

ALBERTA PLANNING EXCHANGE

The
Newsletter of the Community Planning Association of Alberta

June 2003

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ALBERTA ANNUAL PLANNING CONFERENCE YEAR 2004

April 5 to 7, 2004

The Community Planning Association of Alberta CHAIR'S REPORT

The *Alberta Annual Planning Conference 2003* was a huge success and well received by those people fortunate enough to be able to attend it. Armin Preiksaitis, a member of the Community Planning Association of Alberta's Board of Directors, did an outstanding job as Conference Chair, as did everyone else involved in the organization of this special event. This year's Education Session was equally as successful thanks to the many efforts of Directors Gloria Wilkinson and Don Schultz. If you were able to attend, the Association hopes that you found the Conference informative, insightful and enjoyable.

On behalf of the Association, it was a pleasure for me to welcome four new members to the organization's Board of Directors, as well as a Director that was most recently our Student Director. Tim Burton, Phyllis Kobasiuk, Bert McFadyen and Cathy Olesen were elected to the Board of Directors at the Association's Annual General Meeting. Allison Kolody is now a Director of the Association having been a Student Director for the past two years. They will all add a positive dimension to the Board of Directors, and will make a significant contribution to the advancement of the organization.

Nick Paladino was re-elected to the position of Vice-Chair: South for the Association, while Armin Preiksaitis was re-elected as Vice-Chair:North.

The Board of Directors would be remiss if a reference to the excellent work of the Association's new Secretary-Treasurer was not mentioned. Sue Sych was one of the key reasons for the success of the 2003 Conference and Education Session. On behalf of the Association's Board of Directors and members, please accept our sincere thanks Sue.

The Association lost a great supporter and a good friend with the recent passing of Al Suelzle. Al was an Honourary Director of the Association and was an active member for many years. At various times, Al was either the Chair or a Vice-Chair of the Association. He dedicated countless hours to the organization and was a tireless supporter of it. Al will be dearly missed by family, friends and colleagues. Inside this edition of the newsletter you will find an excellent tribute to Al, as prepared by the Association's Past-Chair, Jean Lewis.

Tom Baldwin,
Chair,
Community Planning Association of Alberta

THE ALBERTA ANNUAL PLANNING CONFERENCE 2003

The theme for this year's *Alberta Annual Planning Conference 2003* was certainly a timely and well-received one.

Sustainability... Planning For The Next Generation captured the imagination of speakers and delegates alike. With the pressures associated with the Province of Alberta's significant growth, delegates found the insight to these issues expressed by the Conference speakers to be very useful.

The Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the Honourable Shirley McClellan, highlighted the opportunities for rural Alberta - especially in areas where value can be added to agricultural products. Minister McClellan also noted the challenges facing rural Alberta as it tries to realize the opportunities. Minister McClellan has requested that the Community Planning Association of Alberta provide her with comments on the future of rural Alberta, especially from a land use planning perspective. Any comments you may have would be greatly appreciated by the Association's Board of Directors.

Barry Mehr, Deputy Minister, Alberta Economic Development, noted the importance of regions working together on the economic development of their area. He made mention to the regional economic development alliances that have been and are being formed across the Province of Alberta.

The presentation by John Waller, Director, Long Range and Strategic Planning, Regional Municipality of York, provided an excellent overview of the planning for an unique area - The Oak Ridges Moraine.

Dr. Mike Percy provided interesting perspectives on the future of Alberta and its economy. As always, Dr. Mike was well prepared while providing the needed statistical information to convey his thoughts on the Province's economic future.

The next edition of the Community Planning Association of Alberta's newsletter will feature summaries of the presentations that were made as part of the Alberta Annual Planning Conference 2003.



Dave Morgan receives a sincere "Thank you" from Tom Baldwin



Honourable Shirley McClellan -
Special Guest at Opening Reception

CONFERENCE PHOTOS



2003 Conference Chair - Armin Preiksaitis



Ken Newman - Special Guest and Friend of the Community Planning Association of Alberta



Veronica Bliska
Chair, Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency

AL (A. J.) SUELZLE 1932~2003



Al Suelzle was born in Craigmyle, Alberta, May 20th, 1932. He died May 24, 2003 in Edmonton after a long illness.

In 1944, Al's family

left Alberta and moved to Port Alberni, B.C.

Upon finishing school, in 1949, Al joined the Royal Canadian Airforce. He served in Canada and in Germany. In 1970, he transferred from the regular force to the R.C.A.F. Reserves from which he retired in 1979.

Al became Secretary of the Alberta Planning Board in 1970 and became the only full-time member of the Board in 1972.

Al became a member of the Community Planning Association of Canada in the early 1970's. In the late 1970's, he was elected to the first Board of Directors of the newly formed Community Planning Association of

Alberta (CPAA). He was an enthusiastic member and worked diligently in many roles. He became Chairman of the CPAA in 1983 where he remained until 1989.

