

1) Introduction and Review of Process

Good evening, and thank you for attending this public meeting to review the Lamont County administration draft of a new Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw for the county. I hope that the presentations you are about to see answers a number of questions that you may have or those that come to you. In order to facilitate the amount of information that we have to present tonight I would ask that you please hold your questions until the end of the evening and please note that I do not have another meeting to attend tonight so I will be around for a bit after the session if you want to ask me something.

We promised a follow up session from our previous meeting in November of 2006. I had wanted the session to be before the snow was gone, and in the words of Don Adams from Get Smart “would you believe that we missed it by that much”.

A couple of points on how we got to this point and what we plan to do here tonight would probably be in order.

On how we got to this point;

- Existing MDP/LUB documents should be reviewed every 5 years and since the last review occurred in 2002 it was about time.
- A large number of residents have called the office wishing to have the documents “opened up” to permit greater development.
- There are a number of issues/concerns/proposals in relation to the Heartland region and our participation in it.
- Council directed that a review of the MDP/LUB occur. Council provided no motions in regards to direction but indicated that they wanted a public input process and they did not want it to take a long time to complete.
- We held a meeting in November next door, to request input for a revised set of documents.
- From the presentations received at the meeting and the letters received afterwards changes to the documents were initiated. One of the issues that became clear off the start was that this would be no incremental review but a major re-write. (enough so that the changes would fill their own document)
- As a group (administration and the consultant) we have had about a half-dozen drafts and spent a considerable amount of time trying to balance the “common sense” information that we have received with the “common sense “of industry standards and practices.

On what are we doing here tonight;

Again thank you for coming out, our intention tonight is as follows:

- Present an outline of the planning framework that got us to this point.
- Outline the impacts of development – some of the industry issues. (not industry as in development but industry as in municipal government)
- Highlight the major changes to the MDP/LUB
- Detail the changes
- Wrap up and a Where To From Here.
- Questions for clarification.

2) Recap of Trends power point

The Planning Department not only received information from our community but also met with a number of the other county departments like public works and agriculture and with council to talk about the future and the documents.

At each of these meetings we made a presentation which outlined market trends in Canada and in the region. I would like to start off tonight with a short recap of this presentation. Those who attended the November meeting will have already seen this but there are many here that have not. It will help you understand the trends that are affecting all of us.....

SLIDE PRESENTATION

3) Outline of Impacts

Over the past 4 months, we have re-drafted the two documents. During this re-draft, we took into account:

- the comments
- we considered the report just presented to you on local trends
- we also had to take into consideration some of the new directions and deliverables set out by the Province of Alberta.

Municipal sustainability plans are one of the major requirements of many of the new programs and grant opportunities administered by the Province. This plan must outline how the municipality will sustain itself well into the future. This too was given serious thought when developing the new documents. Administration had to sit back, step out of the box, and look at the County from a 500 foot level. What opportunities are available to Lamont County that will ensure it is a functioning, sustainable corporation, today and well into the future? Each of our departments are having to take a serious look at how we do business, what new processes need to be in place to ensure Lamont County is a sustainable municipality:

- What can our public works do to ensure our infrastructure is maintained for future generations? Did you know we have approximately 2000 km of roads to maintain. If you drove straight east, 2000 km would take you all the way to Toronto.
- What can our agriculture department do to remain a service provider to our farmers?
- What finances are required to maintain these initiatives and how much do we need to sustain our community?
- And finally what can our planning department incorporate into the land use documents to help?

Planning how land use and development will be maintained and allowed to grow or change and at what level, are difficult decisions that have to be made because they impact people directly. We understand that. The outcomes are sometimes not favorable to all because some decisions may heavily impact a few but are needed for the benefit of the majority. Certainly not any one person is less important than the next. Council must make decisions taking the entire county into consideration. They must also now demonstrate that they are looking to future sustainability.

All these thoughts, issues and situations have been discussed at great lengths. Land use planning is likely the most influential mechanism that can be used to address the future and sustainability of our county. Keeping this in mind and listening to the citizens of our community, administration has recommended numerous amendments to the land use documents, amendments which we hope will address what we heard and will assist in maintaining our community well into the future.

I will now let our Director of Planning and Community Services, Mrs. Debbie Hamilton, outline the major changes. She will be followed by our consultant Mr. Bill Dolman of Municipal Planning Services who will describe the details of each of these major changes.

4) Highlight of major changes

Debbie

5) Details of each major change

Bill

6) Reiterate why

Thank you Debbie and Bill. I certainly hope their presentations helped you understand what is in our proposed documents.

In order to proceed there are a couple of points needed so that we have a similar understanding.

- To many of you, *local municipal government* may appear to have lots of money or the money that it has is just misspent or miss directed and if a greater business or common sense, or stewardship was provided things would be better. I have been in the industry for over 25 years now and the only thing that I find consistent with this comment is that it is not those elected who are saying it. I have heard the comment from many people and when we sit down and go through the numbers and the issues that produce them, a high majority do not like the results, but agree that we appear to be doing the best with what we are provided.

