

SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT

AREA E – ELPHINSTONE ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION

June 25, 2024

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AREA E ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD AT FRANK WEST HALL, 1224 CHASTER ROAD, ELPHINSTONE, BC

PRESENT:	Chair	Michael Sanderson
	Members	Laura Macdonald Arne Hermann Devin Arndt Clinton McDougall Nara Brenchley (Recorder)
ALSO PRESENT:	Electoral Area E Director	Donna McMahon (Non-Voting Board Liaison)
	SCRD Senior Planner FORTIS BC Delegation	Sven Koberwitz Jason Cochrane
REGRETS:		Anthony Paré Mary Degan

CALL TO ORDER 7:01 pm

AGENDA

The agenda was adopted as presented with the rearrangement of items 8 and 9 to allow Jason Cochrane as the FORTIS BC delegation to be heard sooner and therefore able to leave before the meeting was finished.

MINUTES

The Elphinstone (Area E) APC Minutes of March 26, 2024 were approved as circulated.

The following minutes were received for information:

- Egmont/Pender Harbour (Area A) APC Minutes of March 27, 2024
- Halfmoon Bay (Area B) APC Minutes of March 26, 2024
- Roberts Creek (Area D) APC Minutes of March 18, 2024
- West Howe Sound (Area F) APC Minutes of March 26 & May 28, 2024

REPORTS

Advisory Planning Commission Questionnaire Results Summary

Points of discussion included:

- It was noted that each Electoral Area of the Sunshine Coast and APC is quite different in opinions and priorities.
- A 50% response (22 of 44 APC members) for the questionnaire is quite poor.
- While it would be ideal for a staff member of the SCRD to attend APC meetings, the timings of evening meetings and staff capacity and budgeting constraints make that difficult.
 - We appreciated SCRD Senior Planner, Sven Koberwitz' attendance this evening.
- Would having a staff member dedicated to APC attendance, rather than relying on contractors to take minutes, help streamline meetings and make the APC more effective?
- What if we took our own meeting minutes as we are doing this evening?
- We greatly appreciate when the reports lay out what information / comments / recommendations are being sought in order to facilitate discussion and save time.
 - Distillation of the information provided and what feedback is sought is invaluable.

The Area E APC appreciates the opportunity to be heard and looks forward to seeing what recommendations will be made to the board and therefore what changes may occur. We await our September meeting.

Development Permit DP000310 for 1020 Keith Road (FORTIS BC)

Jason Cochrane, of FORTIS BC, addressed the APC and spoke to the application:

- Low pressure issues have been identified within the distribution system on the coast with areas of Redroofs Road and Langdale being at the extreme ends.
- The solution involves high pressure storage tanks filled in the summer when usage is low.
 - Want to get up and running quickly as now is the time to fill the tanks.
- Acknowledgement that work started prior to DP being in place not knowing it was required.
 - Property was logged in end of 2022. Timber was given to Squamish nation.

Key Points of Discussion included:

- If the project was more visible, some variety of colours on the individual buildings would be nice. Something like the wrap at Roberts Creek Road and Highway.
 - This is not actually something we can require, given the current guidelines. There is potential to address this in OCP updates.

- Landscaping is part of the DP. We would like to see Native grasses and pollinator meadow rather than lawn grasses. The application states “Native Hydroseed”, but the Premier Pacific Blend is not comprised of native species.
- Cedar hedging is a fire hazard and requires a lot of irrigation. Time to move on to more drought tolerant plantings.
 - While a “softening” treatment in front of the frost (chain link) fence surrounding the facility is necessary, a deciduous hedgerow is suggested or perhaps a solid fence with a mural to be lower maintenance.
- Application notes “BC Landscape Society Specifications” when there is no such entity, it is the Canadian Landscaping Standards that should be applied.
- Light pollution concerns: a nuisance to neighbours and detrimental to wildlife. Dark skies friendly would be preferred.
 - This site has security concerns requiring permanent lighting, motion sensors are not sufficient. What about low or red lights, only turning brighter when motion is detected?

Recommendation No. 1 *Development Permit DP000310 for 1020 Keith Road (FORTIS BC)*

The Area E APC recommended that while the proposal meets the form and character guidelines at a minimum the Area E APC would like to see an increase in the diversity of plants used in the landscaping as follows:

- Native plants and grasses would require less maintenance than lawn grass and support pollinators.
- Drought tolerant alternatives to cedar hedging should be considered.