As Past Chairman of the CPAA, Al remained very active in, and was an avid supporter of, the Association. His efforts were recognized by his colleagues and Al became an Honourary Director at the Association's 1998 Conference.

Al was also active with the Royal Canadian Legion. He served a term as the President of the St. Albert Branch.

Al will be missed by the CPAA. Our condolences go out to his wife, Margaret, and his family.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING TOGETHER

By

The Honourable Guy Boutilier, Minister of Municipal Affairs

In municipal land use planning, I believe that it's vitally important for communities to look for opportunities to work together.

As Minister of Alberta Municipal Affairs, and as the former Mayor of Fort McMurray, I have seen first-hand the many benefits of people and communities working toward a common goal. Many of Municipal Affairs' initiatives promote cooperation and partnerships, several of which relate to effective municipal planning. These include our Regional Partnerships Initiative, our Municipal Sponsorship Program, and mutual aid agreements.

Regional Partnerships

Regional partnerships are one of the top priorities of Municipal Affairs — and that is because so much can be gained when municipalities work together to provide services and share resources.

As many of Alberta's 360 municipalities are experiencing unprecedented growth, it is becoming increasingly important that these municipalities coordinate their operations, as opposed to working as individual municipalities. This way they can benefit from the unique strengths of their neighbours, and effectively and efficiently meet the needs of their residents, businesses and institutions.

One of the key ways that we promote inter-municipal cooperation is through our Regional Partnerships Initiative. Through this initiative we encourage municipalities to explore how to cooperate with each other to deliver a wide range of services, including those involving development. In some cases municipalities have partnered with each other to explore ways to provide land use planning services and advice to ratepayers.

Through our Regional Partnerships Initiative, we promote the idea that:

- municipalities need to work together on issues such as shared services and land use planning;
- municipal leaders should focus on thinking outside of their local boundaries; and
- the future of regions should be determined by the municipalities within them, using their own solutions.

Self-determination is a key element in all of this.

Our government is a strong believer that, whenever possible, solutions to local challenges are best arrived at locally — by the people who are closest to the situation. When it comes to partnerships, local residents, leaders and planners should decide what makes the most sense for their area.

Cooperation between local governments can enhance a region's ability to:

- attract and retain investment;
- react quickly to opportunities or threats posed by the global economy;
- effectively manage growth and provide services; and
- address environmental issues.

The regional issues these partnerships are exploring are as diverse as the regions themselves. These include sharing the delivery of municipal services such as:

- development permit/application processing and advisory services;
- disaster response and emergency services; and
- water, sewer and transportation services.

An excellent example of effective regional cooperation is the Lloydminster-Vermilion Regional Partnership. This is a regional municipal partnership of seven municipalities in eastern Alberta (the City of Lloydminster, the County of Vermilion River No. 24, the Town of Vermilion, and the villages of Dewberry, Kitscoty, Marwayne and Paradise Valley). The partnership is currently exploring regional opportunities in the areas of decision-making, seniors housing, emergency management, tourism, economic development, and shared municipal service delivery.

Land use planning advice is one of the shared municipal services the partnership is exploring in greater detail. The partnership is assessing the level of planning expertise in the region to determine if advisory services can be provided by one or some member municipalities to others in the region.

This cooperative approach allows some municipalities in the partnership to leverage the planning expertise of other municipalities. In addition, the cooperation creates dialogue to address other issues, including those related to regional land use planning and service sharing.

There are currently 23 regional partnerships in Alberta involving more than 200 municipalities, which cover a combined population of about 2.75 million. Almost \$3 million in department funding has been provided through this initiative.

Municipal Sponsorship Program

Another way that we encourage municipal cooperation in areas such as planning is through our Municipal Sponsorship Program, which is now in its sixth year. The program is open to small- and medium-sized municipalities with populations of 20,000 or less, with the exception of summer villages.

This year the program is providing grants totaling \$13.5 million for projects that improve municipal governance or administration, enhance municipal services or service delivery, and/or increase cooperation with neighbouring municipalities.

I am very pleased that we are able to continue supporting municipalities through this program. In its first five years the program has provided grants for about 1,250 municipal projects totaling approximately \$58 million. As in previous years, a 25 per cent funding bonus is available for projects that involve inter-municipal cooperation.

A good example of a project funded last year that involves cooperation around land use planning is the partnership between the Town of Coalhurst, 17 nearby municipalities and the Oldman River Intermunicipal Service Agency to develop a centralized regional geographic information system over three years.

Introduced as a three-year pilot project in 1998, the Municipal Sponsorship Program was extended due to the positive response from municipalities. Applications and guidelines were mailed in April to more than 300 eligible Alberta municipalities. This year's application deadline is July 11, 2003.

