

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Friday, May 20, 2016

The regular meeting of Improvement District No. 4 Council was held at the Waterton Community Centre in Waterton Lakes National Park on Friday, May 20, 2016.

Those in Attendance:

Chair Brian Reeves, Councillors: Brian Baker, Dennis Pollock, Jody Thaeil and Ken Black
CAO Scott Barton

Parks Canada: Robert Elliot, Town Site Manager.

Call to Order: Chair Brian Reeves called the regular meeting of Council to order at 6:35 pm.

Adoption of Agenda

01-05-20-16 MOVED by Councillor Brian Baker that the agenda be adopted as amended.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Delegation: John Barlow, Member of Parliament

M.P. John Barlow expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to meet with Council. He discussed the Visitor Reception Centre situation with Council and indicated that he has received considerable correspondence regarding the issue. Mr. Barlow has received a petition from concerned citizens and will take the information back to Ottawa. He plans on meeting with the responsible Ministries to discuss the flow of correct information, community feedback on the process and transparency of process regarding the Visitor Reception Centre. He encouraged Council to provide feedback on any Federal issue. The Connecting Canadian's Grant Program was discussed. The new government has committed to the program but are not ready to move forward on 2nd round funding at this time. Mr. Barlow felt that the Waterton area would be of high priority. Affordable housing was also discussed.

Delegation: Bonnie Fromm and Leslie Little – Visitor Reception Centre

Bonnie Fromm discussed her concerns regarding the proposed location of the Visitor Reception Centre. She discussed the overall lack of public consultation. Bonnie, then reviewed information from the 2010 Community Plan, which proposed a location outside of the Townsite. Concern was expressed over the winter decision making process when most leaseholders were absent. Bonnie reviewed her attempts to contact the Park Superintendent the response she received, which did not provide any answers to her questions. Her purpose is to petition the Improvement District Council to assist in her efforts for more public consultation on the issue. Bonnie asked for a retraction of the statement made by Improvement District Chair Brian Reeves in Parks Canada's News Release on the Visitor Reception Centre. She wanted to know the rest of council's

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position on the proposed location. Bonnie expressed her concerns over the trivialization of safety and incorrectness of the plans circulate to the public. The encroachment into or possible removal of the new washroom facility, spray park, basketball court and tennis court was alarming to her. She invited Council to attend tomorrow's open house on the issue. Bonnie expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to present to Council. Attached is a copy of Bonnie Fromm's presentation.

Lesley Little provided Council with an overview of her meeting with Parks Canada Officials. She indicated that they went through the motions, but that it was apparent that they were not open to community input. Leslie indicated that the Lease Holders Association could not support the proposed location of the Visitor Reception Centre. She posed three questions: if the Improvement District Council and Chamber of Commerce Board had discussed with the community the intentions of Parks Officials could that have avoided the present situation?, how are we going to deal with this situation after tomorrow?, and what will happen now?

Councillor Jody Thaele responded to Lesley's questions indicating that it was not Council's decision to locate the Visitor Reception Centre in the proposed location, nor was Council asked. Parks Canada Officials indicated that it was their call. Jody further explained that Parks Canada Officials had discussed proposals for the new Visitor Reception Centre with Council and that Council voiced their location concerns. In the discussions with Parks Canada, Council emphasized the importance of the new playground and spray park facilities. Councillor Thaele informed the delegation that Council does not have the information required to make a decision at this time. Councillor Ken Black indicated that Council has met with Parks Canada Officials and Project Architects to discuss alternative locations, but were given the impression that the decision had been made.

Council Minutes – April 29, 2016

02-05-20-16 **MOVED** by Councillor Jody Thaele that the Minutes of the April 29, 2016 meeting of Improvement District No. 4 Council be approved as amended.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Financial Report

03-05-20-16 **MOVED** by Councillor Dennis Pollock that the Financial Reports be approved as presented.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

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Parks Canada Report – Robert Elliot

Parks Canada Town Site Manager Robert Elliot reported on the Cameron Lake Day Use Area Project that is scheduled to start next week. The contract has been awarded for Phase 1 of the housing project. Water and sewer infrastructure work is continuing. The South Evergreen roadway will open soon and work will start on North Evergreen in the near future. Alley work on South Evergreen will start this fall. Paving the Chief Mountain Highway will start next week. Robert also discussed the Fire Smart Program that focuses on forest fuel reduction.