Agricultural Land Commission Application ALR00026 (437 Hough Road)

Key Points of Discussion included:

- Don't all properties need a house to be in place before an auxiliary building?
- What protocols are in place to ensure this land is actually looked after?
- Right to Farm Act can be treated as a loophole. We have very little procedural ability to make someone prove they are indeed farming the land.
- Land clearing is considered part of farming. One can clear right up to and through a stream.
- A Farm plan is a business plan.
- Professional reliance: An agrologist should be retained to assess/confirm that the soil is “poor quality” as stated by the applicant.
- The SCRDP should do due diligence and the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) should review Regional District comments (regarding both relevant local planning policies and technical considerations) in arriving at a decision by the South Coast Panel.
- Why was the previous owner required to provide more documentation at this stage when that application was ultimately denied?

- A member of the committee, attending a recent conference, heard from ALC representatives that they would love to see regional districts NOT forwarding as many applications that they then have to go and deny.
- Fees for applications received by the SCRD are set and they don't stretch to cover reviewing agrologist reports etc which the SCRD has no expertise to evaluate. That's the ALC's job.
- We, the Area E APC, cannot evaluate this on a speculative or technical merits.
- We recognize the SCRD staff does not have the required expertise to review these types of reports.
- This parcel is adjacent to a riparian area. Huge concern for the salmon bearing stream. This is a key area (i.e. impact on stream Riparian Areas Protection Regulation setbacks and habitat) where the Regional District has certain jurisdiction. As such, potential impacts of proposed fill in the vicinity of watercourses must be addressed and specific concerns forwarded to the Land Commission of consideration in the application.
- This is an incredibly large volume of fill! Without a proposed fill plan it is impossible for the SCRD to adequately address potential impacts on the adjacent watercourse. The referenced Site Plan (Figure.1) included in the Staff Report was inadequate for this purpose.
- A QEP should be involved. An environmental assessment must be undertaken as the basis for a water management plan. What if the fill is freshly dumped and we get another atmospheric river and it all washes into the stream?
- Where is this "quality soil" coming from? Is each load to be analyzed? What makes it "quality"?
- Augmenting soil is a farm use (i.e. manure amendments) fill is not a farm use.
- Contamination of streams should be monitored. Fertilizer is going to run off.
- Does the Right to Farm Act really supersede all riparian protections? The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) land does have some protections for watercourses.
- We are especially worried about fertilizer run off.
- Plans for the barn and house should be in place before anything else to hold the owners in place and keep them from flipping the property.
- The SCRD should request the farm plan and further information like the previous application was required to provide.
- Because this is not a farm use, the ALC can and should require stream protection, storm water management plan, a detailed fill plan and riparian assessments before proceeding.
- While it is recognized that much of the noted additional technical information is within the Land Commission's mandate to require and review, at a minimum it is the obligation of the Regional District to support the Commission's application requirements as part of it's review.

Recommendation No. 2 *Agricultural Land Commission Application ALR00026 (437 Hough Road)*

The Area E APC recommended that the ALC be made aware of the concern about the large volume of fill and the potential for the soil and fertilizers to contaminate the salmon bearing tributary of Chaster Creek

AND THAT a QEP be required to provide an environmental assessment and Storm Water Management Plan to determine and address any potential impacts on the creek.

Recommendation No. 3 *Agricultural Land Commission Application ALR00026 (437 Hough Road)*

The Area E APC recommended that an agrologist be retained to test the existing soil to confirm it is indeed “poor quality” to justify such a large volume of fill being placed and to recommend the quality of soil to be imported to improve the site soils.

Recommendation No. 4 *Agricultural Land Commission Application ALR00026 (437 Hough Road)*

The Area E APC recommended that, because fill is not a recognized farm use, the applicant provide more information which needs to be submitted to both the SCRD and Land Commission at an earlier stage in the review process including a detailed topographical survey, a detailed fill plan, and in this case a QEP assessment of where the fill is to go, addressing potential impacts and proposed mitigation measures.

NEW BUSINESS

An item of New Business arose as a result of discussing jurisdictional limitations with our agenda items.

Recommendation No. 5 *OCP and Bylaw updates*

The Area E APC recommended that the following bylaws be introduced as part of the OCP update:

- Dark Sky policy
- Soil and Fill Removal and Deposit
- Noxious weed / invasive species control.

DIRECTORS REPORT

The Director’s report was received.

NEXT MEETING July 23, 2024

ADJOURNMENT 8:58 pm