

Smith Creek ASP

Community Advisory Group (CAG)

Meeting Notes

May 5, 2016

7:00-9:30 PM

In Attendance:

- Wanda Bogdane, Recreation
- Kyla Conner, Canmore Resident
- Pat Kamenka, Canmore Resident, Environmental
- Sean Krausert, Town Council – Councillor
- Paul Lessard, TSMV Resident, Canmore Business
- Kyle Knopff, Golder
- Chris Ollenberger, Owners Representative for TSMV

Regrets:

- Ken Davies, Recreation
- Andrew Nickerson, Canmore Business and Tourism

CAG Support

- Lori Van Rooijen, Facilitator
- Tracy Woitenko, Town of Canmore
- Jessica Karpat, QPD
- Mitch Braun, QPD
- Kent MacDougall, QPD
- Jenn Giesbrecht, QPD

Agenda

1. Review Notes from March 10 Meeting
2. Concept Plan
 - a. Fencing review and discussion
 - b. Affordable housing discussion
 - c. Update on Provincial approvals
3. Engagement Plan

Agenda Item #1: Review Notes

- **Facilitator** wanted to know if the CAG felt that the notes were reflective of the conversation.
- **Several CAG members** wanted an additional opportunity to review the notes before they are posted for the public. It was agreed that everyone could have the opportunity to send in comments/corrections to the notes until the following evening. The notes will then be circulated around the group once more before being posted.

Agenda Item #2: Review of Concept Map

- There have been a few shifts of the development pods and the road that lies between the pods.
- QPD presented new information pertaining to the draft concept plan for the Resort Centre ASP amendment. Currently there is land use for resort accommodation and resort core.
- Area E is the former golf course land. The land use concept envisions Area E as accommodating uses such as resort accommodation, employee housing, recreational uses, and senior housing. The land use that is proposed will be flexible in terms of what is viable for the market at the time of development.

Update on Fencing:

- In late April Tracy organized a wildlife fencing workshop that provided QPD, Golder and the Town with the opportunity to meet with stakeholders involved in wildlife mitigation in the Bow Valley (including representatives from Alberta Fish and Wildlife, Parks Canada, and Alberta Environment and Parks). The intention of the meeting was to establish what fencing should look like, what type of fence should be used and who would maintain it. We had the opportunity to hear about each stakeholder's experience with wildlife fencing. The workshop was a high level workshop that approached the issue of wildlife mitigation as a town-wide issue that is very applicable to the Smith Creek ASP as well. The Town is currently working through a wildlife attractant bylaw, contemplating the logistics of a fence and extending the human use management process, getting council involved and turning it into a program, gaining momentum.
- **Golder** highlighted what we learned from the fencing workshop. Overall, it was established that the fence will be an effective mitigation for dealing with human-wildlife conflict. While fencing has been an option in a number of EIS and ASP processes, typically Golder as advocated the use of a fence in combination with other hard edge mitigation approaches (i.e. development directly adjacent to the wildlife corridor).

Key Lessons:

1. From the meeting it was clear that this type of mitigation would work for 95% of the wildlife but it is 5% that are the causing the problem. Consequently, experts at the meeting felt that a full fence would be the most effective mitigation option. As a result, the Smith Creek ASP proposal now includes a full fence enclosing the Plan Area, connected with the existing fencing around the Trans-Canada Highway.
2. Jump outs are for people, not for animals. In reality, animals do not like jump outs and they really do not work as well as people think that they do. It was established at the meeting that swing gates would be a more effective option.
3. Key intrusion points with a fence:
 - Trees
 - Highway interchanges (there are additional mitigations that can be used to deal with this)

Discussion:

Public Resistance to Fencing:

