

President Report - October 2018

I know that I have mentioned this before, but because of publishing deadlines, I must write these reports early in the month knowing that you won't read them until the beginning of the next month. A lot can happen between the time that I write until it lands in your mail box. That is what is going through my mind today.

The subject of "cannabis" has taken up much of my time over the summer, first with the development permit applications for retail store outlets, and then with the designated legal consumption site that Councillor Carra is proposing for the south side of the field at 78th Avenue and Ogden Road just below the Glenmore Inn commercial plaza. As I write this report, three applications have been approved by the City, this includes two in the Ogden district and one in Riverbend, each of course subject to an appeal period which will have expired by the time you read this. The three are - Glenmore Inn Plaza, the Rick's Grocery Plaza on 62nd Avenue, and the Riverbend Shopping Plaza. At this time a fourth application is still under review – that is the Ridgemart store on 62nd Avenue at 19th Street. All are in buildings that are properly zoned for cannabis retail and the three that have been approved meet the criteria set out by Council. Of course, these approvals are just for the development permit – there are other approvals including Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission. The applicants for each will likely have to do their business plan and then decide whether they will follow through with the investment in the store. It is not a given that all three now approved for a development approval will open as a cannabis retail store, but we will have to wait to see what happens.

The most current issue is the City's desire to allocate approved cannabis legal consumption sites throughout the City, but only Councillor Carra has come forward with proposed locations. The purpose of course is to offer designated consumption areas for those who do not have a legal place to consume their cannabis. As outlined above the site that is being recommended is a small parcel in the middle of the south side of the field just below the Glenmore Plaza. The site must be a specific distance from residences and this apparently is the only site in the Ogden district that fits the requirements. I have been quite critical in my comments in that I have suggested that just because a site meets the required criteria, does not make it a good site. There has to be some logic and common sense to the selection of a suitable location. This site is so remote that it is hard to imagine that a cannabis user would make a special effort to drive to the field, and then walk across the field which is not maintained, to this spot in the field, to smoke their weed. But it does give the City the ability to say that the City has provided an approved legal consumption site, and it is not their responsibility if consumers do not use it. Note – backyard consumption on private property is allowed, but the concern is occupants of condos, apartment buildings, rental properties, and the hotel guests, who may have other restrictions about consumption on those properties. Interestingly this proposed site is located at the extreme southeast corner of the community while the bulk of the apartments and condos are located at the extreme northwest corner of the community. I am not convinced that legalizing cannabis is going to create an entire new population of cannabis users. This site does not make any logical sense for a variety of reasons and I am speculating that if it is approved, it will not

get any use. People who smoke cannabis now will continue to smoke it wherever they have been and wherever they are comfortable. Personally, my biggest concern is that the site proposed is currently designated for a future recreation facility – specifically an indoor lacrosse centre. Should this site be approved for cannabis consumption, I can only hope that this use will not block the future development of that project, nor interfere with the many families who use the hill for tobogganing.

Anyway, to summarize, Councillor Carra is treating this exercise as his way of consulting with residents and I am saying, no, that it is not correct – there are much better ways to consult with communities. This strategy puts the suggested locations for legal cannabis consumption sites suggested in Ward 9 by Councillor Carra already on a Council Agenda for a public hearing scheduled for October 9, which means that there will be a Report from the administration with a Recommendation, but we don't know what that report says, nor what the recommendation is. But City Council will have to deal with it, and there will have to be a decision. At this point we have not heard from anyone who supports this proposed location as a legal consumption site. A large number of community residents attended the MOCA meeting on September 5 and voiced their concerns to Councillor Carra's Exec Assistant, who does a great job on his behalf by the way, but our concerns will remain until this matter is closed. If you have an opinion on this matter, I would encourage you to voice your concerns to Councillor Carra's office directly.

I am not going to reprint the changes that are being proposed to the bus transit system that currently services our area but suffice to say, some changes will be coming, but not likely until at least November. If you have missed my previous reports where I outlined the proposed changes, you can either look up the previous newsletters on our website [September is most detailed] or contact the MOCA office.