Mutual Aid Agreements

Knowing that you can rely on your neighbours in times of need has always been important in planning for the safety and security of our communities.

As recent events abroad and at home have shown, we can never be too prepared to deal with emergencies. Whether it's a fire, tornado, or some other crisis situation that may overwhelm local resources, it's important that effective mutual aid agreements are in place between municipalities or local emergency responders, and that these agreements can be quickly acted upon if needed.

With this in mind, EMA (Emergency Management Alberta) has developed a guide that provides a standardized format for all municipal emergency plans. A standardized format is important because consistency is a key element in inter-municipal understanding and support. EMA has also developed training and exercise standards to promote standardized training, exercises and real event lessons that are easily understood by any municipality.

When it comes to preparing for emergencies, I encourage municipalities to participate in multi-municipal exercises. These types of exercises allow for a much better understanding of other municipalities' hazards, resources, plans, key participants and stakeholders. Increased understanding leads to better relations and better support in actual emergency situations.

I also encourage municipalities to look for opportunities to participate as observers in each other's exercises. This leads to further understanding of neighbours' municipal plans and key stakeholders, and promotes sharing of ideas and lessons learned.

Some municipalities are also looking at developing and maintaining detailed resource lists to facilitate much quicker sourcing of essential resources during emergencies. As I said before, I believe you can never be too prepared and I urge all municipalities to consider doing this.

A recently-launched mutual aid-related initiative that I'm very proud of is the equipment acquisition to prepare for responding to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threats. For the CBRN initiative, we have seven major municipalities equipped for special response to CBRN hazards anywhere in Alberta, based on agreed-to response zones.

I am very pleased that the province could assist with this important initiative. EMA worked with Alberta's seven largest municipalities to determine what equipment was needed and submit the request to the federal government.

Only two provinces, Alberta and New Brunswick, have taken such a province-wide approach. The result in Alberta was a \$1.8 million grant for equipment in Calgary, Edmonton, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat.

The Province contributed \$432,000 for the cost-sharing portion. The City of Edmonton took care of ordering, distributing and paperwork for equipment — making this a real team effort.

The seven cities will keep the equipment and respond to emergencies in their own municipality and other municipalities in their zone. This makes Alberta prepared to handle chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats throughout the entire province.

This is another initiative that demonstrates the value of cooperation among municipalities, and will provide yet another level of security for Albertans.

Land Use Policy Review

I'd like to conclude this column with an update on the land use policy review, which is something that I'm sure is of great interest to members of the Community Planning Association of Alberta.

When the Planning Act was incorporated into the Municipal Government Act in 1995, the authority and autonomy of municipalities was significantly increased with respect to land use decision-making.

Under the current system, municipalities in Alberta are assigned responsibility and authority for land use

planning. All municipalities in Alberta have adopted a land use bylaw, appointed subdivision and development authorities, and established subdivision and development appeal boards. While only municipalities with populations over 3,500 are required to adopt a municipal development plan, many other municipalities have adopted these as well. The result has been described as a “municipally based” land use planning system, the key features of which are:

- broadly enabling legislation that establishes municipal planning authority, and provides for basic planning tools and planning processes;
- provincial direction to municipal planning authorities through adopted land use policies but no provincial review or approval of plans, bylaws or planning decisions;
- municipal responsibility for the content of plans and bylaws, the making of planning decisions, and the hearing of most planning appeals; and
- emphasis on inter-municipal cooperation, with provisions and support for inter-municipal dispute resolution.

A number of provincial departments and agencies remain involved in land use planning as a result of their particular mandates. The Province’s responsibility, with certain exceptions, extends to managing air, water, and renewable and non-renewable resources.

In the time since Alberta’s land use policies were adopted back in 1995, the Province has experienced tremendous population growth and settlement expansion. These growth pressures are expected to continue for sometime into the future. Growth pressures and emerging environmental issues have resulted in greater public attention being focused on local land use planning. The Alberta Government recognized a need to review our land use policies to ensure they reflect the realities of the 21st Century.

The review of land use policies will provide an opportunity to assess the overall direction the province should take to continue its support for Alberta’s municipal-based local land use planning system. Municipal Affairs staff have undertaken some preliminary research and reviewed general background information on this important issue. Further discussions with provincial departments are underway. **N**

The Community Planning Association of Alberta

??? *How To Reach Us* *???*

Do you want to become a member of the Community Planning Association of Alberta? Do you need information regarding the Alberta Annual Planning Conference? Are you interested in community planning in Alberta? Please contact Sue Sych, the Association’s Secretary-Treasurer, at:

Community Planning Association of Alberta

P.O. Box 176
Brownvale, Alberta T0H 0L0

Telephone..... 780-597-2428
Fax..... 780-597-2428

ABOUT PLANS

..... Municipal District of Peace No. 135 Municipal Development Plan

By

Tom Baldwin, Chair, Community Planning Association of Alberta

The Municipal District of Peace No. 135 is a rural municipality located in the Peace Region of the Province of Alberta.

