

REQUEST FOR DECISION

DATE: November 9, 2015

Report No. DEV-15-063

TO: Laurie Hurst, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Marlene Lagoa, Community Development Coordinator

SUBJECT:

Draft Minister's Bylaw Standards on Agri-tourism and Farm Retail Sales

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive Staff Report DEV-15-063 for information

RELEVANT POLICY:

Local Government Act
Agricultural Land Commission Act
Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2007, No. 2646

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE:

This Request for Decision does not relate to a specific Council Strategic Priority.

BACKGROUND:

At the Council meeting held on October 26, 2015, Council received the Email from Derek Sturko, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, dated October 6, 2015, Re: Draft Minister's Bylaw Standards on Agri-tourism and Farm Retail Sales and directed staff to forward the communication to the Environmental Advisory Committee for review and input.

The Email was addressed to all local government stakeholders in British Columbia requesting feedback on the proposed Minister's Bylaw Standards for regulating agri-tourism and farm retail sales in the Agricultural Land Reserve.

The Township of Esquimalt has only one parcel of land within the Agricultural Land Reserve. That parcel is the Gorge Vale Golf Course which was first established in 1930. In 1973, the provincial government introduced BC's *Land Commission Act* as a way to address the erosion of agricultural land due to development. At the time the use

of land in the Agriculture Land Reserve as a golf course was permitted subject Commission approval and compliance with local government bylaws. Due to the large volume of golf course proposals being received, the provincial government removed golf course as a potential use in the late 1980s. However, the use of Esquimalt's Agricultural Land Reserve by the Gorge Vale Golf Course had been approved and was grandfathered as an acceptable use. Given the long history of the Gorge Vale Golf Course it is highly unlikely that the land use would change to agricultural use in the foreseeable future.

In conclusion, the Draft Minister's Bylaw Standards on Agri-tourism and Farm Retail Sales in the Agricultural Land Reserve was not forwarded to the Environmental Advisory Committee for input. Staff can not recommend providing feedback on the Draft Minister's Bylaw Standards at this time.

ISSUES:

1. Rationale for Selected Option

It is unlikely that Esquimalt's only Agricultural Land Reserve parcel's historical and current use as a golf course will change to agricultural in the foreseeable future. Staff does not recommend dedicating any further resources to critiquing a draft bylaw standard which does not impact the Township.

2. Organizational Implications

Had the item been of relevance to the Township there was still insufficient time to refer the item to Environmental Advisory Committee and provide feedback to Council prior to the November 30, 2015 deadline.

3. Financial Implications

There are no current or future budget implications.

4. Sustainability & Environmental Implications

There are no sustainability and environmental implications.

5. Communication & Engagement

There is no communication and engagement strategy as staff recommends taking no action.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. That Council receive Staff Report DEV-15-063 for information
2. That Council receive Staff Report DEV-15-063 for information and provide feedback to the Ministry of Agriculture.
3. That Council request further information from staff.