Brazeau County

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Brazeau County Response to Brazeau County Ratepayers Coalition Pamphlet

May 17, 2011

During the week of May 9th, 2011, a pamphlet "Sponsored by the Brazeau County Ratepayers Coalition" was distributed throughout Brazeau County. Brazeau County Council met on May 13th, 2011 to review the contents of the pamphlet and provide the following responses to all ratepayers of Brazeau County.

Annexation Revisited

The Town of Drayton Valley's original annexation application was for approximately 69 quarter sections of land. In September 2010, County Council made an annexation settlement offer of 13 quarter sections and the Town responded with a counter offer of 49 quarter sections. The October 2010 municipal election brought change and political will to resolve the dispute with the final result being approximately 28 quarter sections of land. This settlement provides a sufficient area of land for a 50 year horizon and the Town has agreed to not seek any further annexation from the County until the Town population reaches 19,362 or January 1, 2061, whichever occurs first.

Following more than a decade of disagreement between Brazeau County and the Town of Drayton Valley, the two municipalities have entered into an annexation settlement agreement. The agreement provides for sufficient land for the Town to grow far into the future; and a commitment by both parties to work together in a sustainable manner. The Town and County also entered into a memorandum of understanding which has led to the development of an Inter-Municipal Cooperation Agreement. Exploration of opportunities to work together continues, particularly in the areas of economic development, water and wastewater, recreation facilities and programming, and land use planning. In addition, the development of a growth management plan to guide future development is in progress.

Is this Amalgamation through the back door?

As has been stated a number of times over the last six months, there is no interest or movement on County Council's part to consider amalgamation. Working with the Town of Drayton Valley is beneficial to the region as a whole. Brazeau County and Drayton Valley are two independent municipalities but we are part of one region. The best way to help our region grow and prosper is to work collectively for the betterment of all.

Alberta Municipal Affairs has stated that "regional co-operation is of paramount importance to the ministry" and "municipalities must work together to position themselves for the future, and to ensure sustainability and self-sufficiency . . . municipalities and the communities within them need to communicate, collaborate, and co-operate."

> ~ Taken from the Municipal Sustainability Strategy, Terms of Reference, November 26, 2009.

County Council have chosen to participate in the aquatic facility feasibility study with the Town of Drayton Valley because our residents also use the existing facility.

Decisions

1. **New building and the sale of the old site** – Public consultation was undertaken prior to proceeding with the new administration/public works facility in 2009. Environmental assessment is currently in progress on the existing site in preparation for site remediation and sale of the existing property.

2. **Annexation** – same response as provided under "Annexation Revisited".

3. **Eleanor Pickup Centre** – Council has made a decision to advance funds of $40,000 to the Eleanor Pickup Arts Centre project. This funding is in the 2011 budget and has been carried forward from prior year budgets. Council are satisfied that the project costs incurred by the committee to date warrant the decision that has been made. There is no requirement to rescind any prior resolutions.

4. **Loss on Equipment Tender** – The highest bidder on the sale of one piece of equipment (Unit M-75 – 2004 Caterpillar Motor Grader) was not accepted due to the bid being non compliant with the tender requirements. Motion 361/10 was passed unanimously by Council on June 8, 2010 to award the bid to the next highest bidder, which was $50,000 less than the non compliant bid. The results of the tender process are open to the public.

5. **Motocross Development** – County Council passed resolutions and communicated with the EPBR Parks Council in 2009 to strongly suggest that the proposed location of the motocross facility should not be located within the Recreation Area and that alternate sites in less populated areas should be considered for the facility. In August 2010, County Council confirmed its expectation with Premier Stelmach, SRD Minister Mel Knight, Tourism Parks and Recreation Minister Cindy Ady, MLA Diana McQueen and EPBR Parks Council that the proposed motocross facility be located elsewhere.

Council decisions are based on the best available information and decisions are made from time to time that not everyone will agree with.

Standards of Conduct

The Reeve and CAO participated in an economic development tour in January 2011 with the Mayor and CAO of the Town of Drayton Valley. The tour was hosted by the Town of Drayton Valley as part of its Bio Mile/Bio ARC initiative. County Council authorized the attendance of the Reeve and CAO by resolution on January 11, 2011 and follow up report was provided to County Council at its January 25, 2011 Council meeting. Reeve Tweedle is a County appointed representative on the Bio-ARC committee and Councillor Bob Kitching is a County appointed representative on the Bio Mile Citizen Engagement Committee.

Other matters in this section of the pamphlet related to antagonism, bullying and adherence to code of conduct are subjective in nature and a matter of perception.

Councillor Expense Claims

Council is reviewing the matters related to Councillor expense claims. As members of Council, we are governed by the County's policies and any errors found during this review will be corrected. The process of reporting and approving expense claims will be reviewed. Council expense claims are public information and are available for viewing on the County website www.brazeau.ab.ca. Questions from individuals seeking explanation of expense claims are welcomed by members of Council.