

# Smith Creek Area Structure Plan Community Advisory Group Meeting August 30, 2016 Sage Bistro

## In Attendance

Pat Kamenka—Canmore Resident

Sean Krausert—Town of Canmore Councillor

Paul Lessard—TSMV Resident

Andrew Nickerson—Canmore Resident (former Canmore Business and Tourism representative)

## Regrets

Kyla Connor—Canmore Resident

Ken Davies—Recreation Representative

Chris Ollenberger—Owner's Representative

## Support

Lori Van Rooijen—Facilitator

Tracy Woitenko—Town of Canmore

Jessica Karpat—QPD

Kent MacDougall—QPD

Jenn Giesbrecht—QPD

## Agenda Item #1: Notes from June 16, 2016

- Facilitator asked the CAG if they have any additional comments on the notes from the last meeting on June 16, 2016.
- The CAG approved the June 16, 2016 notes.

## Agenda Item #2: Summary of Community Conversations

- A document summarizing the key topics of discussion at the community conversations between June and August 2016 was distributed to CAG members.
- **The Facilitator** noted that between June and August 2016, the Project Team hosted a series of small group community conversations with representatives from various stakeholder groups in the Bow Valley including those representing wildlife, recreation, residents and community groups. Golder Associates attended the meetings related to environment and undermining to provide technical information related to the proposals.
  - Through the meetings, the Project Team obtained a lot of good feedback on a number of concepts presented in the proposed ASP. Overall, wildlife corridor connectivity and human/wildlife interaction remain “top of mind” issues for the community and it will be important to continue the conversation in ongoing engagement initiatives both prior to and after submission of the Smith Creek ASP and the Resort Centre ASP amendments.

## Wildlife Community Conversation—July 14, 2016

- **The CAG representative** that attended the wildlife community conversation felt that the discussion was very transparent. In particular, they felt that wildlife fencing was very well discussed and that there was a strong consensus at the meeting that attractant management is necessary for the fence to be effective.
  - The Town noted that they will be introducing a new program to remove crab apple trees on private land and replace them with an alternative species of tree that is not an attractant for wildlife at no cost to the homeowner.
  - Town is still working on the details of implementation.
- The CAG Representative also discussed several unknowns related to wildlife discussions especially related to the Provincial decision on the wildlife corridors. They expressed concern related to development and how it will work with the BCEAG guidelines. They also discussed how the revised Municipal Development Plan (MDP) includes a caveat that stipulates that the BCEAG will be considered in planning decisions, however, QPD noted that not only does BCEAG not apply to TSMV, but TSMV is also recognized as exempted from BCEAG within the draft MDP.
  - It was noted that the Town is looking at approaching the BCEAG to update the guidelines. The BCEAG was previously updated but the update was related to mapping and not related to wildlife science. The timeline of this update has not been determined.
  - The BCEAG update is not a public process.

### **CAG Question: Have you had any follow up from the community after the environment meeting?**

- Yes, we received clarifications on the notes from Y2Y. Changes were made to the final version.
- Also, following our meeting with representatives from environmental groups in the Bow Valley the Project Team has received two letters. One letter was from Dr. Ford (University of British Columbia) and Dr. Clevenger (Montana State University), wildlife movement experts doing research in the Bow Valley. The second letter was sent to two members of the Town Council (Councillor Sean Krausert and Mayor John Borrowman) from Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y). The letter was then forwarded to Administration and the Project Team.
- Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger primarily provided comments related to the wildlife corridor. The Project Team met with them to provide them with more information on the project and to get additional feedback.
  - Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger indicated that they wrote the letter because they wanted to receive more information about the project as they were being asked questions by various groups and individuals for information and data related to the proposed wildlife corridor and wildlife mitigation strategies.
  - Notes were taken at the meeting and Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger were very open to having the notes publicly accessible to maintain transparency.
- Two representatives from Y2Y attended the wildlife community conversation (in addition to several other stakeholders) on July 14, 2016. At the meeting, one of the Y2Y attendees indicated that the group had been working on research related to wildlife fencing and that they would be happy to share the findings with the Project Team.

