

September 5, 2021

Mike Sosnowski  
Area A Director, Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK)

Ange Qualizza  
Mayor, City of Fernie

Re: Proposed Galloway Lands Rezoning

There is much discussion in the Fernie community about a proposed development on the Galloway lands, a parcel of land (185 hectares) located on the west side of Highway 3 between the existing FAR ski hill development and Lizard Creek. The proposed development entails 75 single family homes on separate parcels of land 1 to 1.6 hectares each and will require a zoning change in order to proceed. Even though the proposed development is entirely in the Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) it will affect the City of Fernie as services, supplies, and support for this development will come from Fernie.

I believe there are significant public safety and social economic issues that need to be considered before this proposal is allowed to proceed. I make this statement based on being a municipal engineer for over 40 years and seeing the impact of good development and bad development on communities. There are also environmental issues and wildlife issues that must be considered however I will leave those matters for assessment from others who are more qualified to speak to them than I am.

This last summer in BC we have seen major destruction of private property from wildfires. This is becoming all too common over the last few years (Fort McMurry, Slave Lake, Kelowna, Lytton) and is now our new reality so designing and building new communities with the view of protecting them from wildfires must be standard practice. The sparse density of the development as proposed is not at all conducive to preventing and fighting wildfires as resources will have to be widely dispersed to protect people and property. Fire guards will have to be longer and larger, and evacuations will be more complex. From a fire protection point of view a development that is contiguous with the existing development and has fire hydrants would be much safer.

The other significant public safety issue is the single access to Highway 3 for the existing ski hill community and this proposed development. I believe this single access has a high potential for a disaster in the future. It is a fact that frequently (such as at the end of a ski day) access and egress from the ski hill is severely restricted. In the event of a crisis such as a wildfire, emergency vehicles trying to access the area at the same time as an emergency evacuation was required would be severely compromised. A second access to the ski hill community is an absolute necessity from a safety point of view. It is easy to suggest that the proposed

development will incrementally only add a small load to the existing access to Highway 3 but I believe it is significant. When I have dealt with these issues in my professional career the developer adding the load to the existing network was required to make a significant contribution to the improvement of the network prior to putting the load on it. This issue was negotiated in advance of any approvals and zoning changes which in this case would require sign off by Highways and the RDEK. The principle is very simple, the developer who stands to make money from his development pays to mitigate the impacts on the existing development and ensure the infrastructure is safe for the new community.

The last issue I wish to comment on is the social economic impact. It is well known that the business and service industries in Fernie are struggling to find and retain staff. The building trades are at capacity, I know a Fernie local who owns a city lot and wants to build a house and was told by a local builder that there is a three-year waiting time. The construction schedule for the affordable housing North End Court Project on 13<sup>th</sup> Ave has been delayed because of material shortages. There is a severe housing crisis in Fernie with a lack of affordable housing for many. To suggest that this proposed Galloway development will give needed economic stimulus to the community is entirely false, it will only exacerbate an already over heated situation in the housing market and further drive-up costs.

In conclusion I think there needs to be public input and discussion on the impacts of a large new development before any zoning changes are approved. I urge RDEK Council to not rush this process. Careful analysis of the impacts done by an independent third party, paid for by the developer but not commissioned by the developer is all standard practice in ensuring good development. Rushed development without the proper analysis leads to poor development and costly problems which taxpayers are required to rectify in the future. The existing zoning is there for a reason and to change it without proper consideration of the impacts would be a serious mistake.

Respectfully submitted,

J.M. Miller  
Fernie, BC

CC: RDEK Electoral Area Directors  
RDEK Municipal Directors  
Andrew Macleod  
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