

Parkland Communicator

March 2009 - A bi-monthly newsletter published by Parkland County

Message from the Mayor

NIMBY, or “not in my back yard,” is a common term used when we don’t like something going on near us. Normally, it is associated with new development in areas that were usually quiet or had little development in the past.

As a landowner it is your right to bring forward ideas for developing your land if they comply with Parkland County’s Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw and Area Structure Plans. It is also your right to apply to have these various bylaws and regulations changed or altered. Notice that I said it is your right to apply - that does not mean that Council will always agree to change any of them. Council will look at the existing bylaws and regulations and base their decision on, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- Are the changes asked for in the best interests of Parkland County?
- Is the development compliant with Council’s philosophy of sustainable and managed growth?
- Will the change negatively affect the surrounding landowners?
- Are there any other reasons for allowing the development or land use changes that may benefit the County?
- Are the Area Structure Plans/Land Use Bylaw/ Municipal Development Plan old or out of date and possibly out-of-line with current development standards, practices, Council philosophies and guidelines?

As the world economic situation changes, we need to look at new and innovative development so Parkland County continues to prosper while retaining our rural lifestyle. We all moved to Parkland County for different reasons but, in the end, our community needs to keep up with the rest of the world.

Does it mean we have to compromise our lifestyle? Not at all. We need to consider what is beneficial to all of us and what will sustain us into the future.



Community Standards Bylaw - how it affects you

On January 13, 2009, Parkland County Council deferred the Community Standards Bylaw to the Governance & Priorities Committee for further discussion and input. Administration has been reviewing this extensive bylaw over the past year in order to combine the public protection, noise, litter, municipal addressing and assembly permit bylaws into one bylaw. This consolidation will provide residents with a clear, and concise set of expectations that will be easily understood.

Public input sessions were conducted in the later part of 2008 (Clymont Hall on November 12, Duffield Hall on November 17, and Entwistle Hall on November 18) to inform our residents of bylaw changes and to provide an opportunity for feedback/input.

Here is a quick summary of the proposed bylaw:

Orders and Appeals

- Outlines how an order is to be written
- Creation of a Community Standards Appeal Board
- Outlines the process for an appeal

Enforcement

- Specified penalties for offences
- Allows for increased penalties for second and subsequent offenses
- Outlines how an order is to be written and issued



Unsightly Properties

- Exempts agriculture practices
- Prohibits the accumulation of certain materials visible from outside the property (i.e. loose garbage, household furniture, no more than 2 unregistered /inoperable motor vehicles)
- Prohibits the storage of appliances unless closing devices have been removed
- Prohibits the storage of recreational vehicles and/ or boats not owned by the owner or occupier of the property
- Every situation will be judged on a case-by-case basis

Graffiti

- Applying graffiti is an offense
- Owner/occupant is responsible for removal

Composting

- Prohibits composting of animal parts
- Regulates where located on property
- Maintenance standard to prevent odor and attracting animals

Noise

- Prohibits noise from a vehicle that annoys or disturbs
- Prohibits noise from property that annoys or disturbs



Resident Satisfaction Survey

Later this year, Parkland County will be developing and conducting a customer service needs survey to solicit input from County residents, customers and stakeholders on future service needs of the County. A consultant will be retained to conduct the survey and research key issues facing the County including satisfaction, usage and importance of programs and services. Watch for further details on this survey in the next Parkland Communicator, the Stony Plain Reporter/Spruce Grove Examiner and Parkland County website.

Tri Municipal Tradeshow

Parkland County Council and Management will be participating in this year's Tri-Municipal Tradeshow being held on April 17, 18 & 19, 2009. In addition to celebrating Parkland County's 40th Anniversary, we will focus on providing information to our residents on the proposed Community Standards Bylaw, 2009 County Census, Intelligent Community Project (high-speed internet service), rural addressing and much more! For showtimes visit www.stonyplainchamber.ca. We look forward to seeing you there!

KidSport Parkland, so all kids can play

KidSport Parkland helps economically disadvantaged children take part in organized sports. KidSport provides up to \$300 a year to kids under the age of 18 who need financial assistance to offset the cost of registration fees. If you know someone who needs assistance or can help provide these through a monetary donation, contact KidSport Parkland at 780-963-8604.

Census

Parkland County will be conducting a municipal census during the month of May 2009. We want to count on you! It is very important that we include each and every one of our residents in our 2009 Census. Population figures are critical to claim per capita grants. Each person counted in our census helps us receive over an estimated \$500 per person in grant funding from the Provincial and Federal Governments!

“We want to count on you!”