- Following the meeting Y2Y indicated that they would not be sharing their research with the Project Team and subsequently wrote a letter (considered a discussion paper) to Council and the Province. The letter indicated that Y2Y did not support the proposal as they were uncomfortable with the proposed mitigation strategy (fencing in particular) and would like to discuss alternative models, but unfortunately were not willing to share any data or science behind their opinion.
  - The opinion presented in the letter by Y2Y was based on personal communications with wildlife managers, but the communications were not shared.
  - Golder Associates, the Project Biologist has prepared a technical memo to address the inconsistencies in research. The letter is complete and will go back to Council and to Y2Y. The Project Team has invited Y2Y to meet.
  - The Project Team will send the technical memo prepared by Golder to the CAG.
- **One CAG Member** noted that they met with Y2Y following the distribution of the letter to Council. Y2Y indicated that they were upset that Council circulated the letter because it was perceived as being confidential [note: any information sent to Council is public information]. Y2Y raised two key points in their discussion with the CAG representative:
  1. A 450-meter corridor is already a compromised corridor.
  2. Y2Y wants to have more conversations about fencing to explore other alternatives to a fence.
- The Project Team is prepared to discuss these issues with Y2Y should Y2Y agree to meet.
- **Another CAG Member** noted that the wildlife discussion is probably important to Council's decision.

#### Meeting with Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger— August 23, 2016

- QPD felt that there was good discussion at the meeting. The Project Team summarized the Smith Creek ASP and Resort Centre ASP amendments proposals and then discussed the proposed wildlife corridor and the wildlife mitigations recommended in the EIS.
- Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger asked questions related to the wildlife corridor, specifically related to the proposed corridor re-alignment and the design of the underpass—many of the questions are too specific for the ASP planning phase. However, the Project Team noted that this feedback will be good to consider at future stages of development for detailed design.
- The Project Team, Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger discussed the basic corridor alignment. Attendees noted that they are not concerned about east west movement in the Along Valley Corridor, but they are concerned about movement through the Across Valley Corridor being impacted by the Three Sisters Parkway bisecting the corridor. However, they expressed hope that the mitigations proposed in the EIS could improve the function of the various Across Valley Corridor connections (recognizing not all of them are with TSMV's influence). Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger also advocated for the use of adaptive management techniques while implementing the fence.

**CAG Comment:** It is good that the Project Team met with Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger because Council values having a variety of opinions when considering proposals.

- The Project Team reiterated that Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger wanted their opinion to be known. Based on the discussion, it was clear that they were generally supportive of fencing solutions

provided it was part of a broader mitigation strategy including housing setbacks and attractant management.

**CAG Comment:** It is difficult to know whose opinion is the right one. They felt it is important not to automatically discount an opinion from a smaller voice or a minority, but recognize that credibility of opinions or science is important for Council.

**CAG Question:** Did Y2Y attend the meeting with Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger? Will there ever be a consensus?

- **QPD** responded that Y2Y did not attend the meeting with Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger. Overall, Y2Y and Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger have different concerns and are focused on different issues associated with the proposals. Specifically, Y2Y is concerned about the Along Valley corridor width and fencing while Dr. Ford and Dr. Clevenger are primarily concerned about the function of the Across Valley Corridors. QPD will continue to work through the issues, but QPD noted they are well aware that consensus is very unlikely as some groups focus more on advocacy or other goals internal to them versus open discussions on solutions and this has been the case in the valley for decades. QPD is focused on defensible, credible science based solution to managing human use in the corridor which is the number one issue for functionality in the Bow Valley.

#### **Summary of Environment Meetings:**

- **QPD** is grateful for the small group meetings where small stakeholders are coming to the table to offer solutions.
- As per the NRCB decision in 1992, development in TSMV is allowed to go forward. It is necessary to balance wildlife considerations with economic feasibility.
- Overall, the experience with the community conversations has been positive. The Project Team was able to respond to issues and hear concerns as well as see some nodding heads. **QPD** suggested that Canmore and TSMV have not been here before.

**CAG Question:** Do you think that you've made progress on resolving issues and concerns related to wildlife?

- **The Facilitator** extended the question back to the group.
- **One CAG member** indicated that the topic of wildlife in Canmore is very emotionally driven, making it very difficult to change people's opinions. While this process has maintained a high level of engagement and transparency as well as a clear rationale for the proposals, if the goal was to change the community's feelings towards the proposals, the engagement process has not been completely successful. Changing the opinion of the community is a long-term endeavor that cannot be accomplished solely through this engagement process. A paradigm shift is required because currently the community needs to shift its focus from the issue of protecting land from development and further, towards ongoing management of wildlife (such as human use in corridors and attractant management) which requires individual commitment and action. The member also noted that it is this process has been successful in broadening people's perspectives and helping to end the "silencing" or "bullying" in the community.

