



Agricultural Land Commission
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April 30, 2007

Reply to the attention of Jennifer Carson
ALC File: MM-37155

Mattheus & Marlin Alblas
13025 Burns Road
Mission, BC V2V4J1

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Alblas:

Re: Application to Subdivide land in the Agricultural Land Reserve

Please find attached the Minutes of Resolution # 148/2007 outlining the Commission's decision as it relates to the above noted application.

Yours truly,

PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION

Per:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erik Karlsen', is written over the printed name below.

Erik Karlsen, Chair

cc: Fraser Valley Regional District (3015-20-2006-03)
Slade Dyer & Associates, 33219 Brown Crescent, Mission, BC V2V2R3

Enclosure: Minutes



MINUTES OF THE PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION

A meeting was held by the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission on April 11, 2007 in Mission, B.C.

PRESENT:	Sylvia Pranger	Chair, South Coast Panel
	Michael Bose	Commissioner
	John Tomlinson	Commissioner
	Tony Pellett	Staff
	Jennifer Carson	Staff

For Consideration

Application:	# MM- 37155
Applicant:	Mattheus & Marlin Alblas
Agent:	Slade Dyer & Associates
Proposal:	To subdivide the 15.6 subject property to create four (4) 3.9 ha lots.
Legal:	PID: 005-715-806 Block A, North East 1/4 of the South West 1/4, Section 25, Township 18, New Westminster District
Location:	Located at 13025 Burns Road, Mission

Site Inspection

A site inspection was conducted on April 11, 2007. Those in attendance were:

- Sylvia Pranger Chair, South Coast Panel
- Michael Bose Commissioner
- John Tomlinson Commissioner
- Tony Pellett Staff
- Jennifer Carson Staff
- Mr. and Mrs. Alblas Applicants

Mr. Alblas confirmed that the Staff Report dated March 22, 2007 was received and no errors were identified.

The Commissioners and staff met with Mr. Alblas on the subject property to discuss the application. Mr. Alblas took the Commission on a little tour of the property and indicated where he had brought a substantial amount of soil onto the property in order to fill in the many depressions existing around the property. The Commissioners commented on the large amount of work Mr. Alblas has done to improve the property. When asked about the type of agricultural activity that had occurred on the property Mr. Alblas mentioned that he has had sheep, goats, ducks and chickens on the property.

Mr. Alblas indicated that he is proposing the subdivision as he has two children that he would like to be able to each give one of the proposed parcels. He also mentioned that he has recently developed health problems.

Context

The proposal was weighed against the purposes of the Commission as stipulated in section 6 of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* (the "Act"). They are:

1. to preserve agricultural land
2. to encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest, and
3. to encourage local governments, first nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies.

Discussion

Assessment of Agricultural Capability

In assessing agricultural capability, the Commission refers in part to agricultural capability mapping and ratings. The ratings are interpreted using the Canada Land Inventory (CLI), 'Soil Capability Classification for Agriculture' system, or the BC Land Inventory (BCLI), 'Land Capability Classification for Agriculture in B.C.' system.

The improved classifications of the agricultural capability of the soil of the subject property are

- Class 2 – Land in this class has minor limitations that require good ongoing management practices or slightly restrict the range of crops, or both.
- Class 3 – Land in this class has limitations that require moderately intensive management practices or moderately restrict the range of crops, or both.

Subclasses

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| D | undesirable soil structure |
| T | topography |
| W | excess water |

Organic Soils - Organic soils are grouped into seven classes, designated as O1 to O7. The organic soil class definitions are equivalent in terms of their relative capabilities and limitations for agricultural use to those defined for mineral soil.

Subclasses

- | | |
|---|--|
| L | degree of decomposition - permeability |
| W | excess water |

Assessment of Agricultural Suitability

The Commission assessed whether the external factors such as encroaching non-farm development have caused or will cause the land to become unsuitable for agriculture. The Commission does not believe there are external factors that render the land unsuitable for agricultural use.

