

ROCKY VIEW COUNTY
AGGREGATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Committee Meeting Summary Notes

November 23, 2023

7:30 – noon

RVC Committee Room

These notes, as taken by the chair, are an informal record of the meeting and reflect the evolving discussion of the members. The notes are not a final record or set of recommendations and will be reviewed by the committee at their next meeting.

Attendance:

- Gerry Bietz, Hazel George, Monty McNair, Dale Soetaert, John Weatherill. Members.
- Gerrit Scheffel. Administration
- Barbara McNeil. Chair

Regrets: Tom Foss. Member

Agenda: The meeting was guided by the following agenda:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Review the October 26th, November 1st, and November 6th summary notes.• Complete the discussion on ARP gaps<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Reclamation○ How can enforcement work? Current process is complaint based.• Outline/discuss the areas of agreement• Perspectives on aggregate supply in the County• Communication and aggregate development• Additional areas of agreement where stakeholder interests are met• Local working groups• What are our next steps?• Goal for December 15th meeting• Adjourn |
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Review of Summary Notes:

- A clarification was made regarding Alberta Environment and Parks. Alberta Environment has jurisdictional control of certain aspects of an aggregate application and, where required, AENV reviews documents.
- A clarification was added that gravel dust does not cause pneumonia in calves.

- A point was added that the committee can have a broader conversation about identifying the interested parties for applications and operations, and that perhaps there can be a system where people can register their interest to receive more information.

Discussion on ARP gaps, continued:

Compliance:

- Industry is not afraid of inspections, enforcement, or compliance.
- There are conditions in operating permits. Sometimes, monthly reports are required to be submitted by the operator. Some things, such as a spill, must be reported, and the regulator may do follow up. For the most part, operators are required to self report.

Compliance concerns are typically complaint based, and follow up is then up to the regulator. Normally complaints are acted upon by the operator, the regulator, or the County.

The opinion was expressed that if the county had stricter regulations, for instance for smaller pits, there would be less impact. For example, one pit had 40 acres of open area, is that necessary? Perhaps start with more rigid requirements, in this example allow for an expansion when the original pit requires it.

- Progressive reclamation is the industry preference. The open space that's needed depends on the operation. Another view is that there needs to be logical progression of development.
- In a recent case, there was an active permit, and a complaint was made. The pit was inspected by the County and was found to be in compliance.
- One operator pointed out that for one of their pits, the size of the operation is 26 acres and the operation is being done in eight phases to minimize the open area at any one time.
- For the ARP, the committee can have an opportunity to say that open areas add incremental impacts and that phasing of open areas and reclamation can reduce impacts. The more open area there is, the greater the impact. Perhaps we can provide a recommendation and the staff can do the correct wording?
- What kind of inspections are done now? Alberta Environment does relatively infrequent, random inspections. Inspections are different in different jurisdictions and it's based on complaints and depends on the operator and on the complaint. Lots of people won't call the operator directly, but the operator hope that neighbors/residents would call directly. Land owners hope that the operator is responsive.
- A member noted that it's important that a record of concerns/complaints is kept. An operator pointed out that they keep a complaint tracker and, that in their experience people usually phone the County or the province when they have a complaint. It was pointed out that perhaps

that is a shortcoming in the process. The operator may not know there is a complaint. If the complaint goes to the County, is the operator told?

- Rockyview County currently has no proactive compliance. Sturgeon County has hired a development compliance officer, like a bylaw officer, to check on development permit conditions.
- It's a requirement of the MSDP that the operator posts signs about who to call when there is an issue. These signs have been emphasized, and they're likely a condition of the permit. On an anecdotal basis, it seems that most people are not comfortable phoning the company directly. It's important that there is responsiveness to concerns and follow up. If a company is complying, they shouldn't be afraid to talk to landowners. This discussion emphasizes the value of informing people.
- It was pointed out that if a company is required to do something special regarding conditions, the company wants to know that it's for specific reason.
- The Committee discussed groundwater. Operations above the aquifer can operate 1m above the aquifer. If the operator breaches the flowing water, to whom do they report? Is this a gap? Alberta Environment has ground water monitoring wells., Who gets this information? And how do they respond? Who pays attention to the information?
- An operator responded saying they're not sure what other operators do or what their conditions may be, but their company gives annual reports on certain information. It was pointed out that Sturgeon County coordinates groundwater monitoring and reporting. This has been very helpful to alleviate concerns about groundwater, and it goes a long way to bring confidence because people have real information.
- Sturgeon County also provides a quarterly newsletter to residents. That County also has other requirements regarding communication with stakeholders.

Reclamation.

- Progressive reclamation is something that one of the operators feels that they do well and would encourage. It's harder to do with older pits. A new proposal they have provides for more systematic phasing.

