



**Agricultural Land Commission**  
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October 30, 2007

Reply to the attention of Terra Kaethler  
ALC File: J-37622

Ross Blackwell  
Focus Corporation Ltd  
552 Trunk Road  
Duncan, BC V9L2R1

Dear Sir:


**Re: Application for Non-Farm Use in the Agricultural Land Reserve**

Please find attached the Minutes of Resolution # 540/2007 outlining the Commission's decision as it relates to the above noted application. As agent, it is your responsibility to notify your client(s) accordingly.

Yours truly,

PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION

Per:

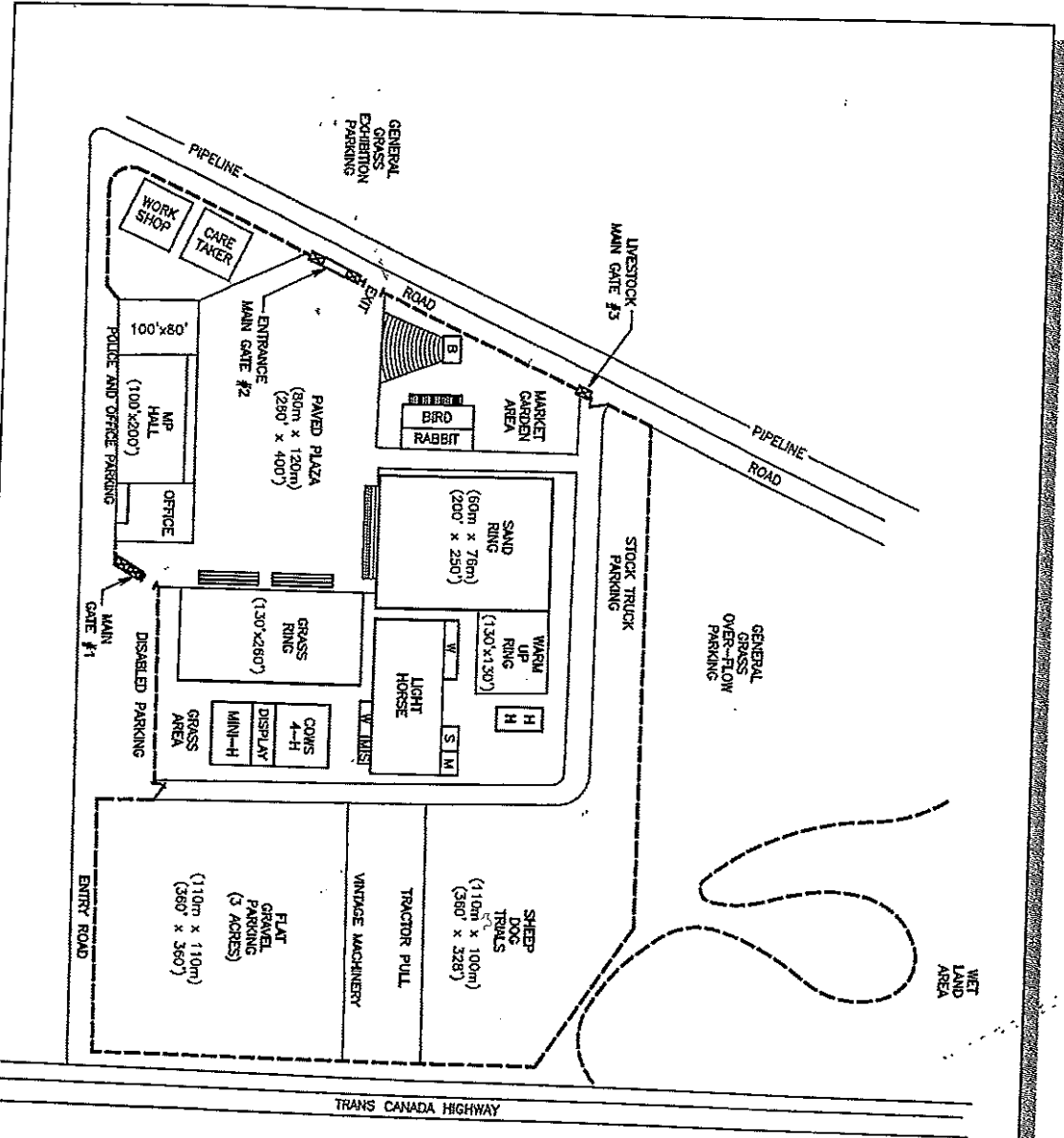
  
Erik Karlsen, Chair

cc: The Corporation of the District of North Cowichan (3025-20-07-07)

Enclosure: Minutes/Sketch Plan

TK/37622d1.com

APPENDIX 5 - Proposed Site Plan



ALC APPLICATION J - 37622  
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVED IN TERMS OF ALC  
 RESOLUTION NUMBER 540/2007





## **Discussion**

### **Assessment of Agricultural Capability**

The agricultural capability of the majority of the subject property is identified as improvable to Class 3 with a subclass limitation of topography. Land in this class has limitations that require moderately intensive management practices or moderately restrict the range of crops, or both.