Population figures are also required to calculate cost-sharing agreements with other municipalities such as the Town of Stony Plain, City of Spruce Grove, Town of Devon, and Town of Drayton Valley. It is important that each municipality pays its fair share for facilities and services.

Census information helps indicate trends and growth patterns within the County and is often referred to when making decisions for planning future development and services, and for promoting economic development and tourism.

Knowing the number of residents and their ages gives Parkland County an idea of how many adults/children live in our municipality, which provides useful information in planning services and estimating number of eligible voters. Demographic information also assists the school boards with planning for schools and school transportation.

Please watch for Parkland County enumerators who will be coming to your doors throughout the month of May (May 1-31). There are only a few quick questions to be answered: total number of residents and ages of each resident. All our enumerators will present their photo identification.

We appreciate your participation to ensure our census is thorough and accurate. Thank you in advance for contributing to the success of this very important project.

Parkland becoming an “Intelligent Community”

The County is implementing the recommendations of the Rural Broadband Study prepared last fall. This will help the County move forward to become an “Intelligent Community,” a community in which broadband technology is fully utilized by residents, businesses and the County for a range of communication, learning, business, marketing and economic development purposes. The first objective is to extend efficient, reasonably-priced broadband service to 90% or more of the County. A request for proposals has been issued to attract a private sector company to partner with the County to provide the “backbone” infrastructure network throughout the County. A partner is expected to be selected in March. The next priority will be to enter into agreements with one or more

internet service providers (ISPs) to provide broadband access from the backbone to residents and businesses in areas that are underserved. The timeline target for these two initiatives is to have service extensions to the underserved and lower density residential areas by end of December 2009.

Concurrent with these two initiatives, detailed analysis of the service in the hamlets, villages, higher-density residential areas, and industrial parks is underway to assess existing infrastructure. This will provide direction on what improvements and partnerships are needed to ensure broadband access and capacity are available and sustainable to meet residential and business requirements, now and in the future.

Public Input

Parkland County Council decided not to conduct an evening public input session in February as had been done over the last couple of years. Instead, residents are invited and encouraged to come before Council at the public input sessions that occur at the beginning of each Governance & Priorities Committee (1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month) and Council (2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month) meeting.

Residents are not required to provide notice to attend the public input sessions. Council

allows the public to speak at these parts of the meeting. Ten minutes has been allocated for the public input session therefore, if a lengthy presentation is desired, an appointment should be requested. If you wish to submit documentation at the meeting, please provide a minimum of ten copies.

Formal appointments at Council meetings may be arranged by contacting Legislative and Administrative Services at 780-968-8405.

Community Standards Bylaw cont'd from page 1

Noise cont'd

- Prohibits the idling of trucks for longer than 20 minutes in a residential area
- Exempts agriculture practices
- Major events require permits from Parkland County
- Outlines permit application and appeal process

Nuisances

- Outlines what the court may take into consideration to determine an offense
- Prohibits outdoor lights from shining into an adjacent dwelling
- Prohibits grass length longer than 25 cm
- Allows for some exemptions

Maintenance of Buildings, Structures and Fences

- Outlines maintenance obligations

Excavations

- Prohibits excavations from becoming or remaining dangerous to public

Addressing

- Consistent with current Addressing Bylaw
- Outlines signage requirements



- owners/occupants of property with a dwelling shall be required to display their address visibly from the roadway at all times

Littering

- Prohibits refuse disposal on public land or highways
- Prohibits transportation of insecure refuse
- Allows registered owner of a vehicle to be charged
- Prohibits disposal of refuse on private land without owner's consent.

Visit the County website for additional information and to review a copy of the draft bylaw, or contact Community & Protective Services at 780.968.8400.

Ground Ambulance Transition

The responsibility for ground ambulance services will be transferred from municipalities to Alberta Health Services in a move designed to improve patient care, accountability, and efficiency. The transition will take full effect April 1, 2009. New legislative and regulatory framework is being put in place to provide the foundation for this transformation. More than 80 service providers (operators) supply ground ambulance services throughout Alberta. There are an average of about 260,000 trips per year, involving more than 500 ambulance vehicles and 3,000 ambulance care attendants. Ground ambulance services are available 24 hours per day, seven days a week, every day of the year. Ground ambulances are best known for responding to emergency

situations. While onsite, medical service crews provide pre-hospital health care to people who are injured or sick to stabilize their medical conditions. Patients are then transported to the nearest appropriate health care facility.

Parkland County wants to let our residents know that Alberta Health & Wellness has assured us that there will be no service level changes due to this transition - residents will not feel any impact.

The Alberta Health & Wellness website provides extensive coverage on transition news. You can visit their website at <http://www.health.alberta.ca/services/EHS-transition-news.html> for full details on this matter.

