

May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017

To the Residents of Division 5,

Please feel free to pass this on to anyone you think might be interested. I have Bcc'd as many e-mail addresses as I have collected over the years.

I attended the McDougal Flats Area Protection Society AGM last week and it was brought to my attention that some of the Division 5 residents think I am doing a very poor job as their Councillor. I am not defending myself and everyone is of course entitled to their opinion, however I thought that I would just try and put some information out there for you to consider. If your opinion is the same after reading the information, that is fair. If you wish to further discuss any issues, please feel free to contact me by this e-mail address or phone (403) 507 1057. I have tried in the past to hold both Division 5 open houses, as well as Combined Council and Administration open houses both at the County Office and at the Sundre Legion. These have not been well attended, and I do appreciate that after working all day, the last thing most people want to do is attend an open house. I have considered the suggestion that I go door to door, however after determining that we have some 2000 land owners in the Division, this did not seem feasible. I do try and attend all functions I am invited to, and always respond as a matter of priority to e-mails and phone calls.

This is intended to give you some information on the progress both Council and I have made during the last 3 years.

## Aggregate

This is a hot topic, not only for Division 5, but County and Province wide. Aggregate extraction is both a Municipal and Provincial issue. In 2013 when I first joined Council, an Aggregate Committee made up of Council, residents and aggregate industry members was already underway. I was appointed by Council to this Committee, who was tasked with making recommendations on what a potential Aggregate Land Use would look like. I have heard on many occasions that Council did not adopt what the residents wanted, however it should be noted that Council did not adopt what the Aggregate Industry Members wanted either. A wise man once told me that if you make no one group happy you have done your job because you have tried to find a middle ground, where everyone gets something. It should also be noted that Council, including myself, not only represent the Country residential land owners and farmers, but also the Businesses in the Community that provide employment and community benefits. I believe our job as Council is to try and find common ground to minimize the impact of potentially conflicting land uses so that all can co-exist and thrive in our County. Also, Council needs to find common ground with the Province, in particular Alberta Environment and Parks, so that we can address the concerns raised by land owners, which results in a sustainable and enforceable set of operating guild

lines to address both public and industry concerns. Having said that, the following have either been done or are in progress;

**Community Concerns: There is a lack of public consultation and input into the development of aggregate in the County.**

**Council Response:** In 2013/1014 a Committee was struck by Council which included members from Council, the public and the aggregate industry. The Committee was mandated to develop a process to mitigate the conflict between land uses. In 2014 Council adopted an aggregate extraction and processing district amendment to the land use bylaw. This addressed the specific concerns of:

1. Need for public consultation and input: Council adopted an aggregate extraction and processing district as an amendment to the land use bylaw. Through the rezoning process a public hearing is required, where originally aggregate extraction could occur as a discretionary use on agriculture lands and only required a development permit through the Municipal Planning Commission, which is not a public hearing process. The Aggregate Extraction District requires the applicant to develop a comprehensive site development plan which has set requirements for information; therefore all applications must provide the same data for consistency.
2. Need for an additional buffer between Residential and Aggregate operations: Increased setbacks, the new aggregate district land use required a minimum of 165m setback from dwellings, where it was originally 3m from the property line.
3. Need for a wider circulation to land owners: An increased circulation area to 1 mile as adopted. Originally this was 0.5 mile.

**Community Concerns: Cumulative impacts of aggregate extraction**

**Council Response:** Through the development permit process, the Municipal Planning Commission has adopted in the last two permit applications, a condition which restricts the amount of area open to extraction at one time. I have also requested through a Council motion that administration adopt a reclamation strategy to deal with County owned and operated pits as well as adopting the progressive reclamation process for all new County pits. I believe the County can be a leader in adopting and executing the highest level of reclamation possible. By reducing the area open to extraction at one time, this should also achieve reduction in dust, and improve the aesthetics in the communities.