In regards to the previous commercial composting site and subsequent placement of waste and fill materials without the Commission's approval, the proposed exhibition site would overlap the area previously utilized, and now debilitated, by the commercial composting operation. The location chosen for the exhibition grounds uses the bulk of the debilitated areas and as such appears to be the most appropriate.

The Commission did not believe that the Exhibition center would negatively impact the agricultural capability of this portion of the property, provided that the siting of the permanent structures and parking area be limited to the area as proposed. Further, the Commission discussed that the parking area be a permeable surface of gravel or grass to decrease the impact on the property.

It was also discussed at the site meeting that a limiting factor to the agricultural capability of the site was water supply and drainage issues, and that improvements would be made on the remainder of the property to increase the agricultural capability of the remainder area.

### **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 recognized that the location, size, and accessibility of the property was well suited for the needs of the Exhibition, and would allow them to expand their efforts to create a demonstration agricultural project. Therefore, the Commission does not believe there are external factors that render the land unsuitable for agricultural use.

### **Assessment of Impact on Agriculture**

The Commission was of the view that the Cowichan Exhibition provides benefits for agriculture and as such should be supported. The difficult question faced by the Commission was to determine whether the drawbacks of this location within the ALR can be adequately compensated for by improvements to agriculture.

As such, the proposal to develop a demonstrative agriculture project to promote and facilitate agricultural research and educational opportunities on the remainder of the subject property was a major consideration. The Commission believes that the proposal for a demonstration farm would be a benefit to the agricultural community and commends the efforts of the Exhibition Center and its partners to develop the project.

The Commission understands the vision behind the application to create a project that would be a collaborative effort of community stakeholders and offers a complementary and important opportunity to expand the scope of agricultural activities of the Exhibition. Other benefits to agriculture that the Exhibition may provide include improvements to maximize the agricultural capability of the property for the purposes of developing the demonstration agriculture project, such as the installation of tile drainage, improvement of water supply, and arrangements for agricultural leases for the land not required for the demonstration project.

Further to the discussion at the site visit, the Commission recognizes that the plans are in the conceptual stage and that there are a variety of factors affecting the progress of the initiative. Achieving success would appear to depend primarily upon finding key leaders to guide the project to fruition and secondly on mechanisms being in place to provide some guarantee that the plans will be implemented.

To that end, the Commission discussed that a community - based process should be initiated to develop plans for the demonstrative agriculture project. The Commission would request that the District of North Cowichan be involved as a key stakeholder in this process and that progress reports be submitted to the Commission as plans evolve on a regular basis.

The Commission believes that the proposal has the potential to provide a net benefit to agriculture, both on the subject property as well as benefits to the agricultural community on the island as a whole.

### **Other Factors**

The Commission reviewed the alternative sites assessed in the application and discussed the possibility of the inclusion of the North Cowichan property. Of the sites reviewed, the Commission determined that the proposed site was the most appropriate to meet the applicant's needs. In the Commission's view, the inclusion into the ALR of any potential lands owned by North Cowichan should be explored as a separate 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 not negatively impact agriculture, and may offer benefits to agriculture.

### **IT WAS**

**MOVED BY:** Commissioner Rugg  
**SECONDED BY:** Commissioner Craven

THAT the application be approved as proposed for the non-farm use of the exhibition center on a 10.0 ha (approximate) portion of the property

AND THAT the approval is subject to the following conditions:

- The siting of the permanent structures and parking area be limited to 10.1 ha and in the location as per the drawing submitted with the application. Any expansion of the facilities beyond those shown on the drawing will require additional approval from the Commission.
- The parking area be a permeable surface of grass or gravel. The area allocated for the sheep dog trials and overflow parking is to be left grassed and remain available for agricultural use when not required for the Exhibition.
- That a community -based process to include the District of North Cowichan be initiated to develop plans for the demonstrative agriculture project and that progress reports be submitted to the Commission every 6 months until completion of the project.

- The carrying out of improvements to the drainage, water supply and irrigation of the 15.8 ha area of the property that is not to be used for the Exhibition to the satisfaction of the Commission prior to the opening of the Exhibition to the general public.
- Approval for non-farm use is granted for the sole benefit of the Cowichan Exhibition Center and is non-transferable.

This decision does not relieve the owner or occupier of the responsibility to comply with applicable Acts, regulations, bylaws of the local government, and decisions and orders of any person or body having jurisdiction over the land under an enactment.

**CARRIED**  
**Resolution # 540/2007**