- As previously said, the issue of municipal sustainability is one that generates considerable discussion. What is needed to ensure that a community is sustainable in the longer run? There is an understanding that property taxes by residents pay their own way or contribute significantly to the operation of a municipal government and therefore more residents mean more money which is good. This understanding may be present in the general population or in the development/ real estate industry but the numbers do not support this understanding. In order to be sustainable a community should have not more than 50% residential and not less than 50% non residential assessment. It is not the money from residential taxes that makes up the majority of a sustainable community. In our case we have an interesting mix. Our residential assessment is 42% and our non residential is 58%. (remember that farm is residential) Our taxation is generated at a level of 75% non residential and 25% for residential. Therefore the residential sector (includes farms) (42%) of the county pays 25% of the taxes while the nonresidential (58%) pays 75% of the taxes. The second part of this equation is that there is a problem with the thought that marginal increases to the use of land have no real cost implications. Although an extra parcel or two on a quarter may be seen as a way to receive additional monies from property taxes it is important to recognize the implications.

Examples of issues include the following:

- An increase in residences normally requires an increase in road maintenance. Dust control is done as a subsidy. A normal application costs the county over \$1200 for oil and gravel with no charge for equipment. The county currently charges it's residents \$775 for an original application and \$380 for a re-do. The reason that the dust control is not more permanent is that the road base is not solid enough. An upgrade to a gravel road is currently just over \$100,000 per km if the county does it and over \$300,000 per km if a contractor does it. The next work or upgrade is to prepare the surface to permit paving. This cost is currently at \$250,000 per km. The final cost is to look at paving and that cost is currently a approximately \$470,000 per km. Options to provide a less complete final product are available, but the base work still must be done.
- An increase in residences normally generates an increase in municipal services besides roads. Fire, police, ambulance, bylaw enforcement, animal control, garbage, community services and recreation all cost additional monies. For many communities the next level of development is the addition of water and sewer services. The costs here can be very high.

- Urbanization in a Rural Setting: Remember that small streams make large rivers when they join so be careful what you wish for because you might just get it.

- The size of the Heartland area is a topic that will generate a considerable amount of discussion. The possible development in the area or the county in general will also generate a considerable amount of discussion. Recognizing that there is no acceptable common view in the community on the issue the following were used in discussing the area.
 - Many of the possible developments are currently acceptable as a discretionary use in the agricultural designated areas. From an issue of approval there is no issue from the counties perspective. From the industry position it is the same as a blue ford or a red chevy. A zoned area they understand, a discretionary development area they are not comfortable with. This is due to legal case precedent, and an understanding of accepted planning practices.
 - The Council did not direct a position for the area, but have not felt the need to reduce the involvement in the Alberta Industrial Heartland Association as a participating municipality in the organization, ...so by default the administration's understanding is that we continue to be a player in the request to have heartland type development express an interest in the county.
 - The proposed developments have expressed a large interest in establishing in the area of transportation corridors. Roads and more predominantly, rail, appear to be a large draw. With Lamont County having one of five crossing points for the two railways in the province it makes sense that an attraction to the site is logical.
 - From a municipal sustainability position Lamont County is considered a *have not* municipality and therefore receives monies from the targeted investment program of the province. As an administrator, with the location of the county, its budget and needs, and the requested increase in residential development there is a need to balance this "costing development" with some "paying development".

- The need to accommodate urban development in the region will be an issue that generates discussion. The allowance for development in urban centers was incorporated by removing the specific urban fringe zoned area and providing for a 1 mile region around their corporate boundaries to which consultations will occur in relation to discretionary development. What this means is as our towns and village grow so too does the 1 mile region. The old documents did not allow for this. In the last two years, both the Town of Mundare and the Town of Lamont have annexed land from Lamont County. In order to change our urban fringe zone, an amendment to the land use bylaw would be required. The need to undertake an amendment will now be eliminated. This will help with future urban boundary changes. In fact there has been discussion between both the Town of Lamont and the Town of Bruderheim for further annexation.

I want to remind you that these documents have not been approved through council yet. As previously mentioned, many of the recommended changes come from your suggestions, discussions with other municipalities regarding what works well and the need to keep our county a sustainable community. We also wanted to ensure the documents provided opportunities for growth, growth that will help work towards keeping our agricultural and residential taxes to a minimum.

7) Next Steps

You have heard from us. We now want to hear from you. We have made copies of the proposed documents, please take a copy with you when you leave. Over the next few weeks review the documents and if you have any further suggestions, please provide your comments in writing. Your name and personal information will be kept confidential. *Positive comments are also greatly encouraged.* We will accept written comments until May 9th. After that time, administration will compile all comments and review them with council in preparation for a final draft document for council consideration and first reading.

After first reading, we are required by legislation of hold a public hearing. The date will be advertised for two weeks in the local paper. The public hearing must be held before 2nd and 3rd reading of the bylaws.

8) Questions

Thank you for your attention. Now does anyone have questions on the process or require further clarity on the proposed changes.