Duplex Gifting to the WPCA

04-05-20-16 **MOVED** by Councillor Brian Baker that the Duplex, which was gifted to the Improvement District from Parks Canada be gifted to the Waterton Park Community Association.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Community Group Grant Funding

Brian Baker proposed, that whereas the 2016 ID#4 Budget was conditionally approved at the April 29, 2016 Council Meeting, with a condition that no further community grant funds be distributed unless ID#4 council unanimously approved the transfer of such funds, and; whereas the 2016 ID#4 Budget included a Community Grant to the Waterton Park Community Association (WPCA) for \$ 184,720, and; whereas the 2016 ID#4 Budget included a Community Grant to the Waterton Chamber of Commerce (Waterton C of C) for \$ 140,000;

05-05-20-16 **MOVED** by Councillor Brian Baker that Council approve a Community Grant funding transfer totaling \$324, 720 with respective grants to the Waterton Park Community Association (WPCA) for \$184,720, and to the Waterton Chamber of Commerce for \$140,000, and;
that these Community Grant funds be deposited into the current ID#4/WPCA General Account, and;
that this ID#4/WPCA General Account be repurposed as a restricted Community Grant account for the sole purpose of transferring funds to community groups and/or programs. Additionally, this fund will hold any Community Grant funds that have not been approved for distribution, as cash reserves for future community funding initiatives/programs, as approved by the ID#4 Council, and;
that a grant in the amount of \$140,000 be allocated to the WPCA, and transferred to the WPCA General Operations account, noting that a portion of

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this grant (\$100,000) has already been transferred to the ID#4/WPCA General Operations account. The remaining \$40,000 is to be transferred to the WPCA General Operations account as soon as funds become available. This funding allocation to the WPCA of \$140,000 is to be used solely for approved and budgeted operational and administrative purposes of the WPCA, and; that a grant in the amount of \$140,000, be transferred to the Waterton Chamber of Commerce as soon as funds become available. This funding allocation to the Waterton Chamber of Commerce, totaling \$140,000, is to be used solely for approved and budgeted tourism marketing purposes of the Waterton Chamber of Commerce.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Crooked Creek Campground

Councillor Ken Black reviewed the drinking water well situation at Crooked Creek Campground and discussed the implication of the closed water basin. He is projecting that the Campground will have a small profit in 2016. The 80 fire pits at the campground will be replaced this year at a cost of \$150 per pit.

06-05-20-16 **MOVED** by Councillor Brian Baker that Council approve the replacement of eighty (80) fire pits at Crooked Creek Campground at a unit cost of \$150.00.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Broadband Project

Chair Brian Reeves reported that 95 percent of the business community has signed up for a broadband connection. He reviewed the situation at the Prince of Wales and that broadband installation has been rescheduled until the fall. The Gigabit service will be setup on June 1 by Telus.

Highway 3 Twinning Development Association

07-05-20-16 **MOVED** by Councillor Jody Thael that the Improvement District join the Highway 3 Twinning Development Association and approve the \$250.00 annual membership fee.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Correspondence

08-05-20-16 **MOVED** by Chair Brian Reeves that Brian Reeves and Ken Black be approved to attend the Municipal Government Minister's Tour.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED



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09-05-20-16 **MOVED** by Councillor Ken Black that the Correspondence be accepted as information.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Next Council Meeting

The next regular meeting of Council is scheduled for June 24, 2016 in the Community Centre at 6:30pm.

Adjournment

10-05-20-16 **MOVED** by Councillor Brian Baker adjournment at 8:04 pm.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED


Chair Brian Reeves
CAO Scott Barton

Good evening, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to be on the agenda tonight. I know that you have many things to discuss.

I am just like you - I love Waterton. These mountains are where I have spent every summer since I was a baby in a backpack. Now with my own children, I have passed on a love for Waterton. I often say that it is my favourite place in the whole world.

There are many people with a personal interest in Waterton who would like to stand before you and share their concerns on the proposed location of the new Visitor Reception Centre, but do not want to compromise their relationship with Park administration. I consider it an honour that I can speak openly and convey some of these same concerns. Where each person stands on this issue will impact Waterton for generations.

I am concerned there has been no public consultation related to this decision. Park Management has indicated that they believe the necessary consultation has already been completed by the 2000 Community Plan.

However, since that time, the public was also consulted during the 2010 Park Management Planning process. Could the Council please turn with me to the Agenda Packet to the 2010 Waterton Management Plan Key Actions Section 5.1.4 Bullet #3. It reads:
"Investigate the feasibility of locating a new visitor centre at a site along the entrance road across from the Lake Linnet/Middle Waterton Lake day use area. This site will improve access for visitors, provide a positive welcome and sense of arrival, and mitigate impacts on the wildlife corridor in the area of the current visitor centre."