**Further Council Response:** In 2016 I proposed to Council that MVC put forward a resolution to be presented at the Alberta Association of Municipalities and Districts with the purpose of lobbying the government to update the Code of Practice for pits to include a mandate for progressive reclamation, as well as increasing the securities associated with reclamation to a level that would provide financial incentives for the industry to adopt progressive reclamation practices. This resolution was supported at the November 2016 AAMDC conference by the members. Since then, the Province, through Alberta

Environment and Parks (AEP) have held some sessions with AAMDC, Industry members and community groups to get feedback on how regulations could be improved. I have been fortunate to participate as a member of AAMDC, which gives me the voice to continue to raise your concerns at the Provincial level.

**Community Concerns: The operations of aggregate are governed by too many vintages of development permits, and therefore there is a lack of consistency so residents do not know if operations are compliant or what may be expected of the operators.**

**Council Response:** First and foremost, the County is not a hammer. Council does try and work with existing businesses as well as all landowners to ensure that all landowners and businesses are given the opportunity to comply with all statutory plans by their own accord. In cases where compliance is not the end goal of a land owner or business owner, the County will take measures to enforce compliance in line with the statutory plans. Council has directed administration to move forward with a project to bring all existing gravel pits within the County into compliance. Prior to adoption of the Aggregate extraction and processing district, re-zoning of the aggregate operations was not required. One of the lessons learned from the addition of this district was for Council to better understand the unintended consequences of significant changes to statutory plans. Had this been done, Council would have recognized the resulting large number of existing operating pits that would be non-conforming to the new district. The gravel pits that fall into this project are existing pits that either have Provincial approvals, Municipal approvals through a development permit, or a combination of both. The purpose is to bring these gravel pits that are already operating into compliance with both the land use bylaw, as well as setting a standard of operations through operating regulations that will achieve consistency how all pits in the County will operate, which will be beneficial for the Operators and also the Public.

**Community Concerns: Public pits do not require public consultation, nor do they require Municipal approvals and therefore are able to operate 24/7.**

**Council response:** The County has been working to improve relations with AEP so that more of collaborative approach to Aggregate can be done. Although the Municipality does not have jurisdiction over public lands, there is an opportunity to develop better relations with AEP so that the Municipality can support the public and work with AEP and AT to mitigate concerns. I have been working hard to engage AEP to work more closely with Municipalities to find a better way forward for aggregate development on both public and private lands. I am hopeful those engagement sessions will happen soon.

**Community Concerns: Overall conflict between aggregate operations and Residential, noise, dust, traffic being the top concerns.**

**Council Response:** A few years back Council entertained the idea of putting caveats on all subdivision applications that were in close proximity to gravel deposits. The idea was that the caveat would only be a “buyer beware” clause but not limit development in anyway. This was in response to many residents

who said “if I had of known, I would have never bought here”. However, the idea of a caveat was not supported by the people as there was a feeling it would diminish property values. Through statutory plans, it is now discouraged to subdivide within close proximity to known gravel deposits or operating gravel pits, as it is for confined feeding operations. This is to provide a buffer between current and possible future operations of industries with potential conflict. Other improvements have been made through the aggregate district as well as more focus on addressing public concerns through the development permit.

## **Red Deer River Flood issues**

Back in 2014, Council approved a flood moratorium post the 2013 flood event. The sole purpose of this moratorium was to protect people, the environment and infrastructure. Council was awaiting both the Provincial floodway mapping for the McDougal Flats area as well as the floodway regulations that the Province continually promised to develop (these are still not complete). This was not popular with residents in the area, however I did my best to meet with anyone who was concerned, at their convenience to give as much information as I possibly could.

Council directed administration to proceed with a 4km berm to try and address future flood mitigation, however after almost 3 years of study and review with the Province, the problem was considered too massive for the County to address, with the issue of liability, potential negative downstream effects, as well as the high likelihood that the berm would not solve the issues as it was not on a large enough scale. I brought forward the idea to Council to repurpose the Flood Recovery and Erosion Control (FREC) grant monies of some remaining 3 million \$, for other projects in the area. Council has now accepted a report to move forward on a plan to upgrade sections of Range Road 55 and 60 to better prepare our infrastructure for flood events, and post flood that will minimize impact to residents regarding road washouts, as well as addressing drainage issues at the Sundre airport at a total cost of 2.6 Million \$, covered by Provincial Grant money. In addition, I brought forward to Council the idea of creating an emergency response plan for those located in the floodway area in McDougal Flats. Administration was directed to bring forward a project and has been working for the last 6 months with a Consultant to develop an emergency response plan that will be brought forward in May to those located in the mapped floodway area for consultation.