Assessment of Impact on Agriculture

The Commission also assessed the impact of the proposal against the long term goal of preserving agricultural land. The Commission discussed the need for retaining larger properties for different types of agriculture such as poultry operations. The Commission was also concerned that if this subdivision were to be permitted it would heighten the expectations of other property owners in the area to do the same. The Commission believes the proposal would adversely impact existing or potential agricultural use of surrounding lands.

Assessment of Other Factors

While the Commission has compassion for the health problems faced by Mr. Alblas and understands his desire to create properties for his children, the purpose of the Commission is to focus on the agricultural impacts of each application.

Conclusions

1. That the land under application has agricultural capability and is appropriately designated as ALR.
2. That the land under application is suitable for agricultural use.
3. That the proposal will impact agriculture.
4. The Commission cannot make decisions based solely on compassionate terms.
5. That the proposal is inconsistent with the objective of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* to preserve agricultural land.

IT WAS

MOVED BY: Commissioner Bose
SECONDED BY: Commissioner Tomlinson

THAT the application be refused.

CARRIED

Resolution # 148/2007



Staff Report
Application # MM – 37155
Applicant: Mattheus & Marlin Alblas

Agent: Slade Dyer & Associates

DATE RECEIVED: January 08, 2007

DATE PREPARED: March 22, 2007

TO: Chair and Commissioners – South Coast Panel

FROM: Jennifer Carson, Land Use Planner

PROPOSAL: To subdivide the 15.6 subject property to create four (4) 3.9 ha lots. This application is made pursuant to section 21(2) of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In response to another application (#35557, 2005) to subdivide a property a short distance to the south of the subject parcel, ALC Staff wrote a report discussing the need to preserve large parcels of property in the area in order to accommodate poultry farming in order to aid its dispersal as recommended by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Since 2005, studies of options for the dairy industry have suggested that the McConnell Creek and Columbia Valley areas have good climate, ample water, workable soils and some parcels which still large enough – and thus are the main areas of the Fraser Valley which can still afford real opportunities for younger farmers to enter the dairy industry.

An excerpt from the 2005 report follows.

In 1978 the Commission and the Dewdney-Alouette Regional District jointly reviewed all the ALR boundaries. In the Upper Hatzic Valley, substantial areas were excluded along the edges of the valley, redefining the toe of the western mountains and recognizing the very limited agricultural suitability of the alluvial and colluvial fans to the east. The residential area of Durieu was excluded both because of the extent of non-farm development and because it is on a coarse alluvial fan. In the north part of the McConnell Creek area, some substantial areas were included at the time, with a further review (and more detailed agricultural capability mapping) in 1986.

Between the McConnell Creek area and the lowlands south of Durieu, the soils are somewhat similar to Nicholson soils (adequate silt capping over clay) except that the “Durieu” soil is more acid, possibly because the native forest cover is evergreen rather than deciduous. On the southern fringe of the Durieu soil, the land slopes strongly to the south, thus the land is better drained and has mostly been farmed despite the topography limitations. The northern part of the Durieu soil area is the height of land between waters flowing to Stave Lake and waters flowing to Hatzic Lake. The land is fairly level but there are some well-defined areas of poor drainage (which have formed the organic “Judson” soil type). Some small-scale agriculture is taking place, but most of the land is either

subdivided to 4 ha or in non-farm use (e.g. Salvation Army's "Miracle Valley" alcoholism rehabilitation centre).

A further issue for consideration is the recent comment by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency that it will be necessary for future growth in the Lower Mainland poultry industry to be dispersed. Although there is currently no infrastructure for the poultry industry in the Upper Hatzic Valley, the need to disperse could potentially lead to sufficient demand for sites as to make the Upper Hatzic Valley [McConnell Creek area] attractive to the poultry industry in the future, unless the existing prevalence of 4 ha parcels leads to concern over "neighbour problems".

On another topic, email correspondence from the agent in mid February of 2007 mentioned that the agent felt that misinterpretation of the bylaws by the planning staff of Fraser Valley Regional District was the reason why the Regional Board did not support the application.

Local Government:

Fraser Valley Regional District

Legal Description of Property:

PID: 005-715-806

Block A, NE¼ of the SW¼ Section 25, Township 18, New Westminster District

Purchase Date:

March 1993

Location of Property:

13025 Burns Road, McConnell Creek

Size of Property:

15.6 ha (The entire property is in the ALR).

