

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO**

**ELECTORAL AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2016**

**6:00 PM**

***(RDN Board Chambers)***

**A D D E N D U M**

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**COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**

- 2-3            **Paul Christensen**, re Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project – Revisions to Bylaws No. 500.402 and 1285.26.
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To Regional District of Nanaimo Board of Directors

Thank you and please receive as correspondence.

I am writing to you to with a request to refer back to staff the following language for amendment of the Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Update Project currently before the board.

Background:

In 2012-13 our farm, Pineridge Farm in Area H filed a development permit application and zoning amendment to allow Agri-tourism accommodations on our 70 acre property with the purpose of diversifying farm income and allowing a strong financial foundation to be built. This was passed by the board and we now have 3 years under our belt and the future of our farm and its growth potential is secured. The Pineridge application was the first of its kind adopted in the RDN and we are proud of that.

Reference in ALC policy

*Section 3 (1) "the following land uses are permitted in an agricultural land reserve unless otherwise prohibited by a local government bylaw:*

*(a) accommodation for agri-tourism on a farm if*

*(i) all or part of the parcel on which the accommodation is located is classified as a farm under the Assessment Act,*

*(ii) the accommodation is limited to 10 sleeping units in total of seasonal campsites, seasonal cabins or short term use of bedrooms including bed and breakfast bedrooms under paragraph (d), and*

*(iii) the total developed area for buildings, landscaping and access for the accommodation is less than 5% of the parcel;*

I am in full support of an update and review of Ag zoning policy within the RDN. The purpose of such exercise is to identify inconsistencies with provincial ALR policy so we are all on the same page. With that said, I feel that language pertaining to Agri tourism accommodation proposed by staff is overstepping the underlying purpose behind the ALR policy by restricting the number of "bedrooms" to 1 sleeping unit per hectare. Provincial ALC policy has a limit of 10 sleeping units per parcel. Although our zoning is permitted at 10 sleeping units per parcel we will not be affected, however in a climate of attempting to encourage agriculture and supporting it within the RDN the limit of 1 unit per hectare will most definitely discourage small parcel owners from having the option to diversify their farm income.

According to the Agriculture land use inventory done on ALR Lands within the RDN there are 1666 parcels in the RDN that are not being used for farming or 75%. Of ALR parcels that are less than 4 hectares in size, 80% are not used for farming or 1047 parcels. As an example, in the proposed policy update of limiting Agri tourism accommodation to 1 sleeping unit per hectare, the parcels of 4 hectares and under would be shutout of the opportunity to maximize to the full 10 sleeping units as set out in provincial ALC policy. From experience the costs associated to have an amendment to accommodate 4 sleeping units along with development costs would discourage all considering the opportunity for only 4 units per parcel.

When attending Community engagement meeting in Area H, I had asked what the thought process was behind limiting ALR landowners to 1 sleeping unit per hectare. It was surprising to hear the reason of “not wanting a bunch of illegal trailer parks cropping up around the district” as the reason behind the decision. According to the consolidated Community Engagement Summary 78% of people favored Agri-tourism Accommodation on ALR lands. Why are we attempting to restrict land owners from the allowable 10 units per parcel?

Every landowner wishing to apply for Agritourism accommodation must go through the process which includes PIM and Public meetings to gather feedback from those with concerns and are addressed prior to approval. Fears such as the one stated above would be addressed at that time.

In discussion with ALC planners the underlying purpose of having Agritourism accommodation as an accessory use is to encourage agriculture which is the ALC mandate. Should a farm which currently has the 10 sleeping unit per parcel in place and wishes to apply for more units they must first demonstrate that they have increased the farming portion of their business before any more units are approved by the ALC. This in of itself secures the objective of creating more agriculture.

I feel very strongly that this language in the bylaw excludes a large portion of land owners the full potential available and should therefore be amended prior to 3<sup>rd</sup> reading

Regards

Paul Christensen

Owner Pineridge RV Park and Farm Market

**From:** CLEM REMILLARD

**Subject:** Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Zoning amendments

**Date:** 7 March, 2016 10:26:58 PM PST

**To:** Maureen Young

Dear Maureen Young

After hearing about the upcoming proposed changes to the Agriculture Bylaw and setbacks , I am concerned that they have not taken into consideration many farmers as myself that have smaller acreages. I have 3 acres in the East Wellington valley that is within the ALR that has been farmed since 1960. Many cattle have been born on the property as well as chickens and pigs. They are raised ethically and are provided with as much care as possible. At certain time of the year ,cows may have to be kept closer to the proposed 15 meters setback from all lot lines for confined livestock area. It may be at birthing , at certain times in the winter,or at breeding, but if you take 45 ft from each property line and you take away lets say 90 ft from 200 ft it only leaves 110 ft. This is a total waste of ALR land and for the small property owners it will create a hardship. At a strike of a pen many of us will become illegal. We have invested thousands of dollars in tractors, hay equipment and trailers etc . Can you please look at less setbacks so we are not wasting prime agriculture land. I also notice that in the proposed Bylaw 1285.26 Area F buildings and structures 10 m or less that they have different setbacks that bylaw 500.402. Why can they not be the same?

I would be happy to meet with staff to try an work out a solution or some give some ideas that I have gained from 45 years of farming.

Thanking you and all the directors for helping farmers !

Clem and Debbie Remillard

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Nanaimo