

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO**

**RURAL/AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Thursday, September 3, 2020**

**PRESENT:** Chair Mark Parker

Directors Mark Fisher  
Tom Greenaway  
Clint Lambert  
Chris Newell  
Jerry Petersen  
Michael Riis-Christianson  
Gerry Thiessen

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer  
Cheryl Anderson, Manager of Administrative Services  
Nellie Davis, Regional Economic Development Coordinator  
Janette Derksen, Deputy Director of Environmental Services – arrived at 10:58 a.m.  
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer  
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning  
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant

Others Dolores Funk, Village of Burns Lake  
Darrell Hill, Contractor, Northwest Invasive Plant Council – arrived at 10:40 a.m.  
Casda Thomas, Councillor, Town of Smithers  
Wayne Whittemore and Residents from the Whistle Cessation Group, Electoral Area “A” (Smithers Rural) – Via Zoom left at 10:36 a.m.

Media Priyanka Ketkar, Lakes District News – arrived at 10:36 a.m.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 10:15 p.m.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

Curtis Helgesen, CAO administered the Oath of Office to Casda Thomas, Director, Town of Smithers.

**AGENDA**

Moved by Director Lambert  
Seconded by Director Greenaway

**RDC.2020-6-1**

“That the Rural/Agriculture Committee Agenda for September 3, 2020 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority) **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**MINUTES**

**Rural Directors Committee Meeting Minutes -June 4, 2020**

Moved by Director Petersen  
Seconded by Director Lambert

**RDC.2020-6-2**

“That the minutes of the Rural Directors Committee meeting of June 4, 2020 be adopted.”

(All/Directors/Majority) **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **DELEGATION**

### **WAYNE WHITTEMORE (Via Zoom) RE: Whistle Cessation, Electoral Area “A”**

Chair Parker welcomed Wayne Whittemore and residents of Electoral Area “A” in regard to Whistle Cessation.

Mr. Whittemore spoke to the request for Whistle Cessation, Electoral Area “A”

- Concerns in regard to noise disturbances
  - o Health and sleep impacts
  - o Impact to quality of life
- Staff in the Thompson Nicola Regional District have worked through the whistle cessation process and indicated willingness to assist
- Challenging process
- In Southern BC there are a number of whistle cessations with guarded crossings
- Request from residents in Electoral Area “A” (Smithers Rural) for whistle cessation at:
  - o Lake Kathlyn East
  - o Lake Kathlyn West
  - o Slack Road
    - Petition signed by 334 residents
    - A number of fatalities have occurred at the rail crossings
- Anticipated increase in train traffic
- Cost and responsibility of guarded crossing
  - o Potential Service Area
  - o Potential grant funding and funding from Transport Canada
- Impact to the region due to the number of unguarded crossings
- An existing guarded crossing located in a low-density area in Electoral Area “A”
- Vegetation near unguarded rail crossings makes it challenging to have a clear line of sight
- Train whistles are inconsistent
- Whistle a deterrent to people wanting to move to the area
  - o Impact to resale values
- Work being conducted by Friends of Morice-Bulkley in regard to rail traffic
  - o Director Fisher encouraged Mr. Whittemore to contact Friends of Morice-Bulkley
- Moving forward and investigating options
  - o Possibly establishing a service area
- Whistle Cessation group will provide a summary of concerns to Regional District staff.

Mr. Whittemore indicated his wish to move forward and review potential options.

Chair Parker thanked Mr. Whittemore and the residents of the Whistle Cessation, Electoral Area “A” Group for attending the meeting.

## **PLANNING DEPARTMENT (Rural Directors)**

### **Crown Land Referral**

Crown Land Application  
Referral No. 7410025  
(J Penner) – Electoral Area F

Moved by Director Petersen  
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2020-6-3

“That the Comment Sheet for Crown Land Application Referral No. 7410025 be provided to the Province.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **Crown Land Referral (Cont'd)**

Crown Land Application  
Referral No. 6409207  
(BV Amateur Radio Society)  
-Electoral Area B

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson  
Seconded by Director Lambert

RDC.2020-6-4

"That the Comment Sheet for Crown Land Application Referral No. 6409207 be provided to the Province."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

### **RURAL REPORTS**

CN Whistle Cessation

Moved by Director Lambert  
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2020-6-5

"That the Rural/Agriculture Committee receive the Manager of Administrative Services' September 3, 2020 CN Whistle Cessation memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place in regard to staff:

- Working with the railway company to determine a cost analysis of whistle cessation and a guarded crossing
- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure jurisdiction of roadways in rural areas
- Options moving forward and staff time
- Staff will provide a report at the September 17, 2020 Board meeting.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### 1. Spot Zoning

- Raised at the Electoral Area "A" APC Meeting as a result of a rezoning application that was being considered
- There is no formal definition of "Spot Zoning"
- The term originates from the American Legal System
- Rezoning a particular property with property around it that is negative and contrary to land planning
- Doesn't apply to the Canadian legal system/planning
- 90% of applications received by the Board is "spot zoning"
- Rezoning that may have a negative impact is referred to as spot zoning - if the rezoning is favourable it is not referred to as spot zoning
- Legal System in BC oversees the rezoning process to ensure a fair process and that legislation is being followed.
- The Board considers a number of items when a rezoning application is brought forward, and a decision is made
- Understanding of cumulative impacts regarding rezoning and land use
- Official Community Plans (OCP) is the process in which cumulative impacts are reviewed.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS (CONT'D)**

2. Federal Gas Tax Review
  - Chair Parker spoke with Taylor Bachrach, MP Skeena-Bulkley Valley
    - MP Bachrach participates on the Review Committee for Federal Gas Tax
    - Requested input/feedback from the Board in regard to Federal Gas Tax
    - Directors can e-mail information to Nellie Davis, Regional Economic Development Coordinator
      - Staff will bring forward information received at an upcoming Rural Directors Committee Meeting prior to forwarding to MP Bachrach.
  
3. UBCM Convention Update (if available)
  - Staff provided the latest 2020 UBCM Virtual Convention Program
  - Have yet to receive Minister Meeting Confirmations
  - Rural Directors wanting hotel accommodations in Burns Lake during UBCM can forward their information to staff.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan

Chair Parker noted that staff have hard copies of the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan available.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Director Lambert  
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2020-6-6

“That the meeting be adjourned at 11:07 a.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

---

Mark Parker, Chair

---

Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant