff met with the Executive Director of the ALC in the fall of 2021 and were advised that a Non-farm Use application is the only remaining course of action the Town may pursue for use of the site. The land would remain in the Agricultural Land Reserve.

Application

A Non-farm Use application was made in January of 2022 with the following request:

1. the use of the existing building for public works administration, garage, and shop,
2. use of the playing field as a public works yard and training area for the Fire Department, and
3. use of a 20-metre-wide strip of land along the northern edge of the property for the construction of a collector road which would serve as a critical second point

employees and visitors. Parking occurs informally on the adjacent public roadways.

c. The facilities and yard are contained within a 2.76-acre (1.09 ha) parcel at 7 Grosskleg Way.

d. The yard needed for a wide range of supportive public works facilities, including salt and sand storage, pipe storage, machinery, etc., is not sufficient in size for the Town's current operation and there is no opportunity for expansion of the yard on site or on adjacent property.

e. The Town has sought unsuccessfully to find and develop an alternative suitable site for 15 years. Sites have been identified in the past and for various reasons were unattainable. Previous Official Community Plans identified the need for an alternative site and new facilities.

2. The proposal for the site includes an area for Fire Department training. Currently there is no facility available in the Town for the training which now occurs outside the Town at the Meade Creek Recycling Facility, owned, and operated by the Cowichan Valley Regional District. As a secondary 'tenant' the Fire Department finds that their activities are increasingly restricted. The proposed site is the only suitable site available in the Town and is compatible with the proposed public works facility and yard.

3. The connecting Collector Road can only occur in the proposed location as it is the only opportunity for a second point of community access for a neighbourhood of up to 150 dwellings. The Official Community Plan identifies this location for a connecting Collector Road between a neighbourhood under construction to the east and the existing town roads at Hammond Street and Poplar Street.

Supporting Official Community Plan Bylaw Amendment

The Town is processing an amendment to the Official Community Plan to support agriculture. Previously the OCP did not recognize the existence of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), within which the former AB Greenwell School site resides. The Town is obligated to recognize within its boundaries land subject to the Agricultural Land Reserve policies and regulations of the Province.

This action is prudent as such a course of action will be seen in a positive light by the ALC when they consider our request for a non-farm use.

Recommendation

A resolution to support the Non-farm Use application to the Agricultural Land Commission for use of a 3.1 ha portion of the former AB Greenwell school site for a Public Works Facility (indoors), Public Works Yard (outdoors), a Fire Department Safety Practice Area, and a Collector Street along the entire northern edge of the property.