- **One CAG member** noted that there will be a lot of resistance to the fact that Canmore will be a fenced community. Even with effective engagement, there are some members of the community who are fundamentally against fencing.
- **Another CAG member** asked if it would be possible to dissipate focus from fencing around Smith Creek towards what is actually a town-wide strategy. In addition, they noted that it will be important to have a strong, compelling message for engagement with very solid information. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that fencing is only one piece of the wildlife issue and therefore, the fencing needs to be part of a holistic approach to wildlife mitigation for the entire town.
- **QPD** clarified that when we talk about fencing, we are also talking about a full menu of mitigation options. QPD recognizes that fencing is controversial and it comes with a series of questions we are working on addressing.
- **Golder** brought up the experience with fencing in Jackson Hole Wyoming. Jackson Hole has maintained a successful wildlife mitigation program (including fencing) for over ten years.
 - **A CAG member** made the suggestion that it would be effective for public engagement for us to have people from Jackson Hole who are well known experts in their various fields come to Canmore and speak to the community about their experience with the fence.
 - This idea went over very well with the other CAG members. Because Jackson Hole deals with the same species that we deal with in Canmore, it may give the community some validation that this approach has been done elsewhere.
 - **Another CAG member** suggested that it would be possible to do a Q and A with an expert in Jackson Hole and share it with the public in an online setting.
 - **A CAG member** noted that groups like Y2Y may not necessarily have issues with the idea of the fence, they will have an issue with the fence's location. They noted that having representatives from Jackson Hole speak to the conversation would help change the conversation.
 - **Another CAG member** noted that there are a number of over reputable voices in Canmore (other than Y2Y) that could contribute to the discussion on fencing in a way that would serve to change the conversation about fencing.

Fence Implementation

- **QPD** wanted to highlight the fact that TSMV lands are not owned by one entity, rather it is owned by TSMV and Stewart Creek Golf and Country Club. QPD notes that we do not want to fence the Smith Creek area and the Resort Centre in solution. QPD has been having conversations with SCGC to ensure that the entire area can be enclosed by the fence. Convincing SCGC to fence their property and pay for it is not an easy feat.
- **Another CAG member** asked when the fence would go it and whether it would go in all at once.
 - The plan would be to phase the fence in

- **A CAG member** expressed concern that if the fence were to be phased in, there would be a risk that the fence would never be completed. This incomplete fence would not only be an ineffective wildlife mitigation, it would also be a waste of resources.
 - **QPD** clarified that as development was phased in, the fence would also be phased in, but the developed area would be enclosed completed by the fence. As development continues, the fence enclosure would be expanded, but the complete loop would be maintained.

Fence Enforcement and Upkeep

- **One CAG member** noted that using swing gates rather than jump outs will result in a “ranching process” (where humans will have to open the gates to get the animals out of the fenced area). They noted that this results in a cost that is born by someone and this needs to be considered as we go through the process.
- **The Town** noted that this was discussed in the wildlife fencing workshop and it has been determined that the cost of “ranching” is still less expensive than the cost is without a fence.
- **Another CAG member** brought up the issue of humans that will cut through the fence.
 - This will be addressed by providing designated trails for humans and frequent swing gates should humans wish to cross the corridor.
 - At the workshop the idea of “outriggers” were also discussed as ways to prevent wildlife (and potentially humans) from climbing over the fence. In addition, it may be possible to fine people who climb or break the fence.
- **The Town** also stated that it will be the responsibility for the Town to maintain the fence and consequently they will need to have access to it. They propose that behind the development there will be a designated public trail before the fence. This will allow the Town to access the fence to inspect and maintain the fence as well as provide people with direct access to a trail.
- **Another CAG member** noted that there needs to be an established commitment from different stakeholders regarding what their roles and responsibilities will be with regards to the fence.
 - Under the Wildlife Act, the Province is obligated to deal with wildlife management. This is a given and therefore the messaging to the residents of Canmore need to reflect this. The Province supports the fence because it saves them money (in other areas of wildlife management). This needs to be conveyed to the public.
 - However, the fence would be a Town undertaking. It will be up to the Town to decide what tax mechanism they will use to fund the fence and how it will be collected.
 - There will also have to be monitoring (not necessarily more bylaw) to ensure that the public knows that the regulations around the fence will be enforced.
- **A CAG member** asked what the fence compliance is like in Jackson Hole. How do they deal with humans trying to cut the fence?
 - Golder currently has a team member in Jackson Hole meeting with those that implemented and maintain the fence. The compliance is excellent but this is because they have had the fence for ten years so everyone is used to it. In Jackson Hole, when people move into a new community, they will be moving into an area with a new fence.
 - Given that Canmore has an existing community that is not surrounded by a fence, this could be an adjustment.

