

County lends supports to heritage designation for North Saskatchewan River

Clearwater County council notes:

Jan. 26

BY DIANE SPOOR
STAFF REPORTER

During its regular council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 26, Clearwater County council approved a letter of support to Smoky Lake County to have a portion of the North Saskatchewan River become part of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

In a letter provided to council from Kyle Schole, a delegate from Smoky Lake County, it stated the designation is being sought for economic development: "Smoky Lake County provides for a variety of commercial and industrial uses along the river corridor, including for example, sand/gravel/aggregate resource extraction. Further, the county, the Town of Smoky Lake, and the Métis Nation of Alberta have embarked together on a strategy to support further economic development especially in the Victoria District adjacent the river, including the commercial, agro-tourism, and visitor economies."

In his letter Schole, said the next steps are to determine the exact portion of the river to be included in the nomination. The letter said: "Numerous Alberta municipalities have already signed-on-

In a letter dated Oct. 23, 2020, Alberta Minister for Environment, Hon. Jason Nixon confirmed that Alberta Environment will be supporting Smoky Lake County in making a nomination for a portion of the North Saskatchewan River. This is a notable and exciting development, as it is Alberta Environment which will formally nominate the river to the CHRS (Canadian Heritage River System) board, which, if accepted, is then endorsed by both the Alberta and Canadian Ministers of the Environment. We anticipate that this could occur in Q4 2021."

APPROVAL GIVEN FOR FIRST READING TO ALLOW FOR SOLAR FARMS

Clearwater County gave first reading to amend the land use bylaw to include a definition for solar farm under discretionary uses under the Agricultural District. The land use revision would allow Agricultural District "A" landowners the opportunity to use a portion of land for electricity generation and would provide consistency with provincial regulations.

The granting of first reading allows the matter to move to a public hearing, with a date still to be set.

Councillor Michelle Swanson brought a notice of motion forward to ask county staff to look at building a land

use bylaw that would encompass all types of alternative energy such as geo-thermal, solar and wind.

COUNCIL APPROVES AMENDMENT TO EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Clearwater County council approved an amendment to its employment policy that clarifies to employees that they will be held accountable for their behaviours that are prohibited by Occupational Health and Safety legislation.

Human Resources Manager, Janice Anderson presented the change to council during the regular council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 26.

Anderson said the amendment came about after the provincial ombudsman received a complaint in 2019 from an employee regarding discipline he had received. Anderson said, "That opened up the door to the ombudsman office poring over our policy and procedures in some detail. One of the things that had been proposed for clarity and transparency was for our employees to recognize that their behaviour at work matters and could be the subject of discipline."

The agenda item before council stated, "The recommendations from the ombudsman office requested administration to be clearer and more transparent in the following: 1) the clear expectation

that an employee is accountable for their behaviour in the workplace, 2) clarify confidentiality requirements of the complainant and respondent of a complaint, 3) clarify the reporting process for a complaint, 4) indicate the general principles of an investigation, 5) clarify that the internal report to the CAO may be written or verbal, 6) clarify the process that supervisory staff are to undertake prior to issuing discipline, and 7) provide an internal appeal process."

Council approved the amendments.

DUNCAN AND VANDERMEER RECEIVE LONG SERVICE RECOGNITION

Councillor Jim Duncan and Deputy Reeve John Vandermeer were recognized at Clearwater County's regular council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 26, for their long service to Rural Municipalities of Alberta.

The RMA recognizes rural municipal elected officials and administrators for their commitment and dedication to municipal governance. Duncan

and Vandermeer were set to receive these awards during the RMA fall convention but due to COVID-19 that event was cancelled.

COUNCIL PROVIDES LETTER OF SUPPORT TO XPLORNET

Clearwater County approved providing a letter of support to Xplornet Communications Inc. for their application to the Universal Broadband Fund. This is the third company that has sought and received a letter of support from the county for the UBF application.

In the letter of support, Reeve Cammie Laird stated, "While the county intends to submit applications for its own project, we also support applications by local Internet service providers as we view this as a significant opportunity for them to potentially partner with us in reaching our goals related to rural broadband."

DRAFT BROADBAND TELECOMMUNICATIONS OPEN ACCESS POLICY PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

During the regular council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 26,

Clearwater County council received a draft Broadband Telecommunications Open Access Policy. Council directed administration to contact Internet Service Providers (ISPs), Retail Service Providers (RSPs) and the public to gather input.

BROADBAND POINT OF PRESENCE SITE TO BE DEVELOPED

Three bays in the Emergency Services North Building are being marked for renovations to be the site of the point of presence (POP) for broadband.

This building will host the main POP site for broadband infrastructure. The total space of the three bays is approximately 3,000 sq. ft. and would house a third party equipment room, an outside plant fiber termination room, a Clearwater County equipment room, an AC/HVAC/utility room, a network monitoring office, an equipment storage room, a washroom, a mop room and hallway space.

The estimated budget cost of the project is \$966,000.

PUBLIC NOTICE CANADIAN NAVIGABLE WATER ACT

FortisAlberta Inc. hereby gives notice that an application has been made to the Minister of

Transport, pursuant to the *Canadian Navigable*