



Agricultural Land Commission Staff Report

DATE: February 9, 2010

TO: Vice Chair and Commissioners - South Coast Panel

FROM: Ron Wallace

RE: Application # 50827

PROPOSAL: To establish and operate an anaerobic digester on the subject property. The digester will produce "biogas" (natural gas) primarily from dairy manure from the farm, and to a lesser extent, alternative feedstocks such as whey, bakery byproducts and food waste. The proposed operation will also produce residual products such as animal bedding and fertilizer as a by-product of the digesting process.

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Background: The applicant has provided detailed information about the anaerobic digester.

Received Date: October 16, 2009

Applicant: Bakerview EcoDairy Ltd (Bill Vanderkooi)

Agent: N/A

Local Government: City of Abbotsford

DESCRIPTION OF LAND

PID: 027-956-814

Legal Description: Lot A Section 11 Township 16 and District Lot 355 Group 2 New Westminster District Plan BCP41412

Civic Address: 1356 Sumas Way

Area: 17.6 ha

ALR Area: 17.6 ha

Purchase Date: May 22, 2007

Owner: Bakerview EcoDairy Ltd (Bill Vanderkooi)

Total Land Area: 17.6 ha

Total ALR Area: 17.6 ha

Current Land Use: The subject property is part of Bakerview EcoDairy Ltd. which is an integrated agribusiness involved in dairy farming, marketing of food products, agritourism and public education.

PROPOSAL DETAILS

Non Farm Use

Area	Agricultural Capability	Agricultural Capability Source
0.1	Prime Dominant	BCLI

Surrounding Land Uses:

North	South Parallel Road; beyond Highway No. 1
East	Agricultural (blueberry and forage crops)
South	Dwelling on a 0.8 ha parcel and an auto recycling operation
West	Sumas Way; beyond Commercial and Industrial uses

Official Community Plan

Bylaw Name:	Agriculture
Designation:	Agricultural
OCP Compliance:	No

Zoning

Zoning Bylaw Name:	Agricultural Two Zone
Zoning Designation:	A2
Minimum Lot Size:	16.0 ha
Zoning Compliance:	No

PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

Application #: 45938

Applicant: Bakerview EcoDairy Ltd (Bill Vanderkooi)

Proposal: Notice of Intent

Decisions:

Resolution Number	Decision Date	Decision Description
1086	April 23, 2009	Exemption granted by CEO as per Regulation.
Note:	This was a 'Notice of Intent' (NoI) that was received by the ALC on April 6, 2009. The NoI was submitted to obtain authorization for the placement of fill on the subject site.	

Under the ALR Use Subdivision and Procedure Regulation 'placement of fill' in the ALR is recognized as a 'specified non-farm use' for which an exemption from making a non-farm use application may be granted.

Based on the information outlined in the proposal, the placement of an estimated 20,000 cubic meters of fill was authorized and exempted from the requirement to submit a non-farm use application to the Commission as the proposed use was intended to facilitate the construction and use of a farm building and farm equipment parking/storage.

Application #: 44625

Applicant: Albert and Roeline Witteveen

Proposal:

To subdivide the subject property under homesite severance.

**Decisions:
Resolution**

Number	Decision Date	Decision Description
91	February 20, 2008	Refuse subdivision as proposed due to impact on agriculture.

Note: Legacy File # 38967 Subdivide

RELEVANT APPLICATIONS

Application #: 45505

Applicant: Christopher and Hiromi Bush

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.

**Decisions:
Resolution**

Number	Decision Date	Decision Description
601	July 30, 2009	To allow as proposed by the amendment letter of 17 July 2009. The amendment would provide for a more effective operation of the anaerobic digester for accommodation of wastes from agriculture and agricultural processing.
749	November 17, 2008	Allow subject to the ALC's guidelines for anaerobic digesters in the ALR.

Note: This application was approved for the establishment of an anaerobic digester in Abbotsford in 2008. A Nutrient Management Plan was provided for this application.

Committee Recommendations

Type	Recommendation	Description
Board/Council	Approve	That Report No. DEV 200-2009, dated September 28, 2009, from the Planner, regarding an Agricultural Land Commission application for B. Vanderkooi (Bakerview EcoDairy) property, located at 1356 Sumas Way, be received; and Council voted to (1) forward the application to the Commission with support and (2) the Mayor and Corporate Officer be authorized to execute all documents related to this matter.
Agricultural Advisory Committee	Approve	The Abbotsford AAC recommended that the application to permit an anaerobic digester on the property be approved.

STAFF COMMENTS

As outlined under relevant applications, the Commission approved a similar application for an anaerobic digester in 2008. This application was allowed provided the feedstock for the digester was consistent with a proposed Nutrient Management Plan.

The subject applicant has partnered with Avatar Energy Corp. which specializes in the design,

construction and service of biogas plants. This company has been involved in the establishment of biogas facilities in North America.

The agricultural waste that will be processed at this facility will primarily consist of manure from the dairy operations and alternate digester feedstocks such as whey, bakery byproducts and food waste. The applicant anticipates that the proposed anaerobic digester will offset farm operating cost. The residual by-products of the digestion process will be animal bedding and improved fertilizer.

The Council of the City of Abbotsford has recommended support for the application as did the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

A letter of support was received from the Anaerobic Digestion Advisory Committee (ADIAC). This letter indicated that the anaerobic digestion technology that Bakerview EcoDairy Ltd is proposing to adopt is unique in that its cost effective modular design makes it suitable for small to medium sized dairy farms, as small as 75 - 100 head instead of the traditional 500+ head. This is important in BC, as the average herd size of BC's 542 dairies is approximately 124 head (see attached letter).

In regard to agri-tourism activities taking place at Bakerview EcoDairy, the City of Abbotsford has issued permits and variances to ensure consistency with its bylaws as it believes that the activity is consistent with ALC Act regulations. ALC staff have reviewed the agri-tourism proposal and have advised that agri-tourism activity proposed, including the farm retail sale component, is consistent with the regulations.

ATTACHMENTS

- 50827_ContextMap50k.pdf
- 50827_AgCapabilityMap.pdf
- 50827_AirphotoMap10k.pdf

END OF REPORT

Signature

Date