## **HWY 584**

**Community Concerns: The road condition of HWY 584 west of Sundre to Bearberry is in very poor condition.**

**Council Response:** At my first Bearberry AGM concerns about the poor condition of HWY 584 were brought forward. I have, with the support of Council, been lobbying the Minister of Alberta Transportation at every opportunity to address these concerns. I have also brought these concerns

forward to our MLA Jason Nixon. Mr. Nixon sent a letter to the Minister of AT supporting the Council concerns. We have just recently found out that an overlay for HWY 584 is now part of the 3 year Alberta Transportation plan.

**Community Concern:** The debris on HWY 584 in front of West Fraser Mills is a safety hazard.

**Council Response:** I have contacted both the Mill and Alberta Transportation regarding debris concerns. The County has no jurisdiction over the highway, and cannot force the Mill to do anything in their yard to mitigate the trucks dragging debris on the road. However, through communication, Alberta Transportation and West Fraser Mills are now developing a work access agreement which allows the Mill to sweep the highway and keep it free of debris.

## **Alberta Environment Projects regarding water**

The Province has embarked on a project to provide policy to direct the Oil and Gas Industry to reduce their use of fresh water by utilizing Industry and Municipal effluent where and when possible for fracking. AEP has contracted the WaterSmart group to hold consultations to gather information on the project. I was the only Council representative at the Workshop in Sundre held in March. I have worked with the WaterSmart Group in the past with projects regarding the Red Deer River. I have built up a great working relationship with this group and now have the opportunity to participate in most of the water projects initiated by AEP in the Red Deer River Basin. This gives me a very good opportunity to bring information back to Council and develop strategies to influence policy to the benefit of Municipalities. Through my participation I arranged for AEP to present at our May 2<sup>nd</sup> Municipal Area Partnership meeting (this committee is made up of representatives from MVC, Sundre, Cremona, Didsbury, Olds and Carstairs). The presentation was to bring awareness to our neighboring Municipalities on the benefits of using Municipal effluent for fracking in place of fresh water, and provide the Municipalities with the opportunity to have dialogue with AEP on how they can become a part of the process.

## **Committees/Boards/Commissions that Councillor Aalbers is directly involved with**

**The Audit Committee:** I have chaired the audit committee for the last three years. This committee is responsible for interacting with the Auditors and reviewing all the information prior to approval by Council. We also make recommendations for policy change and new policy development to address any shortfalls that have been determined in the Governance process by the Audit.

**Inter-Governmental Committee:** This committee is made up of myself the Reeve, Deputy Reeve, CAO and the Communications Coordinator. Through this committee, recommendations are provided to Council on the most important issues to address with each Minister, as well as creating an issues list for our MLA's. This has proved to be a very effective communication tool with the Ministers and is much appreciated by our MLA's. We realize change is slow, however the traction on HWY 584 demonstrates that the process does work. Some key issues on these issues lists are:

Minister of AEP – Update of the Code of Practice of Pits to include progressive reclamation for gravel pits, development of legislation regarding Ag Plastic recycling

Minister of AT – Increasing access to Bridge funding, upgrade of HWY 584, extension of the northbound acceleration lane at HWY 2 and 27 interchange.

Minister of Ag and forestry – Better public communication on the development of regulations on the Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act, review of setbacks required for clearcutting in the headwaters.

Minister of Municipal Affairs – Release of the floodway regulations.