The Municipal District has a strong agricultural land base. There is also oil and gas activity in the area, as well as a significant number of gravel deposits. Within the boundaries or adjacent to the boundaries of the Municipal District are the Town of Grimshaw, the Town of Peace River and the Village of Berwyn. The Municipal District is also the location for the Peace River Airport and the Peace River Correctional Centre.

The Peace River represents one of the boundaries of the municipality which provides opportunities for market gardens, tourism, recreation and residential development.

In 1998, the Council for the Municipal District of Peace No. 135 adopted a municipal development plan.

Goals - Future Planning

The Municipal District of Peace Municipal Development Plan establishes a number of goals for the future planning of the municipality.

- A. To conserve and enhance the Municipal District's agricultural and rural character.
- B. To minimize the negative impacts of growth and development.
- C. To facilitate a modest growth rate throughout the entire Municipal District.
- D. To minimize land use conflicts in the Municipal District.
- E. To encourage activities and facilities which support the agricultural sector.
- F. To encourage the preservation and enhancement

of wildlife and recreational areas and provide rural recreation opportunities for the surrounding communities.

- G. To support the development of an efficient transportation system.
- H. To operate the Municipal District in an efficient and economical manner.
- I. To support the development of urban areas which act as service centres to the agricultural community, including the continued development of the Hamlet of Brownvale.
- J. To continue efforts of inter-municipal cooperation with the urban municipalities in the Municipal District.

The Priority of Agriculture

Within its Municipal Development Plan, the Municipal District highlights the importance of agriculture to the area. In fact, the Municipal Development Plan indicates that agriculture will be the priority land use in the municipality.

Under its land use planning framework, the Municipal District "wishes to see all landowners respect farming operations and to act accordingly." The Municipal District further states, "It should be realized by everyone that farming shall be the first priority land use for all lands capable of agricultural production."

Clearly, the Municipal District has made a commitment to protect its agricultural base and keep the loss of any productive farmland to a minimum.

Agriculture Land Use Objectives

In order to implement its future planning goals and the priority for agriculture, the Municipal District has set the following objectives for its agricultural land

use policies:

1. To protect better agricultural land for agricultural uses;
2. To allow for some flexibility in the subdivision and development of better agricultural land where no reasonable alternatives exist and the positive benefits from the development offset the negative effects;
3. To facilitate the development of services and facilities which support agricultural operations;
4. To minimize the conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses; and
5. To ensure that parcels of land are of appropriate size for the use intended.

In the case of the second objective, the Municipal District may allow for the subdivision of better agricultural land for the following land uses:

- ! public uses;
- ! uses which are site specific such as natural resource extraction industries;
- ! agricultural industries which directly benefit and serve the agricultural area; and
- ! uses which have unique site requirements and/or transportation requirements which make their location elsewhere unpractical.

Natural Environment Policies

The Municipal District includes a number of natural features that make it necessary to adopt land use policies, including the challenges associated with land in the Peace River Valley.

In regards to the valley areas, the Municipal District has set policy directions aimed at ensuring the development of such lands is undertaken in a safe and proper manner. Flooding, erosion and subsidence are considerations for decision-makers when looking at developing these areas.

A desire to protect the natural environment is a theme throughout this policy section, as well as the setting of conditions to allow for a certain level of development.

The Grimshaw Gravels are a key groundwater recharge area located in the Municipal District. Prior to the approval of any subdivision or development proposal, the municipality requires extensive information to assess the impacts on the groundwater's quality and/or quantity.

Inter-Municipal Planning

Municipal District Council has recognized the importance of working on a basis of cooperation and communication with its neighbouring urban municipalities. In particular, the Municipal District indicates its support for the Peace River Inter-Municipal Development Plan, as well as the need to ensure the coordination of transportation and municipal servicing systems between the municipalities. In the case of land use proposals in the area of an urban municipality, comments will be requested from that urban municipality.

Financial Management

The Municipal District's Municipal Development Plan includes a section that addresses the financial management of the municipality. The desire of the Municipal District is to keep the costs to developers and the property tax burden to a minimum in order to encourage continued growth.

This section of the Municipal Development Plan is based on the following principles:

- ! Continue to provide basic services to the residents of the municipality at a level compatible to financial resources;
- ! New developments will not create a financial burden on existing residents; and
- ! Financial resources managed so as to minimize the costs to its residents.

For Further Information:

, ***Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency,***
780-338-3862

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ANNUAL PLANNING CONFERENCE 2003

SPONSORS & CONTRIBUTORS

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