

**ROCKY VIEW COUNTY**  
**AGGREGATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Committee Meeting Summary Notes**

**December 15, 2023**

**8:30 – noon**

**RVC Committee Room**

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**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, Tom Foss, Dale Soetaert, John Weatherill. Members.
- Gerrit Scheffel. Administration
- Barbara McNeil. Chair

**Agenda:** The meeting was guided by the following agenda:

- Welcome
- Review the November 23<sup>rd</sup> summary notes
- County update on mapping of aggregate supply and potential and for environment sensitive areas.
- Review the Terms of Reference and Committee mandate of this project.
- Begin to outline the consensus recommendations from the Committee
- Identify the areas where consensus is challenging
- Local working groups update
- What are the next steps?
- Adjourn

**Review of Summary Notes:**

- Members provided requested clarifications. Notes will be amended and available on the County website.

## **County update on mapping of aggregate supply and potential and for environment sensitive areas.**

In 2016, the County contracted Golder Associates Ltd. to map the potential aggregate resources and environmentally sensitive areas (ESA's) throughout the County.

Administration discussed two maps that were created during the previous ARP project. The first was appended to the Aggregate Resource Plan Phase 1 Summary Report (2016), titled "Map 1". This map indicates the potential aggregate deposits throughout the County as indicated by aerial photographs, County records of existing aggregate sites, and data from the Alberta Geological Survey. The map also shows the location of existing privately operated and County operated pits, together with all land that has the land use designation of Natural resource Industrial (NRI). The disclaimer on the map states that it is higher level, and it is not a judgment of the quality or viability of aggregate.

This map was later superseded by the "Potential Aggregate Deposit Areas" map, which was appended to the final draft of the previously proposed Aggregate Resource Plan (2018). In addition to the review of existing geological survey data, aerial photography, and Rocky View County records, this map added the analysis of provincial water well data. The disclaimer on the map states the map is to be used as a guide to indicate potential areas of aggregate resource and in no way is confirmation of an economically viable deposit. No field surveys were undertaken to validate the potential aggregate resource areas identified.

It seems that the County may need a higher-level quality inventory of aggregate. Operators agreed and pointed out this would be expensive, however, it would be an opportunity to focus the development and be able to manage the resource. Perhaps, it's time to spend the money to do it right. In development of the previous maps, the County had written a letter to Alberta Sand and Gravel Association asking aggregate operators to disclose their land interests and knowledge of gravel deposits throughout the County, but there was only one industry response. To build trust and transparency, the County would need more information from industry to prepare a comprehensive aggregate resource map. An operator indicated that the best indication of where gravel exists is where industry already owns the land. One member pointed out that a lot of maps could be layered, for instance, environmentally sensitive areas.

The question was asked: if we had a perfect map, how would we use it?

- A member pointed out that the old ARP seemed to have a bias to protect the resources. We need to have a balance between protecting the resource and protecting residents and the environment.
- Another member stated that if we had good mapping, industry could be guided to areas where impacts to residents can be minimized. Currently, there seems to be no plan. For

example, in the Big Hill Springs area, one company found gravel and now there is lots of development and land redesignation.

- An operator pointed out that if we had an accurate map, it would allow the County to make informed decisions.

The discussion moved to considering impacts. An operator suggested that performance standards could be increased so effects from a 500,000 ton/year operation would be the same as a 50,000 ton/year operation. This was challenged by a landowner who couldn't see how impacts to surrounding residents (i.e., dust) could be contained to the pit area.

A member raised the concept of centralizing pit operations rather than an agglomeration of numerous pits. To concentrate development in an area – like the Star pit. Discussion continued: Recognizing that gravel is located in certain areas, there might be short term pain of development for long term gain, and that gravel could be extracted, and then future land uses are available. For instance, communities could be built after gravel is extracted. Another comment was that forward planning is good (if it works); extract the non-renewable resource and then the property can be developed for long term use.