**Inter Collaboration Framework Negotiation Teams:** Mountain View County has embarked on the re-negotiations of our current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements with the Towns and Village. I am a member of the negotiating Team for Mountain View County for both the Carstairs and Cremona processes. The Towns and Village provide services to our rural residents that Mountain View County cannot, specifically with respect to recreation, library and fire services. Our current agreements with the Towns, which define how much the County contributes to Library and recreation annually, came to an end on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2016. We have since extended these agreements one more year to allow us to negotiate new agreements that provide mutual benefit to all residents and build trust and respect between MVC and the Towns and Village that will ensure we have a stronger than ever community. We are looking forward to starting the process with Sundre now that they have a new Chief Administrative Officer in place. Due to workload of both MVC Council and Administration, as we are currently negotiating with Olds, Didsbury, Carstairs and Cremona, the discussions with Sundre may have to be delayed until the next Council takes office.

**Area Structure Plan Committees:** I am currently a member of both the Growth Node ASP (Carstairs area) as well as the Eagle Valley ASP review. The Growth Node ASP is a new ASP that is meant to provide focused commercial growth in the Mountain View County along the HWY 2 corridor with access to rail. If we are successful in our long term planning for focused Commercial development, we will be successful in preserving the Agriculture lands in the rest of the County. Previously I participated as committee member on both the Bearberry and Bergen ASPs as well.

**County Strategic Infrastructure Committee:** This committee was struck by Council in order to develop a comprehensive strategic infrastructure plan that would capture historical decisions regarding potential infrastructure projects as well as provide clarity on the vision, strategic goals and guiding principles that future Councils should consider when making decisions on which projects to include in

the budget. I was the Councillor appointed to this committee to work with administration to develop the draft plan for Council consideration and was pleased to be able to use my background in Oil and Gas and Strategic planning to add value. MVC now has a sound plan for the future planning of our strategic infrastructure.

**Mountain View Regional Waste Commission:** I am the alternate for this Board. However, with some of the rather large issues the Commission was experiencing in 2014, Mountain View County supported me to attend all meetings as well as the finance committee meetings. Through hard work, the Board was able to convert a Commission that was incurring an annual loss every year, to an efficient Solid Waste Commission that is on budget. I have been able to utilize my background in business planning and budgeting to support the Commission. I have facilitated all of the business plan development meetings as well as supporting the preparation of the business plan for the commission.

In addition to the waste commission, Mountain View County has entered into operational agreements with both the Town of Carstairs and Cremona to financially support the recycle depots that are managed by the Towns and Village in order to provide a service to our residents that we know is very important. With the absence of a CAO for the Town of Sundre, these negotiations were stalled with Sundre, but as of the April 26<sup>th</sup> Council meeting I have put forward a Council motion that directs Administration to get an agreement in place for the recycle depot with the Town of Sundre, as well as reviewing the frequency of collection of the recycle material to ensure that the bins are not overflowing. Mountain View County in partnership with the Towns and Village will also be developing a communication strategy to update residents on the recycle depots.

**Waste Water Commission:** I currently sit on the Board of the South Red Deer Waste Water Commission. This is a commission made up of membership from Mountain View County, Penhold, Red Deer County, Olds and Innisfail. The waste water line is currently the longest raw sewage line in operation. This is a 150 Million \$ investment, that became operational in 2015.

**Policy Review Committee:** I proposed to Council that a committee be adopted to review all of the current County policies to ensure that Mountain View County maintains a strong Governance structure. Council approved formation of this committee in 2017 and I am pleased to have been an appointed member of the committee. I believe that good Governance results from strong bylaws and policies and this committee now has the mandate to review all County Policies and make recommendations back to Council for policy improvements.

**Central Alberta Campus:** I have been a Board member of CAC for 3 years. CAC is a joint venture between Olds College and Red Deer College that provides post-secondary educational learning opportunities to communities across central Alberta via Community learning sites. I am very excited to be part of this Board, as I am currently the only Municipal Representative on the Board. It gives me the opportunity to connect the Executive director of CAC with our Municipality and Organizations so they can benefit from more on-sight learning opportunities to train rural residents. MVC has benefited from running courses in Health Care Aide and a Welding Course that was run at the Sundre High School.

