

Friends of Leduc Area Greenspace

Executive Summary to Changes Recommended To Leduc County May 2007 Draft Land Use Bylaw

The Friends of Leduc Area Greenspace (FLAG) believe that all Canadians are collectively responsible for using our resources sustainably in order to ensure that future generations can benefit from them in the same sustainable manner. We are thus stewards of our land, air, and water as much as we are users of it. Leduc County's most significant and enduring resource is its land base, primarily the County's natural and environmentally significant lands. These lands are irreplaceable and contribute significantly to all Leduc County residents' high quality of life.

The Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw currently in force in Leduc County were passed in 1983. They display well thought-out protection for environmentally sensitive areas throughout, including the use of three land use districts that restrict the number of uses on thousands of acres of environmentally sensitive land (specifically Wildlife Habitat, Recreation Open Space, and Lake Shoreland.)

Leduc County recently released a third draft of the Land Use Bylaw they propose to replace the current one with. In the opinion of FLAG, all three drafts have been much worse than that currently in force and this third draft is by far the worst. **The third draft has no land use district that requires protection of environmentally sensitive areas.**

In August of 2006, we made recommendations in the hope of helping to improve the second draft. In essence, none of our three recommendations were followed. The recommendations made were general in nature, including a request that Leduc County stakeholders be asked for input on the redraft that was ordered by Leduc County Council at the end of August 2006.

As this third draft has been released without our input being requested, we have now opted to make specific recommendations to improve the draft Land Use Bylaw. We request that Leduc County Council once again send the draft Land Use Bylaw back to administration for a rework—but this time that input from stakeholders such as those represented by FLAG be taken fully into account.

Our recommendations are founded in sustainability and stewardship—that is what over 90% of Canadians support! In a national context, this is supported by an Ipsos Reid/ President's Choice survey in which the results, released April 17 of 2007, found that “the majority of Canadians (92%) feel personally responsible for preserving and protecting the environment in their province, yet only six in ten would give themselves an "A" (12%) or a "B" (48%) on their own personal performance.” There is also a much more local survey that was conducted by Parkland County in early 2006 as part of their Municipal Development Plan review. The telephone survey asked a statistically significant portion of county residents: "Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means not at all important and 5 means very important, how important is it to you that the environment be protected in Parkland County?" The result was a mean of 4.7, which means that almost all respondents felt that environmental protection was very important.

Recommendations Highlights

Maintain the Wildlife Habitat land use designation and absorb the Recreation Open Space land into it. Leduc County is blessed with a number of natural areas that both deserve and need specific protection. This protection is most effective through a land use designation that makes it clear to prospective purchasers that the land in question is not suitable for invasive or conflictive uses.

Prevent unsound applications without preventing public input. FLAG perceives that there is a desire by the county to reduce the time, energy, and ‘noise’ of development applications. The manner selected appears to have been to reduce the number of land use designations and to add a smattering of discretionary uses to the land use designations remaining. Doing so will move the decision making authority on development applications from County Council, and through them the general public, into the hands of administration. FLAG would much prefer to see proactive land planning through proper analysis of generally where uses are sustainable, sensible, desirable, and where conflictive uses are kept apart from each other.

Specify environmental protection requirements to make it clear in advance to applicants that a biophysical assessment will be required in certain circumstances and may be in others.

Interested in what we have to say? Please read the full text of our “Changes Recommended To Leduc County May 2007 Draft Land Use Bylaw” document.

Kindest Regards,

Friends of Leduc Area Greenspace

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