- **Another CAG** member noted that if the objective of this process was to realize change, the objective was not realistic. The challenge in Canmore is that not everyone is open to learning new things and that the community tends to align philosophically on matters related to the environment and wildlife. Differing opinions are not viewed upon favorably. However, the member also acknowledged that the process generated a lot of community dialogue about the issues and dialogue is not a bad thing—the process was successful in creating more awareness surrounding wildlife.
- **A CAG member** stated that it is too early in the process to tell if the engagement process has made progress on the wildlife issue. They noted that it is likely that there will continue to be a diversity of opinions and really hopes to hear from people who maintain a “middle” perspective on the matter as well as from those with polarizing opinions. They also noted that at the end of the day, the final decision will not please everyone.
- **The Town** expressed the opinion that despite the long engagement process, there is still a long road ahead of us. They noted that people are trying to protect land, but it is important to ensure that the land we protect is being used for the purpose that we have protected it for.
- **QPD** feels that the goal of the CAG and the engagement was to have a transparent and open process and to provide people with the opportunity to learn and to understand. QPD feels that this was accomplished. Although, we were not necessarily able to change some people’s positions or opinions, there are a lot more people who have a clearer understanding of the issues. It is our hope that those who are informed by usual advocacy voices in Canmore may have learned something first-hand through this process. When the decision is made, we do hope that people will feel that their issues were considered through this process, but QPD recognized that a decision that involves any development will leave a few disappointed.
- **The Town** noted that from the Town’s perspective the collaborative process was not easy because critics have commented that the Town is in the pocket of the developer, which is not the case.

#### Recreation Community Conversation—August 15, 2016

- **The Facilitator** felt that there was good discussion at the meeting and that attendees asked good questions. They noted that the meeting involved a brief project overview to get everyone up to speed and, in addition to a discussion related to recreational amenities, there was a wildlife discussion related to the human/wildlife interaction and wildlife corridor functionality. Attendees held similar opinions to those that had been heard in previous community conversations.
- **The CAG representative** in attendance of the meeting held the opinion that the meeting got sidetracked from a conversation about recreation in favor of a more detailed discussion about wildlife. While this was not the objective of the meeting, these two issues (recreation and wildlife) are intertwined. The member felt that the focus on wildlife resulted in less time to discuss recreation.
- **QPD** did indicate that at this level, they have all the information required to resolve the most pressing issues of recreation planning and that they will be working with recreation stakeholders as the plan is further developed.

- **The same CAG member** was happy with the diversity of stakeholders at the meeting (Representatives from Canmore Cycling Culture, Friends of Kananaskis as well as from At Your Bark and Call). The CAG member also felt it was worth noting that group dynamic of the meeting made it difficult for everyone to voice their opinion. It was suggested that if the Project Team would like more information from recreational stakeholder groups, they should consider how to best bring out the quiet voices. Surveys or individual follow-up emails may be a better mechanism to get feedback. The Project Team indicated that they will explore the possibility of a survey should they want to follow-up.
- **QPD** noted that attendees at the recreational community conversation brought up interesting points and new ideas. For instance, from the meeting it was clear that there is an appetite in Canmore for a new event venue. Many suggestions provide an opportunity for consideration at future planning stages. For example, at the meeting attendees indicated that people with “reactive” dogs prefer to run their dogs in the wildlife corridor because it reduces the risk that their dog will be involved in a confrontation with other dogs in designated off leash areas. While this is more of an operational consideration, it is something that could be accommodated at future levels of planning.
- In addition, **QPD** noted that there has been a lot of follow-up from the meeting. QPD will be meeting with Alberta TrailNet Society to discuss the extension of the Trans Canada trail.

Hubman Landing Residents Community Conversations—June 20, 2016; July 19, 2016; August 11, 2016 and August 18, 2016.

