

Large residential development planned in Bearspaw

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The Municipal District of Rocky View has given direction to a real estate investment company to prepare a concept scheme for a residential development on two quarter sections in north Bearspaw.

Dallas Wingerak, land development manager of the Beiramar Group, said the company will spend several months conducting studies required for the comprehensive planning of the land, such as biophysical impact assessment.

At its regular meeting of December 13, council gave green light to Beiramar (Loch Ridge) Corporation for the preparation of a comprehensive planning document for residential development on approximately 320 acres, located west of Lochend Road and half a mile north of Township Road 262.

The company, with head offices in Calgary, states its involvement “in various areas of real estate, including selection and acquisition of land, construction and development.” Gary Youde of Urban Systems said background studies would probably take about six months about six months.

Beiramar’s website announces several projects in the M.D. of Rocky View, including Bow Valley Lands, Rocky Ridge Lands, Loch Ridge restates, Loch Springs Ranch and Resort, and Springbank Links.

Municipal planner David Wyatt said the Loch Ridge lands, as part of the north portion of the Bearspaw Area Structure Plan, had been slated to remain agricultural. However, because the municipality has the faculty to allocate any portion of those lands to country residential, staff recommended council to direct Beiramar to prepare a comprehensive planning instrument. A concept scheme, if approved, would be followed by consideration for changing the land use from farm and ranch district to residential.

“The applicant has indicated they can justify the viability of the project and how it will benefit the municipality,” noted Wyatt in his report to council.

Area Clr. Paul McLean made a motion to recommend that Beiramar conducts a concept plan for the land, which was supported by a majority of councilors.

“We have asked many times for concept plans,” he said.

“This (request for concept plan) does not presuppose approval.”

A concept scheme involves planning, usually comprehensively planning on a quarter section or more, detailing possible impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, proposing future parcel sizes, traffic assessment and utility servicing.

However, some councilors were opposed to opening the door to subdivision of lands that have not been identified in the plan area as residential.

“I see this as pushing the limits and putting pressure on our resources,” said Deputy Reeve Lois Habberfield.

“It is not unreasonable to ask them to wait two years.”

Clr. Gerry Neustaedter supported McLean’s motion said Beiramar should not be asked to put together a concept scheme with conditions exceeding those of the Bearspaw Area Structure Plan.

“It would be unfair to the applicant in the Bearspaw ASP area,” he said.

Wyatt said a level of planning appropriate for the large scope of the project.

Clr. Bob Everett spoke against directing the developer to conduct a concept scheme that does not guarantee subsequent approval of a change in land use.

“It creates expectations in developers, (making them) spend a lot of money,” he said.

Reeve Al Schule, however, supported requesting Beiramar for a comprehensive planning document.

“At least, when it comes forward, we can make a better decision,” he said.

Clr. Greg Boehlke also voted against the proposed plan.