Present use of the Property:

Small hobby farm use with a dwelling unit, garage/workshop, chicken coop, small greenhouse and ancillary shed.

Surrounding Land Uses:

WEST: 4 ha Hobby Farms

SOUTH: forested 16 ha parcel

EAST: Residential, 2 ha lots

NORTH: Residence, accessory buildings, mostly treed – 8 ha parcels

Agricultural Capability:

Data Source: Agricultural Capability Map # 92G/1 g

The property is identified as being improvable to Prime ratings.

[N.B. Part of the parcel includes organic soils, which are reportedly more difficult to improve to prime ratings, especially where parcel size is smaller.]

Official Community Plan and Designation:

Dewdney-Alouette Regional District McConnell Creek-Hatzic Prairie OCP Bylaw No. 454 (1987

Designation: **Agricultural**

Zoning Bylaw and Designation:

Dewdney-Alouette Regional District Land Use and Subdivision Regulation Bylaw No. 559 (1992)
Designation: Upland Agriculture (A-1)
Minimum Lot Size: 4 ha

PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS:

Application #19223-0

Applicant: Ministry of Lands Parks and Housing
Decision Date: August 20, 1985
Proposal: Subdivision of the 32 ha property into two lots of equal size.
Decision: Allowed as requested.

Application #21020-0

Applicant: Snethen
Decision Date: May 29, 1987
Proposal: Subdivision of 2 adjoining 15 ha properties into six 4 ha lots and one 7 ha lot.
Decision: Refused as proposed due to concerns about reduced agricultural capability.

Application #32843-0

Applicant: Mattheus and Marlin Alblas
Decision Date: October 20, 1999
Proposal: Subdivision of the 15.5 ha property into four lots for children.
Decision: Refused due to agricultural capability and reduced agricultural potential.

RELEVANT APPLICATIONS:

Application #11061-0

Applicant: Claasen, Guenter and Helga
Decision Date: October 07, 1980
Proposal: Subdivision of the 8 ha property into two lots of equal size.
Decision: Refused on the grounds of reduced capability.

Application #25763-0

Applicant: Avery, David Glen
Decision Date: January 16, 1992
Proposal: Exclusion of property.
Decision: Application allowed.

Application #35557-0

Applicant: Bergquist, Larry & Cynthia
Decision Date: April 05, 2005
Proposal: Subdivision of the 36.3 ha lot into 72 lots of approximately 0.45 ha in size and construct a sewage water treatment plant.
Decision: Refused subdivision as proposed due to the good agricultural capability of the property and impact of proposed subdivision on land and adjacent agriculture.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS:

Fraser Valley Regional District Board:

The Regional Board forwarded the application with a recommendation of non-support.

Planning Staff:

That the Regional Board not support the proposed subdivision for the subject property.

STAFF COMMENTS:

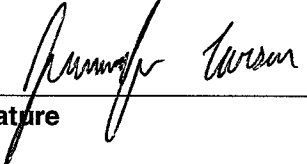
It is recommended that the Commission consider the following:

- Previous applications to subdivide the subject property have been refused by the Commission.
- The smaller properties adjoining the subject property predate the ALR.
- Despite the potential misinterpretation of bylaws as was mentioned by the agent, the Regional District Report on the application gave other reasons as to why the application should not be supported, namely the agricultural capability of the soils and through subdividing the property, the cumulative building footprint would increase, resulting in less agriculturally productive land.
- Reducing the property to 4 parcels would limit the type of agriculture that can take place on the property.
- The information presented in the background information of this report be considered as a regional need for dispersing poultry operations around the Lower Mainland and for maintaining agricultural options, including potential future conversion to dairy use. The fact that the property has not been effectively farmed in the past has no bearing on the need to preserve opportunities for 21st Century agricultural needs.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Base Map
2. Soil Capability Map
3. Aerial Photo Map
4. Memorandum from the Fraser Valley Regional District (4 pages)
5. Sketch of Proposal

END OF REPORT



Signature

March 28, 2007

Date