



Agricultural Land Commission
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April 2, 2008

Reply to the attention of Brandy Ridout
ALC File: #H-37781

R.G. (Bob) Holtby, P.Ag
670 - 17th Street, SE
Salmon Arm, BC V1E1W2

Dear Mr. Holtby:

Re: Application to Exclude land from the Agricultural Land Reserve

Please find attached the Minutes of Resolution # 08/2008 outlining the Commission's decision as it relates to the above noted application. As agent, it is your responsibility to notify your client accordingly.

Yours truly,

PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION

Per:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erik Karlsen', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Erik Karlsen, Chair

cc: Columbia Shuswap Regional District (LC2370-C)

Enclosure: Minutes

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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. The Canada Land Inventory ratings for the property indicate that the land has an unimproved rating of 60% Class 3 and 40% Class 4 with limitations of growing season moisture deficiency and topography.

A Regency Consultants Ltd. report dated August 29, 2007 assesses the Canada Land Inventory ratings noted above. It is Mr. Holtby's opinion that significant portions of the property should in fact be classed as Class 5 with limitations of stoniness, topography, and growing season moisture deficiency. He indicates that there is a division at approximately the 590 metre contour and the subject property should have been classified separately rather than grouped in with the agricultural capability rating given to the area to the south.

The "Soil Survey of the Shuswap Lakes Area BC by A.B. Dawson and C.C. Kelley, Interim Report" was consulted for information on soils in this area. There are two main soil types in the ALR portion of the subject property. The majority of the northern third is Reiswig while the majority of the southern two thirds is Hobson. While the Hobson soils extend slightly south of the subject property, the soils change for the most part south of the property. Looking at the Notch Hill area as a whole, it was evident that soils that exist on the subject property also exist in the surrounding area.

The Commissioners recalled the site visit to the property in its discussion about the soil capability ratings and the Regency Consultants Ltd. report. The Commission concurred that portions of the property have challenges to agricultural development, particularly without irrigation. However, while recognizing these challenges, the Commission considered the property to have reasonably good potential for pasture and hayland, particularly if irrigated. It recalled that the Regional District was presently assessing options for sewage treatment and disposal in the Electoral Area, and that one of the favoured options was spray irrigation. The Commission believes that the subject parcel, and similar lands in the surrounding area have potential to benefit from spray irrigation.

Assessment of Agricultural Suitability

The Commission assessed whether factors such as encroaching non-farm development have caused or will cause the land to become unsuitable for agriculture. The Commission noted that the subject property was bordered on the east by a residential development owned by the applicant, and to the south and west by large ALR parcels. The Commission did not believe the adjoining residential uses rendered the land unsuitable for agricultural use.

Assessment of Impact on Agriculture

The Commission also assessed the impact of the exclusion proposal against the long-term goal of preserving agricultural land. The Commission believes the proposal could negatively affect adjoining lands in the ALR by raising expectations that additional exclusion might be allowed. The effect of raised expectations is a reduction in agricultural activity, speculation and more applications for exclusion and subdivision.

Assessment of Other Factors

The Commission recalled that Shuswap Lake Estates was in discussions with the Columbia Shuswap Regional District about the sale of their sewage treatment facility, and the establishment of a spray irrigation program by the Regional District. The Commission believes that this property and nearby properties might benefit from spray irrigation. Even if spray irrigation is not chosen, at this time, by the Regional District as the primary method of community effluent disposal, that does not preclude irrigation as a long-term option, as other water sources could be secured in the future.

The Commission also noted that the proposal is not supported by local government planning, or zoning. The Columbia Shuswap Regional District Bylaws #70 and #701 designate the property for A1 – Agriculture and AR 1 Agriculture Zone respectively.

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 have a negative impact on agriculture.
4. That the proposal is inconsistent with the objective of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* to preserve agricultural land.

IT WAS

MOVED BY: Commissioner Irvine

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Sidhu

THAT the application to exclude the property from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) for urban residential development be refused.

CARRIED

Resolution #108/2008