*\*Note: The August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016 meeting addressed undermining and primarily related to the Resort Centre Project.*

- **The Facilitator** summarized the series of meetings that the Project Team has had with Hubman Landing Residents.
  - Between June and August, there were four meetings with Hubman Landing residents. The first meeting was a general meeting about the projects, the meetings after that were related to wildlife and undermining. For the follow-up meetings, the Project Team brought in experts to discuss the technical components of the proposals.
- **The Facilitator** noted that the follow-up meetings with Hubman residents were very successful because information was shared in a transparent manner; the groups were able to talk through difficult issues and express concerns. Experts attended the meetings to provide objective technical information related to wildlife and undermining and this helped to dispel myths.
- Overall, Hubman residents highlighted the fact that in contrast to Smith Creek, the Resort Centre proposal impacts real people in the community, primarily mainly their street. They feel like they have something to lose more than others. **QPD** felt it was important to have these types of conversations prior to the municipal process to enable them to address concerns and when this is not possible, to explain why they were not able to address everyone’s concerns. This is the same approach taken with engagement on Smith Creek.
- **QPD** noted they have one more meeting with Hubman Landing residents to highlight where we landed with the proposal and to close the loop.

### Resort Centre Update: Undermining Meeting with Gerry Stephenson—August 18, 2016

- On August 18, Gerry Stephenson met with Chris Ollenberger and Phil Wareham from QPD and a number of experts from Golder Associates to discuss undermining. The **CAG representative** in attendance expressed the opinion that the meeting was successful. The CAG representative shared some broad thoughts from Gerry about the meeting.
- **The CAG representative** noted that it could be beneficial to continue the conversation. Gerry is a known member of the community and felt Gerry has been sharing undermining information with the community from his own perspective.
- **QPD also** thought that the meeting with Gerry generally went well, appeared to be very informative to Gerry, and indicated they would be open to meet again.

### Community Conversation Summary

- **The Project Team** thanked the CAG members for their time and commitment for the process. The community conversations were extremely valuable as there was much debate and passion brought to all of the conversations.

### Agenda Item #3: Proposed Engagement

- Over the next few weeks the Project Team will continue to build on the success of the community conversations with events to engage the broader public as well as with groups that we were not able to meeting with individually.
- On September 14, 2016 the Project Team will be hosting an Online Community Conversation (or webcasting event). The event will specifically pertain to wildlife and will mimic the format of the previous meetings. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions via instant messaging and any questions that are not addressed during the meeting will be answered in an FAQ that will be distributed following the meeting.
- While overall the CAG expressed enthusiasm about this initiative, **One CAG member** cautioned the Project Team that people can plant questions and use the event as an opportunity to further their own agendas. The Project Team noted that only the moderator will be able to see the questions, but the intent is to answer them all as best as the team can and the moderator will work to ensure questions get answered.
- In addition to the Online Community Conversation, there is a tentative Community Conversation scheduled with Hubman Landing residents on September 22, 2016 and two public information sessions tentatively scheduled for September 24, 2016 (**Note: this has been rescheduled to the 18<sup>th</sup> of October**).

### **CAG Question: Are you open to meeting with the environment groups again?**

- The Project Team indicated that they have already extended an invitation to meet with Y2Y.

### **CAG Question: From a Council perspective, will this process impact the final decision?**

- **The CAG member** representing Town Council reiterated that it is Council's objective to make a decision that is in the best interest of the public. While Council is prepared to make a difficult decision, because environment is one of the most important issues to the Canmore community, Council is listening to everyone. It will be important to hear from other perspectives, and 3<sup>rd</sup> party opinions will be valued.

#### Agenda Item #4: Concluding Remarks and Next Steps

- **The Facilitator** noted that this would be the last CAG meeting. The Project Team thanked everyone for their time and commitment to the collaborative process. While there were many difficult conversations, the Project Team valued the feedback and input that the CAG provided throughout the entire process.
- **A CAG member** noted that they are impressed with the Project Team working through the collaborative process and that the Town, QPD and TSMV were willing to try something new.
- **The Project Team** acknowledged that the collaborative process involved a lot of difficult conversations, both with the CAG but also internally between the Town and QPD. Despite this, the Project Team indicated that the hope is that when the applications go to Council for consideration, there will be a line that can be agreed upon. **QPD** has high expectations for the applications given the extent of engagement.
- Drafts of the Smith Creek ASP and Resort Centre ASP Amendments will go up on the project websites upon submission ([www.smithcreekcanmore.ca](http://www.smithcreekcanmore.ca) and [www.smithcreekcanmore.ca/resort-centre](http://www.smithcreekcanmore.ca/resort-centre)).
- Notes from this meeting will be distributed to attendees in draft. After the notes are approved they will also be posted to the project websites.

The meeting ended on positive note around 9 pm.