



County approves initial reading to change Agriculture Nature Conservation property to Country Residential

Sturgeon County council passed first reading of a bylaw to rezone two quarters from Agricultural and a portion of a third quarter from Agriculture Nature Conservation to Country Residential Estate. Administration plans to schedule a public hearing on the bylaw in February.

If approved, the rezoning would be the first step in the development of Riverside Springs estates east of Gibbons and just south of Casa Vista on Twp 555A. Land owners James and Della Thimer and developer Inca Ventures Inc. propose to create approximately 340 half acre country residential lots.

During the Jan. 14 council meeting Senior Planning and Development Officer Arjen de Klerk said administration sees limited risk in bringing this zoning application forward at this stage.

"There are some concerns that this development will not be economically viable; however, the developer sees the project as feasible and is anxious to proceed," said de Klerk. He explained that the developer has financing arranged that is contingent upon rezoning and has committed buyers for 15 lots.

If rezoned, the project still requires an Area Structure Plan (ASP) amendment, subdivision approval and the adoption of a development agreement. All are further opportunities for council and the Municipal Planning Commission (MPC) to re-evaluate the project.

Total cost for off-site municipal improvements for Riverside Springs subdivision is estimated at \$17 million. As an alternative to the high pressure wastewater collection system originally proposed, administration has agreed to review a less costly low pressure sewage system suggested by the developer's consultant. Costs for the low pressure system are not yet available.

Coun. Karen Shaw asked if that would be of benefit to Casa Vista residents.

General manager of Integrated Growth Ian McKay said it would have no change or impact on Casa Vista.

Shaw made the motion for first reading and suggested the public hearing be held in the evening so area residents who work would be able to attend.

Coun. Susan Evans asked if the Riverside ASP would be completed by third reading of the rezoning bylaw because the development is not aligned with the county's strategic goals and economic plan.

Manager of Planning and Development Clayton Kittlitz said he is not sure of the timing. McKay added that the lack of such alignment is why no county funds are being invested in the servicing.

Proponent representative Gord Putnam said the development is consistent with the county's goals because the developer is working closely with county planning staff and the location is adjacent to an existing subdivision.

The Thorhild Ukrainian Dance Club held a family Christmas concert to show off their dances thus far at

Thorhild Central School on Jan. 16. Group 1: Nathan Quaghebeur, Olivia Mazurenko, Andy Melnyk, Carter Stevens, Forrest Cruikshank, Adam Moscaluk, Alyssa Bosch.



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Alcohol & Pregnancy: Help Spread the Facts!

Many Albertans know someone who has a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and most are aware of this preventable birth defect. FASD is a lifelong disability resulting from prenatal exposure to alcohol that has no cure. People with an FASD can have a combination of unique physical, developmental, learning and behaviour problems and concerns.

Yet 9% of Alberta women reported drinking during their last pregnancy. Some may be surprised the percentage is markedly higher (41%) for women in the highest income group. Among Alberta women 18 to 44 years of age, 80% reported drinking within the past 12 months. Given that 50% of pregnancies are reported to be unplanned, a significant number of unborn babies are at a high risk of prenatal exposure to alcohol

No wonder why women, their partners, family and friends are confused about alcohol use and pregnancy, there are myths and misinformation everywhere! From authors, health care providers to well intentioned friends, conflicting and inaccurate information is being spread to women.

What we do know is that no woman consumes alcohol wanting to cause harm to her baby. A woman may not know she is pregnant, may not be aware of the effects on fetal development. Life circumstances past and present, such as domestic violence, poverty, mental health problems and stress can result in alcohol use as a coping strategy. And all women, all ages and all socio-economic backgrounds may drink alcohol during pregnancy because it is their social norm and loved ones around them drink on a regular basis.

So what can we do? Help spread the facts by having non-judgemental prevention conversations with family, friends, colleagues and the community at large about alcohol use and pregnancy.

- Drinking can be harmful at any point during pregnancy and can result in lifelong disabilities.
- Alcohol and pregnancy don't mix. If you drink alcohol and are sexually active, make sure you use contraception.
- Friends, partners and family members can support a woman by asking how they can help her to make healthy choices for healthy babies.
- Some women need support, care and treatment to help them stop drinking during pregnancy.

For more information on the FASD Prevention Conversation or supports and services available for persons with a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder please visit: www.edmontonfetalalcoholnetwork.org

