



Council Highlights

Cemetery Beautification Plan

Council has been entertaining possible upgrades and improvements to the Willow Park Cemetery located in the hamlet of Lac La Biche. Administration prepared a report for Council regarding the current state of the cemetery and possibilities for future upgrades.

Because of the size of the cemetery and the limited capacity for growth in the downtown core, the Willow Park Cemetery has an anticipated lifespan of roughly 10 years.

Citizens have been requesting maintenance and upgrades to the cemetery fence, monuments and roadways as well as a greater emphasis on landscaping upkeep.

Administration presented the options for addressing fencing concerns:

- repairing the current chain link fence;
- removing the fence altogether;
- replacing the chain link fence with an upgraded, coloured chain link fence (i.e. white instead of metal);
- replacing the chain link fence with a wrought iron fence, at a considerable increase in cost.

Administration also offered two options for dealing with the bushes and shrubbery that have grown along the fence— either remove them to create a more tidy aesthetic, or leave them to increase privacy in the cemetery.

Council and Administration discussed the options for addressing the condition of the roadways in the cemetery, as well as for better addressing landscaping maintenance in the cemetery.

After some discussion, Council decided on two immediate capital improvements for the cemetery. Council approved \$50,430 for the reconstruction of the road in the cemetery

and \$15,000 for a memorial cairn. Because Willow Park Cemetery is well over 100 years old, some of the older graves are no longer marked. The memorial cairn will list all the names of those buried in unmarked gravesites.

Further discussions will follow regarding upgrades to Willow Park Cemetery.

Intersection Improvements at Highway 881 and Beaver Hill Road

County's Administration recently met with Alberta Transportation representatives to discuss transportation issues in the County. During the discussions Alberta Transportation indicated that they want the County to upgrade the intersection at Highway 881 and Beaver Hill Road and that future development applications that come to them from the County for approval (as is necessary when developments are planned within a certain proximity to a provincial highway) could be denied if the improvements aren't completed. The estimated cost to the County for the improvements are \$497,938

There are planned developments in the area and Administration is concerned about approvals. The County has also been lobbying Alberta Transportation to address issues on provincial highways and intersections in the County.

The intersection upgrades were considered for the 2016 budget, but were not approved. Prior to making any decision on this project, Council directed Administration to obtain written confirmation from Alberta Transportation regarding future development approvals and the upgrades to the intersection.



Infant Care Child Mind Program

After receiving feedback from parents in the community, Council approved a pilot program offering infant care at the Child Mind Centre at the Bold Center in October 2015. The program was well-received and Council voted to continue providing the infant care program.

The Child Mind Service offers short-term care for children ages two to 12 and now babies aged six months to two years. The service is offered so that parents can use the Bold Center facilities to work out or play sports while their children are being supervised by child care professionals.

There is only space for two infants at a time, in order to observe provincially-regulated ratios of staff to children. At peak times, no infants will be accepted.

Parents can call ahead to schedule infant care on a first-come, first-served basis. You can also drop in to see if there is space without pre-registering, but there is no guarantee of service. Infant care costs \$5 per half hour.

Amendments to County's Whistle Blower Standard Operating Procedure

The County offers a Whistle Blowing Service to staff and residents to allow them to report dishonest or illegal activities. A third-party company responds to and investigates any whistle-blowing claims to ensure they are investigated without bias.

Over the past few years, the Whistle Blower Service has been used as more of a complaint line than the way it was intended—to report fraudulent, illegal activities. There is a cost associated with every report made to the service and any subsequent investigation or follow-up. Complaints about County programs, services or employees should be forwarded to the County's CAO for follow-up. Council and Administration discussed amendments to the Whistle Blower Standard Operating Procedure to improve the reporting guidelines.

Council directed Administration to revisit the agreement

between the County and the third-party service provider and to prepare amendments to the Standard Operating Procedure to be brought back to Council for further review.

Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties Lobby Efforts

Twice a year in the spring and fall, the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) holds a convention for member municipalities and provincial officials to meet and discuss issues affecting the province.

Council will be requesting meetings with the Ministers of Transportation, Health, Seniors, Municipal Affairs, and Environment and Parks to discuss issues important to the County at the spring convention.