This current 2010 Management Plan explicitly states that it replaces the old 2000 Management & Community Plans. The 2010 Park Management Plan also states on page 29 in Section 5.2.4 Bullet #4, included in your packet, that "The community plan will be updated to reflect the direction of this (2010) park management plan." Our concern is that Parks Canada has not fully investigated the feasibility of this site above middle Waterton Lake, and has defaulted to the townsite location without giving due diligence to the 2010 Management Plan.

You would think that Parks Canada would follow the dictate of the 2010 management plan to put the new visitor centre outside the community, rather than what is found in the outdated and irrelevant 2000 management and community plans.

I have read all 58 pages of this updated 2010 document and I see great wisdom in the compilation of the 2010 Plan and their recommendation for the location. The area north of middle Waterton Lake will be a safe, accessible location for visitors, does not increase townsite congestion, and can provide the necessary parking and space for future expansion.

I was surprised when on March 7, 2016 a Parks Canada Press Release stated the new Visitor Reception Centre would be built in the townsite. I immediately contacted several people familiar with Waterton, and we all agreed this decision had come out of left field. I could not believe I had missed the chance to be involved in this decision-making process as a taxpaying citizen and frequent visitor to Waterton.

Parks Canada's own website from Section 8 of their Guiding Principles says that Public Involvement is a cornerstone of policy and management practices. And it also states:
-there must be ADEQUATE NOTICE AND TIME FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

It should be noted that Parks Canada made the decision on this project in the winter months, which did not allow time for public review on the location during the busy summer season.

Public input for a Community Plan 16 years ago does not constitute public input for this specific location of the VRC to be built in the playfield in 2018, as Parks Canada would have you believe. And if they want to rely on outdated data, the most recent data from 2010 shows that public input wanted the placement of the new visitor centre outside the community, not in it. Since public consultation is a requirement for major park infrastructure, I emailed the Superintendent on April 10 asking for the following:

I wanted to know:

1. The date of the supposed public consultations
2. How it was advertised
3. The minutes of the meeting to see what was discussed
4. Those who were in attendance.

One can imagine my disappointment when I received a dismissive email back from Superintendent Thomas two and a half weeks later on April 27, but did not receive a single specific answer to any of my questions. Let me read a portion of this email to you. "Parks Canada seeks to make every effort to engage with those interested in particular issues where a community of interest has a perspective that it wishes to include in that broader discussion."

It took 17 days to receive this vague, non-specific response to my email. I had also sent a hard copy letter. 17 days.....? 17 days is unheard of in this day and age of electronic communications. For those who are familiar with the history of the Park, legendary Waterton figure Joe Cosley could have snowshoed from the Belly River Ranger Station in Montana to Waterton 34 times in 17 days. After 17 days, I still had no answers to my questions. On April 29 I sent another email. This was two days after I had received the Superintendent's response, in which he stated they would now be holding a community session in June, but without any specifics. No date, no time, no agenda, no location. It said nothing about putting the project on hold, seeking input on the location, or presenting relevant safety, traffic, or environmental studies.

In this April 29 email, I requested this same information again, and twelve days later the Superintendent responded that he had "discussions regarding the Visitor Centre location with a range of community representatives, stakeholders, and leaseholders, including the Waterton Lakes Leaseholders Association (WLLA)."

The Waterton Lakes Leaseholders Association has already made it clear there has not been adequate consultation with leaseholders, so I have asked again in another letter sent on May 13, "Who are the specific stakeholders that Mr. Thomas claims to have met with?" I am still waiting for a response. As a federally-funded entity, Parks Canada's decision to be non-communicative with taxpaying citizens is appalling and inappropriate. My purpose in being here tonight is to petition the Improvement District #4 council to help us hold Parks Canada accountable as they have not had meaningful consultations with visitors, leaseholders, and other stakeholders.

In the March 7th, 2016 Parks Canada Press Release, which you will find in your packet, Dr. Brian Reeves was quoted as saying: "The Council of the Improvement District #4 is in full support of the new Visitor Reception Centre in the Waterton Park Community. This will be a great improvement in visitor services, and people will be able to walk to this location from

wherever they are in the townsite. As 100% of the visitors to Waterton already come to the townsite, there will be no additional traffic or parking issues."

I was left under the impression that Dr. Reeves was speaking for the entire Council, and that this Council has indeed voted and given their full support on this proposed location.

But after reading the minutes of the ID #4 Council on April 29, 2016, there was a statement that seemed incongruous with Dr. Reeve's Press Release.

From the minutes, "Council was concerned by the statement that all of Council was in approval of this, when they did not approve or disapprove of the Visitor Centre."

There are two reasons then why the Press Release statement is of concern:

1. It clearly suggests that the ID #4 Council is in "full support" of the visitor centre when in fact this is clearly not an opinion shared by all of council.
2. If indeed the elected ID #4 Council represents the ratepayers and leaseholders, then it clearly does not represent their views.