Perspectives on location and aggregate development.

Members expressed their perspectives, one at a time, around the table:

“We have legacy development in the east where the location impacts are less. Aggregate operates in a market economy; companies will pursue development and their own objectives to make profits. But how are societal interests considered? Perhaps there's a way to get aggregate supply from the hinterland and have it supplied by rail.

Development around Big Hills Springs, for example, is an opportunity to address what will show up in the Cochrane West applications. Perhaps with major projects we need an ASP? Also, we see serial ad hoc applications instead of a comprehensive approach to development. It's noted that the province bought two sections in Spring Bank for aggregate development, possibly for dam building."

"Looking at location from a very high level, this is a large county of 500 square miles. Aggregate is prevalent. Processing occurs around the County. There is diversity around the County. There are a few places with high population density and there are places with high environmental sensitivity. The cost to society of aggregate development requires consideration. Impacts, such as dust, noise and traffic can't be contained to a site despite the best efforts of operators.

We have to consider the concept of existing residents and existing land uses. Where should we focus? It doesn't make sense to put a new residence close to an existing pit. Also, it doesn't put it makes sense to have a new pit close to existing residents. We must look at the direction in the drafted terms of reference for the committee relating to location - we can recommend locational criteria. My view is to minimize the impacts of aggregate development with separation."

"Land owner rights are paramount. And it doesn't seem that the terms of reference takes that approach. The Province will step in when they believe they act in the greatest good for the public. Everybody counts. Pre-existing land uses should count".

"There are differences from east to west in terms of aggregate development and impact. Gravel in the east is depleted and other sources are needed and they are to the west. We can't stop demand. The effects go outside the local area when it's a local source. Our recommendations can have an effect outside the local area. For example, if our recommendations restrict the sourcing of gravel in close to market locations and this forces the supply of gravel to come from outside the local area, this increases emissions produced by trucking longer distances, increases the time trucks are on the roads therefore increasing safety risks, and increases the costs to society. All the perceived impacts, to ground water, noise, air quality, wildlife, etc. of a proposed gravel pit exist no matter where it is located. To overlook the possibility of sterilizing gravel development is a mistake. Future generations will think we made a mistake. As an operator, we can't see why industry and residents can't coexist with performance standards such as monitoring and noise mitigation."

"I appreciate the locational criteria. Assuming that the aggregate potential map is accurate, I don't think that operators have the luxury of going wherever we want to develop aggregate. There's not a lot of gravel in the Beiseker area. Every aggregate application in the County has opposition. It's important that we have the mapping correct. We have to dispel the myth that aggregate is everywhere. We can't speculate."

The discussion continued.

The Star pits are owned by the government of Alberta and there are individual agreements in place with operators. Is there a way to unitize development area? To produce from an area until it's exhausted and then move on? The effects would have a halo and then it's gone.

One operator pointed out that it seems not to be the time that a company is operating, it's the fact that development is there that causes concerns. Another point of view is that it's very different from a homeowner's point of view if a development was completed in two years, rather than thinking that it has to go on for much longer.

The question was asked about the drawbacks of unitizing, such as in the Star pit. A response was that there are limits to the number of operators and not everyone gets involved. However, going through a pit faster is a good thing. In this case, the pit is owned by an independent body. The same approach is used in Fort McMurray.

Working Groups and Community Engagement

Committee members discussed the requirements of their function to establish interest based working groups outside of the Committee forum to distill interested input to the Committee recommendations.

Industry committee members are in contact with their constituents and don't expect to have specific meetings.

For residential representatives, having a summary of process and content for others to respond to would be helpful.

For further public engagement on the ARP after the committee has finished, the County's goal is to go beyond standard engagement. The County has an engagement team and intends to use engagement tailored to this project.

Goal for December 15th meeting.

- Update on the County mapping of supply, potential, and for environmentally sensitive areas.
- Start working on what the committee wants to say to Council.
- Update on interest-based working groups

Wrap up around the table: perspectives on how the committee is doing:

- Decent. Doing as well as we can.
- Going as expected, glad to participate, not surprised at what we're hearing. Glad we're all together.
- Came with low expectations – now pleasantly surprised.
- The tough work is ahead to provide clear recommendations and guides.
- We've done some good work – pleased with the general consensus. Drafting of the final document is the big challenge ahead.

Provided by the Chair based on the 'interests' exercise at the October meeting.

Summary of Aligned interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistency and certainty in the ARP• Protecting environmentally sensitive areas• Responsible operations for compliance, inspections, oversight. Confidence in compliance• Good communications with stakeholders• Residents have confidence in technical decisions• Clarity on requirements for future developments• Improved performance metrics
Non-aligned interests	Location of developments