



Staff Report
Application # C – 38737
Applicant: Ian Vantreight

DATE RECEIVED: December 22, 2008

DATE PREPARED: January 2, 2009

TO: Chair and Commissioners – Island Panel

FROM: Terra Kaethler, Land Use Planner

PROPOSAL: To replace the existing composting operation with a waste-to-resource facility consisting of two biogas digesters and a cogeneration plant. The footprint of this facility is proposed to be 0.4 ha. This application is made pursuant to section 20(3) of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Commission staff have been in communication with the applicant regarding this proposal and were provided with a business plan for the Integrated Resource Management Project. The Commission attended a presentation by the applicant regarding the proposal on July 15, 2008.

Vantreight Farms currently has a composting facility on the farm which collects both farm and community organic wastes for use as fertilizer. The applicant explains that the proposed waste-to-resource facility would allow the farm to substitute current farm inputs of artificial fertilizer, natural gas and electricity with organic materials. The proposal is to create two biogas digesters, one for clean organics (including farm and community organic waste) and the other for sewage sludge. The solids created by the clean organic biogas digester would be used as fertilizer for the farm, whereas, the solids created by the sewage biogas digester would not be used on land growing food. The methane generated from both digesters would be piped to the cogeneration plant and used for the electrical and heat needs of the farm operation. Excess electricity would be available for community use. Furthermore, the proposal is that 1.0 ha of the existing 2.0 ha composting facility will be returned to agricultural production.

This is the second waste-to-resource facility to be considered by the Commission. The previous application (#38578) was considered by the South Coast panel in 2008. The previous proposal was different from the current application in that it was to produce biogas from agricultural waste only as well as produce residual agricultural products such as animal bedding and horticultural fibre (peat moss replacement) as a by-product of the digesting process. Conditional approval was granted for this proposal in November 2008.

Local Government:

The Corporation of the District of Central Saanich

Legal Description of Property:

PID: 000-104-027
Lot 2, Section 2, Range 4 East, South Saanich District, Plan 32353

Location of Property:

8277 Central Saanich Road, Saanich

Size of Property:

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

Present use of the Property:

The property currently contains greenhouses, warehouses, coolers, a machine shop, equipment storage and parking.

Surrounding Land Uses:

WEST: farmland
WEST: farmland
SOUTH: Single family residence
EAST: Pat Bat Hwy.

Agricultural Capability:

Data Source: Agricultural Capability Map # 92B/11
The majority of the property under application for non farm use is identified as having Prime Dominant ratings.

Official Community Plan and Designation:

Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1600
Designation: Agriculture

Zoning Bylaw and Designation:

Land Use Bylaw No. 1309
Designation: Agriculture (A-1)
Minimum lot size: 4.0 ha

PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS:

Application #07699-0

Applicant: Saanich
Decision Date: December 7, 1978
Proposal: To subdivide and consolidate six existing properties to facilitate a land exchange between Saanich and the Vantreight family. One of the parcels created would be 0.03 ha.
Decision: Allowed, however, the Commission strongly recommended that the effort be made to consolidate the small 0.03 ha parcel with an adjacent parcel.

Application #38650-0

Applicant: Vantreight, Ian
Decision Date: none
Proposal: To place temporary farm worker accommodation for between 30 and 60 seasonal workers on the subject property to harvest daffodil and vegetable crops

throughout the year. Furthermore, the applicant wishes to include a 1.97 ha triangle of property into the ALR.

Decision: None- this is a concurrent application on the same property.

RELEVANT APPLICATIONS:

Application #37875-0

Applicant: Vantreight, Ian

Decision Date: March 19, 2008

Proposal: To exclude 2.0 ha of land from the 36.4 ha property which the applicant describes as having limited potential for use as productive farmland, due to thin soils, rock outcroppings and steep terrain. (See concurrent inclusion application C-37876)

Decision: Allowed exclusion of 2.0 ha, subject to inclusion of 3.0 ha.

Application #37876-0

Applicant: Vantreight, Ian

Decision Date: March 19, 2008

Proposal: To include two portions of land for a total of 3.0 ha of cultivated land. See application C-37875

Decision: Allowed inclusion of 3.0 ha as a condition to file #37875 to exclude 2.0 ha of ALR land from property.

Application #38578

Applicant: Bush, Christopher and Hiromi

Decision Date: November 17, 2008

Proposal: To establish and operate an anaerobic digester on the subject property. The digester will produce "biogas" (natural gas) from dairy, poultry and other livestock waste. The proposed operation will also produce residual products such as animal bedding and horticultural fibre (peat moss replacement) as a by-product of the digesting process.

Decision: Allow subject to conditions (see attached)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS:

Council:

To forward the application to the Peninsula Agricultural Commission for comment and to the Agricultural Land Commission for consideration.

Peninsula Agricultural Commission:

See attached letter dated December 15, 2008 for numerous comments. The Peninsula Agricultural Commission would like to see a more detailed analysis of the proposal before further consideration of the proposal.

Planning Staff:

Recommended approval of the majority of the application except the portion where offsite materials will be composted on the farm. It was recommended that this partial approval be on the condition of the decommissioning of the existing open-air composting facility.

STAFF COMMENTS:

It is recommended that the Commissioners consider the following:

- 1.0 ha currently utilized in the existing 2.0 ha composting facility will be returned to agricultural use.
- The area proposed for the facility is approximately 0.4 ha and in close proximity to other farm buildings. It appears that the area of the proposal is a rocky knoll with limited agricultural capability.
- A phased approach for the construction of this facility, beginning with the organic biodigester may be an option to consider.


ATTACHMENTS:

1. ALC Context Maps (2 pages)
2. Aerial Photograph
3. Agricultural Capability Map
4. Proposal (4 pages)
5. Sketch of area proposed for the waste to resource facility
6. Local Government Staff Report and Council Resolution (8 pages)
7. Letter from Peninsula Agricultural Commission (3 pages)
8. Letter from VIHA
9. Staff Report and Decision letter for Application # 38578 (8 pages)

END OF REPORT



Signature



Date