The Leaseholder Association conducted a survey of its own members in September 2015, a full six months prior to this Press Release, in which 94% of leaseholders were opposed to relocating the VRC to the townsite.

To the rest of the ID #4 Council members, if this press release is not your perspective, I would like to hear it, so I can present a new statement at our Public Forum tomorrow morning, and I would also ask for a retraction of the statement in the Parks Canada Press Release. At this point, you may still be thinking, what is the fuss? So what if Parks Canada isn't following their own government-mandated documents? Who cares that they aren't listening to Park employees, business owners, and leaseholders? Why does it matter that they haven't consulted with taxpayers on a \$7.6 million dollar project that is meant for visitors, NOT Parks Canada management?

In an email from Mr. Thomas, he stated:

"The test is whether or not anything substantive has been missed rather than whether or not a particular view is strongly felt."

I am here to tell you today why this matters: something substantive has been missed, namely, the actual facts to prove that this is the only possible site where the new VRC can be built. Parks Canada has not done their due diligence. Our approach is not just one of strong feeling, like Parks Canada implies. Our demand all along has been for specific facts, supported by scientific, unbiased data. We do not want meaningless statistics like "100% of visitors come to the townsite so there will be no additional traffic and parking issues." That does not constitute a traffic study, even though it has been repeated by many people. Just because a statement is reiterated many times does not make it true or relevant. We want assurance that a child will not be hurt or killed with the increased traffic and congestion in the vicinity of the playground.

I have attached for you to review, the scoring matrix from the Site Study conducted by Jenkins Architecture. I was appalled when I saw that Parks Canada had weighted public safety at a mere 3.9%.

Let me say that again. In scoring out of 100, Parks Canada assigned Public Safety a weighting of 3.9. I have heard it said that the people who are raising a fuss over the proposed VRC location think that they are somehow "elite". This is where it gets personal for me. I am here to tell you that as a mother with two young sons, and twenty nieces and nephews, there is absolutely nothing "elite" about keeping kids safe, and anyone who says otherwise needs to examine their own motives.

The weighting of Public Safety should be the highest priority of any public institution, especially in light of the recent fire in Fort McMurray. The Waterton Townsite has experienced major public safety events that need to be weighted heavily in the location and design of the VRC. For example, a large fire in August 2015 nearly caused an evacuation of the entire townsite. Safety should not be trivialized.

One other point of interest in the Site Study scoring guide is the criterion "Ability of (the) site to accommodate future needs."

As you can see, it is ranked dead last in the 13th spot, out of 13 possible criteria. Was this not the main reason Parks Canada said we needed a new VRC to begin with? The existing site could not accommodate current needs.

Mr. Barlow, I'm sure by this point you have visited the playfield - maybe you have even taken your children to the playground there. Can you appreciate that the site Parks Canada has proposed for the new VRC, along with a new interpretive theatre, all townsite administration offices, *and* a proposed 90 stall parking lot, has ZERO room for expansion? Will this mean that Parks Canada will begin demolishing the basketball court, the tennis courts, the spray park, and encroach upon the playground? If the preliminary site drawings from Jenkins Architecture are to be believed, Parks Canada will, in fact, be removing the recently installed basketball court and spray park and it would be no surprise if the tennis courts were removed as well in the name of development. I might add that funding for the playground, spray park, and tennis court renovations done several years ago was through private donations, NOT Parks Canada funding.

Superintendent Thomas has already shared with council that when the existing Falls Theatre is demolished, this will create new, compensatory green space in the townsite. But the playfield next to the playground is an extension of the playground. Simply reclaiming a small section of grass on the opposite side of town does not replace the playfield.

After sharing all of this information, I am here to tell you that you can help us. You are a stakeholder in Waterton Lakes National Park! If Parks Canada thinks the ID #4 Council is important enough to include in their Press Release, then you are also important enough to let Parks Canada know where you currently stand as representatives of those who elected you. It is abundantly clear that Parks Canada is disregarding their own legally-binding 2010 Management Plan. That is grounds for the Environment Minister to intervene and put the entire project on hold until proper public consultation has occurred and unbiased scientific studies have been conducted. We invite you all to attend and participate in our Public Forum tomorrow at 10am at the Waterton Lakes Lodge. Mr. Barlow, I would like to thank you for your valuable time and interest with this matter. Please reflect on the number of letters you have received on this issue, as well as petition signatures, and consider that an accurate representation of where the public stands. I thank you all for taking the time to listen to our concerns. Additional resources are available at savethewatertonfield.com