

Development pressure continues in Bearspaw

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An application is in place for more residential development in the Bearspaw area, but Rocky View is asking the developer to prepare a conceptual scheme before proceeding further

The half-section of land, adjacent to Lochend Rd. and north of Township Rd. 262, is owned by Beiramar Corp., and classified in an agricultural policy area.

Consequently, it is considered inappropriate for residential use under the Bearspaw Area Structure Plan (BASP).

“All of Bearspaw used to be agricultural fringe to Calgary,” Bearspaw area Coun. Gerry Neustaedter says. “As the area becomes more populated, more settled, the agricultural fringe may have to move.”

The MD holds sole discretion to amend the BASP to allow for residential development in identified agricultural policy areas, but requires the preparation of a conceptual scheme of the project beforehand.

The development’s conceptual scheme will include things such as impacts on surrounding agricultural areas and the environment, a utility service strategy, on and off-site visual impacts and a traffic impact study.

A minimum of one open house is also required for public input.

The current BASP was adopted by council on Jan. 18, 1994, and calls for a conceptual scheme to be submitted with an application to amend the plan.

The land in question is classified under the Priority Area 4 development phase of the BASE meaning it was not meant to be subdivided before other higher prioritized land in the 12-year-old area structure plan.

“That decision was made 12 years ago, Neustaedter says. “Once they do the update (of the BASP) possibly that land would be in Priority 2.

“You’ve got to respond to things as they come forward,” he adds. “You can’t go and take a guy who lives in Priority 1 and say, “You must subdivide! We don’t have that right.

“A bunch of things have changed since ‘92.”

Neustaedter believes the MD needs to allow the opportunity for those who wish to live in the area to do so, and adds that it isn't right to preclude others from enjoying the country lifestyle.

"That attitude is not justifiable," he says. "As more people wish to live in the country and have a country kind of lifestyle, we have to provide that opportunity.

Neustaedter says. "Bears paw is an excellent place for residential development

And while land in Bears paw is good for pasture and hay, it is not great for crops that require a longer growing season, he says.

Consequently, Neustaedter believes it is ideal for those looking for larger parcels of land to raise animals and enjoy the country lifestyle.

He adds that the land directly south of the proposed development is a good example.

"There is some precedence for this kind of development," he says. "Bears paw is an excellent place for a residential community."