Strategic Plan Quarterly Report

At the January 20, 2009, Governance & Priorities Committee meeting, Council reviewed administrative results of the 2008 to 2010 Strategic Plan Quarterly report. This report focuses on economic development, quality of life, infrastructure, governance, and intergovernmental relations, and was developed to measure

the success on achieving the strategies/ action plans established by Council. To review a complete copy of the report, visit the Parkland County website under About Us/Core Values and Strategic Plan - go to the bottom of the page and click on the Q4 report.

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Fire Permit Bylaw

Parkland County has initiated a review of the Fire Bylaw as part of the ongoing review of bylaws related to the Community and Protective Services Department. The draft Fire Permit Bylaw takes into account recent feedback from the public in the form of complaints as well as best practices relating to rules and regulations for fire permits from different jurisdictions. The most noticeable changes in the draft bylaw are as follows:

- Limit and better control open burning through the prohibition of outdoor fires in restricted burn areas which include: Multi-Parcel Subdivisions, Rural Center Districts, or Industrial Commercial Core areas.
- Prohibition of burning materials in a solid fuel appliance unless it meets CSA and EPA regulations and Standards.
- No person shall purchase, possess, handle, discharge, fire or set off fireworks within the County unless he holds a permit issued by Fire Services. Permits shall only be issued for the discharge of high hazard fireworks in accordance and pursuant to the Alberta Fire Code.
- Prohibition of bringing materials from another location, municipality, or jurisdiction to burn within Parkland County

Check out the front page of the County website for complete details of the proposed bylaw.

Decentralized Wastewater Management - regulations and trends

The Alberta Onsite Wastewater Management Association (AOWMA) gave a presentation on Decentralized Wastewater Management Regulations and Trends at the January 20, 2009 Council Meeting.

AOWMA is the provincial not-for profit organization established to educate, train and certify industry professionals. The association engages its member installers, septage haulers, suppliers, municipalities and provincial government departments to arrive at sound practices that strengthen the industry and ensure safe and effective septage management for all rural Alberta. Council encourages industry and residents to visit their website for information and training on the operation and maintenance of small sanitary sewer systems.

The Alberta Onsite Wastewater Management Association website can be found at: www.aowma.com.

Shelterbelt Tree Applications

Are you interested in establishing a shelterbelt on your property? Parkland County residents may obtain shelterbelt trees from:

- Alberta Nurseries – if you wish to purchase trees, you may order trees on-line at www.marketland.net or call 403-224-2455, or
- Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration Shelterbelt Centre – for those ratepayers who have a minimum of 5 acres, tree and shrub seedlings are provided to eligible landowners at no charge. Order trees on-line at www.agr.gc.ca/pfra/shelterbelt_e.htm or call 1-866-766-2284.

Application deadline is March 15, 2009. Trees are delivered to Parkland County in early to mid-May. Applications are available from Parkland County Agricultural Services - call 780-968-8467.



Fire Prevention - spring fire safety

Campfires

- Keep a ready supply of water and a shovel near your site in case of an emergency.
- Build your fire gradually and keep it small for cooking or warmth purposes only. Never use gasoline or liquid fire starters as an explosion can result.
- NEVER leave children unattended or playing near a campfire.
- Once the fire has burned down, spread the remains out within the pit and slowly add water. When you think the campfire is out, place your hand above the ashes to ensure it is out.

Burn Barrels

- Always cover your burn barrel with 6mm (1/4") or smaller metal mesh screen.
- Clear away debris for at least 3 meters (10 feet) around your barrel and work up the area to expose the soil.
- Never burn in windy conditions. Light the burn barrel in the late evening - avoid burning during the heat of the day.
- Be sure not to burn prohibited debris.

Prescribed Burns

- Obtain a Fire Permit and abide by conditions of the permit.
- Plan your burn for the cooler evening hours while the winds are calm.
- Keep a ready supply of water and a shovel near your site in case of an emergency and have enough help on hand to keep control of your fire.
- Burn small quantities of debris or grass at a time.

Off Highway Vehicles

- An exhaust system heats up to temperatures in excess of 204°C, hot enough to ignite dry grass, or brush.
- Before you ride, inspect your off highway vehicle and clear out any build up of debris near the engine and exhaust.
- Ensure muffler and spark arrestors are in good working condition.

For more information contact Parkland County Fire Services at 780-968-8400.

Questions? Comments? Concerns? Contact our Parkland County Management Team:

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For more information on this newsletter and other communications, contact Jackie Ostashek, Communications Coordinator, at 780-968-8432 or jostashek@parklandcounty.com

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