**Greenwood Neighborhood Place:** I joined the Board of GNP at the 2016 AGM. I am very pleased to be part of this Board that is filled with just awesome Community volunteers that have a passion to help people. Sitting on this Board for the last 10 months has allowed me to better understand the important services provided by Family Community Support Services and GNP. Through this better understanding, and with the support of Council, MVC has transferred additional dollars to support the FCSS services in not only Sundre, but also in Olds, Cremona, Didsbury and Carstairs.

**Municipal Area Partnership:** I am part of the Committee that make up MAP. MAP is a committee formed with representation from MVC, Olds, Cremona, Carstairs, Didsbury and Sundre. The purpose of this group is to meet every 2 months to share ideas, learn what is going on in each community and to deal with any regional issues that may arise that effect two or more of the member municipalities. MAP has been an ongoing committee for many years, but has not always been successful. I truly believe in communication and collaboration, and so I worked very hard in 2016 to revamp the Terms of Reference for this committee to give it the greatest chance of success. To date we are collectively working on a video project which would showcase not only the region of Mountain View County, but would also showcase community profiles for each of the Towns, Village and County. This will be a jointly funded project with 50% of the funding coming from the 6 municipalities and 50% coming from a Provincial grant (if we are successful in our grant application).

**Community Service Grant Committee:** I am very pleased to participate in this committee. I get to be part of the Committee that reviews all the community grant applications and the amazing things that our organizations bring to the community. The Committee is tasked with reviewing all the applications and recommending to Council the level of funding each application could receive. The ultimate decision is made by Council.

**SPOG Community Affairs:** I am appointed to this committee by Council. It gives me the opportunity to connect with Industry and Community members to provide monthly highlights of what the County is doing. It is very valuable as well, to hear what the Communities doing as well as the Oil and Gas Industry in our area.

**Subdivision and Appeal Board:** For 3 years I was a member of the Municipal Planning Commission. At the October 2016 organizational meeting, I was appointed to the SDAB.

## **In Conclusion**

Over and above the Committees and Boards that I participate in, I attend conferences and workshops that will directly benefit the residents of Mountain View County. I write a report after each conference and workshop that can be shared with the rest of Council and administration so that the tax payers in the County get the biggest benefit from these opportunities. If there is any interest in receiving these reports please let me know.

Council, in my opinion, has made some good solid decisions over the last 3 years, including construction and completion of the new Agriculture building at the same location as the County office and the collaboration with Didsbury to build a jointly owned fire hall in Didsbury. We have executed some large road construction projects, namely the Acme road and Range Road 2.0 which have seen some significant cost savings in these economic times. We continue to look for alternative solutions in order to maximize tax dollars while providing a high level of service, as demonstrated by the new single lane bridge design approved in 2017 for Range Road 52 in water valley, replacing the temporary bridge currently in place and the new design for Range Road 55 and 60 west of Sundre to support a more sustainable infrastructure system against the impacts of flooding. We have made improvements to the service levels on grading the roads, with the addition of another grader beat. I believe our crews have been doing a great job on clearing snow, however there still remains an issue during heavy snowfalls during the weekend periods when crews are not at full capacity. We will continue to work towards a solution for this, whilst all the time being fiscally responsible. We have made some challenging approvals of direct control districts, specifically with respect to the Aurora Cannabis facility close to Cremona and the Rocky Mountain Motorsport park by Carstairs. Council did not make these decisions lightly and tried to find mitigating solutions to concerns raised at the public hearings. These are not easy decisions; however I believe that Council was respectful in the conditions of approval to both the applicant and the public. I want to stress that just because one Party does not get exactly what they want, that does not mean that Council has not considered the issues brought forward, as we try to address or mitigate those issues raised through the approval process.

I hope this has helped to shed some light on the work being done on your behalf. Please feel free to contact me by e-mail or phone if you would like to discuss anything that I have covered in the above letter, or if there are issues that you would like to address. I am always open to meet at anyone's convenience as well at a location of your choice. Thank you for your time and patience to read this.

Best regards,

Angela Aalbers

[aaalbers@mvcountry.com](mailto:aaalbers@mvcountry.com)

403 507-1057