Perhaps Rocky View County needs a structure like the Alberta Energy Regulator for long term guidance and regulation. Develop a long-term plan about where gravel is located and extract as much as possible but minimize the impacts. It's inefficient to have pits run for years instead of concentrating the development. Develop an area for extraction, extract fast, manage the impacts and then reclaim – noting that there are permanent peripheral ecological impacts.

Gravel is where it is – if it's appropriately planned and located development, there might be the right balance between industry demands, environmental protection and health and quality of life for residents.

Administration pointed out that a successful ARP represents the various interests. Thoughtfully planned development reduces conflict and looks after health and safety.

The Calgary Metropolitan Regional Board is mapping environmentally sensitive areas across the region, including Rocky View County; O2 Design has been contracted to complete this work.

In summary: a consensus recommendation is that the County prepare mapping to guide aggregate development. The Golder Associates map is a start; industry land ownership data can be added and overlays of ESAs and landowner developments.

### **Draft Consensus Recommendations from the Committee**

1. That the County prepares a high level, independent, objective assessment of the economic impact of aggregate development.
2. That the County prepares the best possible mapping of aggregate resources to guide development.
3. That the County accepts its role as an active regulator of aggregate operations and no longer responds on a complaint related basis. This would include clear performance standards, responsible monitoring, strict compliance, and enforcement.
4. That the County ensures that standards that would be in place are actively evolving with the worldwide development of the industry and the impacts on residents. The committee recommends that the County apply prescribed performance standards and prescribed monitoring. Industry welcomes more noise monitoring and the use of real information, not just modeling.
5. That there are provisions for independent inspections and expert review of operator reports and that these reports are easily accessed by stakeholders.
6. That the County have a defined stakeholder engagement process for industry to follow. Make the process open, engaging, inclusive and solution focused. Encourage development of relationships and trust for landowners and industry. The Alberta Energy Regulator industry stakeholder requirements could be used as a guide.
7. That the County accesses an up-to-date inventory of environmentally sensitive areas. The committee understands that the CMRB is undertaking this work, and the information will be available to the County.
8. Provincial and County pits should follow the same requirements for operation and reclamation as private operators.
9. Language and tone in the ARP. The tone of the current draft ARP reads as promotional and supportive of industry. The committee recommends a more neutral balanced tone, clear and concise language and objective information.
10. Provide clear accessible understandable information for landowners when they are concerned and affected by a bylaw.

11. The current ARP is a complex technical document. Landowners want to be able to understand processes and requirements. The Committee recommends that a separate reader-friendly and educational ARP document be prepared for a non-industry reader.
12. The Country and the Province have distinct roles and responsibilities for aggregate. Provide clear information for interested parties about the province's role in aggregate applications, compliance, and enforcement.
13. Define cumulative effects clearly. Identify what is required, what the thresholds are, and what the County requirements are. Cumulative effects are a significant concern to residents but reference to them in the current ARP is scarce.
14. That a practical common-sense approach and discretion be used for pit renewal applications. Allow for exemptions on some renewal applications if the operator had a good record of compliance and there are no concerns from affected stakeholders.
15. Find a way to eliminate the sense of bias in expert reports.
16. Follow land use best practices about pre-existing land uses and conflicting land uses.
17. Determine how the County can optimize the revenue from CAP levies. One County uses an advisory committee to provide recommendations on how the funds can be used.

### **What are the next steps?**

- John and Gerry will meet with stakeholder groups.
- The committee meets on January 11<sup>th</sup> for a full day. Topics will be:
  - Updates from stakeholders
  - Further discussion on location criteria, human health
  - Further discussion on the concept of development centralization
  - Review the draft vision and principles in the 2023 ARP Terms of Reference. Does the committee agree with these? Are there additions or suggested edits?
  - Review recommendations and provide relevant detail and reason for the recommendations.
  - Determine additional recommendations.
  - Identify the areas where consensus was not reached.