The development permit for the small parking area at the south end of Pop Davies Park has now been approved by the City Planning Department. There is no timeline indicated as to when the actual construction work will take place. Again the purpose of the parking lot is as follows -- currently the users of the south sports fields park their vehicles along Ogden Road and have good access to those fields, but we understand this Ogden Road parking will be lost once the future LRT tracks and a security fence is installed. We have expressed concern that players will then start parking along Crestwood Road and maybe the alley creating residential parking issues. The City's response to those types of complaints is to create restricted parking zones, or permitted parking areas, but we have suggested that the City be more proactive where parking issues can be anticipated, and that is why the south parking lot was proposed.

You may have noticed other work by Enmax along Ogden Road near Pop Davies during the month of September. The project involved lowering the overhead power lines to the underground ducts and removing the power poles. This work is part of the preliminary work required for the future Greenline LRT.

We continue to monitor the status of the traffic signals expected at 76th Avenue and Ogden Road. All that remains is for a wooden power pole to be removed and then the actual installation of the lights can occur and be activated. We expect that the delay is likely because Enmax is caught up in other work throughout the City and they just need to fit this relatively small job into their work program.

Likewise, if you recall my comments last month about the status of the Lynnview Ridge Site that we expect to be opening to the public, unfortunately the delay continues. We have been told that the City is continuing to give the seeded areas a little more time develop. I understand that the next inspection with the Parks representative is now scheduled for late September. As mentioned in the past, City Parks are required to sign off on the site to accept it under the Parks inventory before the fence can be removed and the site opened up, and they won't sign off until it reaches an acceptable standard.

Our planned Community Hall Expansion Project is still progressing although somewhat slowly. The Building Permit Application has been submitted to the City, and the tendering process is now well underway. On these types of projects, the City must conduct a financial review before there is a final approval to proceed, and this financial review cannot be completed until after we have final cost estimates. This is an understandable process for construction projects like this, that are community owned but sitting on City land. We are happy to provide any information, or answer any questions about this project.

As mentioned, MOCA's Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday October 16 – 7 pm .The Agenda for that meeting is outlined in this newsletter. This is our opportunity as the MOCA Board, to be accountable to you the residents, and more specifically, to the membership. We will be presenting our Annual Financial Report as well as outlining many of the accomplishments of the past year, and a bit of a forecast as to what is planned for the upcoming year, and beyond. In addition, there are a few directors who are up for re-election and, as always, the opportunity for new directors to be added as part of the election process. Although this meeting is somewhat structured, it is one of the most important meetings of the year because it is a requirement of the provincial legislation governing societies. We invite all residents to attend although you do have to own a MOCA membership to vote.

Our current Board is very good -- each Director brings some of their own skills to the table and together we have accomplished a lot, but still there is a need for members with some professional background. In addition, we need to do some succession planning for those members of the Board who might be retiring, and that will likely happen over the next couple of years. This is a volunteer Board as you know, and our Bylaws do limit the term length. We would like to add Board members who can continue to move this organization forward. We are essentially a facility operator, employer, provider of recreation and social programs, community planner, to name a few. This is a very active community, and there are many interesting and exciting things developing including our plans to renovate and expand the community hall building, and of course the forthcoming Greenline [LRT] and all of the projects that are

connected with it. There are always a variety of development projects happening in the community, and of course our involvement in representing the residents on a variety of quality of life issues that arise from time to time. If you would like to get involved with community affairs, please contact us.

And of course, if you are planning a social event, ie, for your family, your business, or an organization, please give some thought to renting the MOCA Hall, - main hall upper floor, or lower level lounge. We would appreciate your business. By the way, the hall is expected to remain open for business during our expansion construction with the least amount of interruption to our renters.

As always, if you have questions or concerns that you would like to direct to me, please either call into the MOCA office, or send me an e-mail at president@millicanogdencommunity.com.

Best wishes

Rick Smith , MOCA President