- **A CAG Member** asked what the experience was like in Jackson Hole when they were undergoing the process to implement their fence.
 - This is something that is currently unknown but is worth following up on.

Fence Effectiveness

- **One CAG member** asked if the fence was more effective for ungulates than for carnivores.
 - It has been found that highway mortalities of carnivores are worse around the highway interchanges. While they are still able to get over the fence, this does not happen frequently.
 - The effectiveness of the fence is entirely dependent on other attractant management practices. If there is prey and other food inside the fence, the wildlife will be motivated to find a way to get through the fence.
- Local experience and new wildlife science has shown that the soft edge approach to wildlife mitigation is not effective.

Impact on Recreation

- **A CAG member** asked what the impact the fence would have on recreation. What has the experience been in Jackson Hole.
 - The concept is to get people out of the corridor by giving them access to designated trails.
 - Arguably, the only impact that the fence would have to recreation would be to the recreation that takes place in areas that it probably shouldn't be (i.e. the wildlife corridor)
 - We could spend thousands of dollars building this fence, and yet if people are still going over the fence and using the wildlife corridor, it will not be effective.
 - The fence may result in a change in behavior from those who are in the recreation field.
 - **The same CAG member** noted that compliance is about providing the right kind of outlets for people to play. If there is a combined, integrated approach to fencing and recreation, the CAG member does not foresee any challenges implementing the fence.

Affordable Housing

- QPD wants to have a better understanding about community expectations with regards to affordable housing, as well as discuss challenges and solutions with regards to the provision of affordable housing.
- Key Points and Questions:
 - There is a spectrum of affordability and how the affordability can be provided. This includes market affordability, market choice (which is essentially affordability based on where you are in your life)
 - Within Three sisters there are conversations regarding how the various types of affordability is provided.
 - Within the Settlement Agreement there are two types of entry level housing:
 1. Entry level lots
 2. Multi-family houses.

- A key challenge is that square footage is the parameter that is used by the Town to establish whether a home can be considered “entry level”
 - Ravenrock is an example of a development that provided what could be considered “entry level housing” yet due to the square footage, many of the units did not qualify as such. This results in the developer having to build more entry level units. In the case of Ravenrock QPD paid to have a relaxation, however, it was a challenge in the process of providing affordable housing.
- There are only so many tools for a Town to regulate affordability through market.
 - The other issue is with regards to secondary suites (suites that are built per regulation).
 - It is possible to zone to enable people to build secondary suites however, there is no mechanism to force people to build them.
 - Even if people build a secondary suite, it cannot be guaranteed that they will contribute to the rental supply in the Town (i.e. they may use it for another family member etc).

Discussion:

Entry Level Housing

- **One CAG member** noted that there are only so many tools for a Town to regulate affordability through the market. Entry level housing is one of the only tools that the Town has to facilitate affordable housing because they cannot require PAH [perpetually affordable housing].

Secondary Suites

- **One CAG member** noted that if you do not permit suites from the get go, there is a risk of having people building suites that are not built to code. In addition, they noted that the use of suites are dependent on the value of the house (i.e. people living in homes in the \$600,000 range are more motivated to build secondary suites to serve as “mortgage helpers”).
- The discussion then shifted towards a conversation of cost of building a secondary suite. The point was raised that building secondary suites are an extra cost that ultimately detract from the amount of money a homeowner can put into their own home. This does not motivate people to build secondary suites.
 - **A CAG member** asked if it would be possible for developers to build a house with a rough in for a secondary suite to give people the option.
 - This sometimes helps to offset the cost, however, building the rough in does not necessarily address the cost of putting in an additional HAVC system etc. Ultimately.
- **A CAG member** noted that secondary suites should not necessarily be viewed as a way to contribute to the rental supply in Canmore. Legally enabling secondary suites would ultimately lead to the building of safer suites.

Housing in Smith Creek

- The proposal to deal with it in Smith Creek is more about mix and variety of the units that are going to be proposed in Smith Creek. We are looking at 1/3 single family and duplex, 1/3 middle housing (townhomes, stacked townhomes, courtyard) and 1/3 multi-family.

