

**BOUCHIE LAKE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
STEERING COMMITTEE WORKSHOP – DAY 2 MINUTES**

File No: 6481-02

Meeting Date: November 20, 2019

Location: Bouchie Lake Community Hall, 1975 Centennial Road, Quesnel

Present: Area B Director Barb Bachmeier; Nigel Whitehead, CRD Senior Planner; Jonathan Reitsma, CRD Associate Planner; Stephanie Hanes; Peggy Smith; Robert Ross; Elizabeth Montgomery, Neil MacDougall.

Present for a portion of the meeting: Mitch Vik, City of Quesnel Councillor, past President of Quesnel Lions Housing Society; Sybille Muschik; Nicole Pressey, Regional Agrologist, Ministry of Agriculture; Stan Hall.

Regrets: Tony McHale.

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 am

N Whitehead welcomed attendees, explained the intent of the meeting & schedule. Attendees introduced themselves.

N. Whitehead provided a brief overview of the recently completed City of Quesnel/North Cariboo Housing Needs Assessment, Gap Analysis & Action Plan (HNA). Low annual growth rates (0.34% North Cariboo), increasing proportion of seniors (65+). Need for small lot strata developments with little maintenance. Need for below market and market seniors housing. Aging in place or in same neighbourhood is preferred. Mobile homes are a viable, affordable option.

M. Vick provided an overview of the Quesnel Lions Housing Society in their role in the development of Silver Manor in Quesnel. Project took about 8-9 years to complete. Securing funding is the most important aspect to move forward.

Approx. 10:00 am, S. Muschik joined the meeting.

Co-housing project is a potential option. Recommend speaking with Quesnel Co-Housing society. Co-housing involves small individual dwelling units, with large common living and cooking space. Small living spaces reduce the per unit cost of construction and purchase. Strata units allow owners to build equity. Smithers and Ladner have recent co-housing examples.

A housing needs report demonstrating need is required for funding applications. Council/Board support is usually required and MLA support helps application. Need to be essentially shovel ready to get construction funding. BC Housing requires site servicing prior to grants. How does this work in rural area?

Tax exemption program is helpful for municipality to support housing development.

N.Whitehead: This is likely not possible in a Regional District as they do not conduct taxation. CMHC has grant opportunities.

Group discussion followed with questions and answers with M. Vick.

Break 11:00 am; reconvene 11:15 am

Continued group conversation, topics summarized below:

CRD owns land in plan area (hall and rec grounds). Could a portion be supplied for housing (i.e. ball diamonds are not used much)?

Small modular homes could be less expensive way to build units. Fits with rural nature of community.

Partnership opportunity to add renewable design elements i.e. biogas, geothermal, etc. N. Whitehead cautioned not to complicate the concept/risk funding and timeline.

Spoke and hub lot layout, with communal infrastructure (common building, septic, etc.) in the hub centre. Could be multi-phased/modular with a new “wheel” for each phase.

Market seniors housing requires “toy” storage i.e. RV parking, canoe, etc.

A stand-alone society is the best driver for such a project. Need a society separate from existing community groups, so not to distract from original mission of existing societies. It is a long-term project that needs dedicated people.

Strata development examples – Avalon, Quesnel; Emory Park (Emory Creek), Fraser Canyon near Hope.

12:15 pm M. Vick left the meeting

Lunch 12:15 pm

Approx. 12:45 pm, S. Hall, N. Pressey joined the meeting

Approx. 12:55 pm reconvene

N. Pressey and N. Whitehead led a discussion on how the Ministry of Agriculture (M.Ag) and BMNP can support agriculture in the area.

Discussion continued from Nov 19 regarding new provincial agricultural code of practice. M.Ag provides stewardship advice for producers.

Agricultural Land Use Inventories (ALUI) underway in the Cariboo (M.Ag project). The ALUIs then can feed into strategic water planning. Look at current use, future demands, agricultural potential, climate change impacts, and resulting water needs.

Hobby farms on small lots can be a source of complaints, usually too many animals for the land. CRD has ability to regulate maximum number of animals on hobby farms. Agricultural buffers are important when creating new residential subdivisions.

Discussion on limitations of farming in some areas designated as ALR. Example of swapping viable land with non-viable land via agricultural capability study, undertaken by local government.

Agricultural practices can support ecological processes, such as grazing to reduce fire fuel, fertilize soil, sequester carbon. Different animals for different tasks/environment.

Young Agrarians program helps to provide land matching opportunities for small producers and land owners. M.Ag helps to increase production of underutilized acreage.

Discussion on challenges with agricultural lease program through FLNRORD.

Discussion on some of the underlying decision making at ALC. Examples include impacts to land values when subdividing off “home plate” on agricultural parcels.

Approx. 1:30 pm, N. Pressey left the meeting, F. Kadenbach joined the meeting.

Break, 1:30 pm – 1:40 pm

F. Kadenbach provided an overview of ABC Communications’ history, services in BC and Quesnel area, recent service improvements in the Quesnel area, and future plans for the Bouchie/Milburn area. ABC has 147 tower sites through 32 communities. Primarily provide rural wireless broadband, and other commercial communications services.

Challenges for rural BC service. When federal minimum internet speed standards are increased, telcos go back to urban cores to focus on improvements in those areas first, then expand outward again to rural areas as funding/ROI is feasible.

Area densities are generally too low for expanding wired service (i.e. fibre). Physical infrastructure cost is too high for the return on investment.

ABC provides wireless broadband service in Bouchie/Milburn area via Milburn Mtn tower and Dragon Mtn tower. Dragon Mtn infrastructure is currently being upgraded, funding application made to upgrade Milburn Mtn infrastructure. Next application round will fill in remaining coverage gaps. Need to identify these gaps. Known gaps on Paley Rd, Paradise and Gunner Rds.

Provincial and Federal funding available, although when Provincial funding is secured, federal funding is reduced.

Regional Districts can consider building physical infrastructure, but not operating. Can also conduct surveys and provide information on service gaps to telcos. Bulkley-Nechako Regional District has done some supportive work as an example. N. Whitehead: CRD Board has been discussing development of a region wide telecommunications strategy.

Other supports include: Community champions, letters of support (i.e. from local governments), access easements for infrastructure, reduced taxation on tower sites, community surveys supporting demand and identifying service gaps.

Approx. 2:45 pm, F. Kadenbach left the meeting

N. Whitehead discussed next steps with committee. Staff will draft neighbourhood plan Dec/Jan. Will follow-up with meeting minutes, survey #2 results, and any additional documents discussed. Plan to meet in late January 2020 to review first draft, then provide to community groups and greater public for feedback.

Meeting Adjournment 3:00 pm