- **A CAG member** asked how many units does this work out to be?
 - Around 1000 plus or minus 300
- **A CAG member** asked what would be the housing proportions in Resort Centre.
 - A much higher level of multi-family (like over 50%), a 25% townhomes (units that do not require a lot of outdoor maintenance), and very likely to see single family houses
- **A CAG member** asked who will be living in Resort Centre. Will it be permanent residents or vacation rentals?
 - Within the Resort Center ASP, permanent residency is considered, but it will be a part of the mix within the resort centre even though the focus is the resort, and the commercial operation of that resort.
 - There is no way to control tenancy. “You can control the use, not the user.” For example, to facilitate more temporary residents, a site could be zoned as commercial to encourage hotel development rather than residential.
 - **One CAG member** drew attention to the fact that the idea of living in a community with temporary residents is not appealing for existing community residents who are looking for new housing.
 - However, local amenities (such as a commercial centre and an employment node) may draw residents in. Note: it is very unlikely that a conventional school will be located in Smith Creek.
 - **CAG members** expressed interest in the potential for community amenities like Elevation Place.
- Within Smith Creek we need to continue to ensure that there are lots of opportunities for affordable housing, we need to be willing to try new models for affordable housing
 - Attainable Homes Calgary is model that is currently working. The City of Calgary provides funding to Attainable Homes upfront. Attainable Homes then provides developers with funding for affordable units up front. This gives the developer more incentive to make the unit more affordable. Attainable homes has a list of people eligible to live in the affordable units in Calgary. The challenge with this model is that people are unwilling to leave their homes (meaning Attainable Homes is unable to eventually sell the house at market price.
 - **A CAG member** asked about the Banff Community Housing Model (which is essentially subsidized housing)
 - The challenge with this model in Canmore is that the market share is too small to have manageable mortgages. Additionally, there is little land in Canmore to really get going on these types of project.

Update on the Province:

- In Resort Centre, the Province is concerned with human use mitigation rather than the size of the wildlife corridor.
- The Province gave an indication that TSMV is on the right track with regards to their proposed wildlife corridor for Smith Creek. The next step is to make an application. The Province did not flag any issues with this proposed application.
 - The implication of this proposed wildlife corridor is that by making the corridor larger, TSMV loses developable land in Smith Creek.

- The options are to either make the corridor larger (as per the Province's preference) or have the application expedited right away or to propose a more preferable alternative for TSMV and wait for the Province to deliberate and process the application. Either way we do not have formal provincial approval for the wildlife corridor at this point in time.

Agenda Item #2: Engagement

- **QPD** asked if the CAG felt we could go out and engage the community on our proposed wildlife corridor without formal provincial approval.
 - **QPD** notes that the Province has expressed the view that if engagement were to proceed without a formal approval, it would be the developer and the Town that would take public criticism rather than the Province.
 - **The CAG** expressed the view that it would be better to wait until we have formal provincial approval.
 - **One CAG Member** stated that this is because it shifts the conversation from one where the public is proposing alternatives and protesting, towards a conversation surrounding the proposal and what it will mean and essentially will identify what is negotiable and what isn't.
- **One CAG Member** reiterated the benefit of inviting well-respected experts to speak to stakeholders and the public about the wildlife corridor and fencing to help facilitate a paradigm shift.
 - **The Town** noted that it is not realistic to think that we are going to get a paradigm shift in two months. This is a long-term issue and a continual, ongoing education and conversation that needs to happen. It would be better to start from a place of Provincial approval (start on the right foot).
- **Several CAG members** noted that this is an issue that may require a new form of engagement that involves both public relations and more traditional forms of public engagement.
- Waiting until Provincial approval may result in having to push back the engagement timeline. This creates more issues as to whether or not QPD and the Town can engage over the summer.
 - The Town has engaged over the summer in the past. **The Town** expressed the view that engagement will be criticized regardless of the time of year it is held.
 - Online engagement could be a way to address this.
 - It may not be possible to push back the timeline without the approval of TSMV owners. In addition, the Town noted that as part of the collaborative process, the Town and council should have a say in the timeline.

Agenda Item #3: Closing

- It was decided that the group would think about the engagement timeline and the discussion would continue at the next CAG meeting scheduled for May 19th