SJ Murphy Planning & Consulting
Morrison | Underhay

Rural Municipality of Miltonvale Park

Official Plan and Development Bylaw Review

March 12, 2021

What We Heard – Phase 1 Public Engagement |Appendix B

Notes by Shari MacDonald, CAO Miltonvale Park

1. INTRODUCTION

The Rural Municipality of Miltonvale Park is undergoing a review of both its 2016 Official Plan (last amended July 2019) and its Zoning and Subdivision Control (Development) Bylaw (2019).

The first phase of the public process included two public meetings and an online survey. The public meetings took place on Thursday, February 18, 2021, a lunch and learn at 12:00 pm which was directed towards seniors and landowners with a second session as 7:30 pm. Both sessions took place at the Milton Community Hall. The purpose of this session was to obtain feedback from property owners, business owners and all residents with regards to the Official Plan.

The public sessions were predominately attended by residents who live in the rural part of the Municipality with few residents in attendance who lived in the Sleepy Hollow area of the Municipality. There were 26 attendees (including staff and council) at the evening session and 9 at the lunch session.

Shari MacDonald, CAO of Miltonvale Park took notes, then summarized the discussions, below.

2. FEBRUARY 18, 2021 | LUNCH AND LEARN

Samantha Murphy of SJ Murphy Planning and Consulting opened the meeting and introduced the Official Plan review process and the framework for the Official Plan and Development Bylaw. The consultants have been gathering and reviewing background information and data. The public information sessions and community survey are to gather feedback from residents to determine if the Official Plan and its policies and actions are still relevant. Much of the current Official Plan is a very strong document. The consultants will review the information gathered and make recommendations for any changes to Planning Board. They will then determine what changes may be required to the Development Bylaws to help the municipality meet the goals and objectives of the Official Plan.

Maps of the community were distributed, and residents were encouraged to mark workspaces, places of interest, natural areas that should be protected, and areas of problem or concern.

Discussion followed:

IRAC – Planning Board and Council should be as clear as possible for reasons for decisions, especially if they are using discretion to make any planning decisions. Policies in the Official Plan should be referenced.

Resident – Likes the look of the community as she travels through from her home. Wants to be "in the country."

COVID – Covid is changing how people work and live. COVID brought the realization that many systems are fragile. There is a greater focus on farming, food sustainability, greenhouses, hobby farming, and chickens. Roosters are more problematic, as they are loud. Residents want to also protect the farmers and their livelihood.

Accessory Buildings/Agriculture - Most of the municipality is zoned Agricultural. If accessory buildings are limited to two on a two-acre property – this may not be enough. Why are they limited? Aesthetics? A resident has hobbies, antique vehicles, and three cars – more space is needed. People have different needs; is there the possibility to looking at some items on an individual basis? Are they limited to decrease visual clutter? Want to have a rural residential feel? Does the number of accessory buildings matter? Are they more acceptable if they have an agricultural use, vs storage or hobbies? Should the size of the accessory buildings be better tied to the size of the property. There is a concern that large accessory buildings could lead to commercial uses. What about home chickens in residential, serviced residential or mini home park? Resident from Sleepy Hollow Road – if others are allowed a small number of chickens, they should also be allowed in that area; but unsure of larger livestock. What about greenhouses on small lots? Is a Community Garden feasible? (There is already a small one at the community park). Some greenhouses are elaborate/year-round. The municipality should not have barriers to growing food. Accessory buildings not currently permitted in the front yard. Perhaps this could be evaluated on a case-by-case basis -although the criteria should be the same and consistent. It is important not to be detrimental to adjacent neighbours, and compatible with the neighbourhood.

Seniors – It is difficult for seniors to leave homes as they age, especially if they have always lived in the area/family home when they can no longer live at home, but there are no special seniors housing or needed services (medical/groceries/public transportation) in the Municipality, aside from the Convenience Store.

Difficulty in buying a lot - Resident has lived in Miltonvale Park his entire life, with parents and grandparents also living here but is unable to buy a lot to build a home.

Zoning Map – shows a dense residential area. Where would more homes go? Is there an opportunity to increase the serviced residential area? Not everyone wants to live in a subdivision and many live in Miltonvale Park so they can have a large property.

Commercial Uses – At what level can business grow or expand? When does it become problematic to neighbours? Special permit or conditional uses need to be very clear. What are considerations? - If it is a child-care facility– traffic, parking… The evaluation method must be consistent, so applications are evaluated fairly without bias or too much discretion. "Keeping the property tidy" is not valid evaluation criteria, as the criteria should involve the use. "Commercial Creep" is a concern. Other concerns – smells, noise, traffic, hours of operation, protection of the environment, public health and safety, aesthetics. The community must decide what is not acceptable. In a rural area there is the expectation of agricultural noise and smells. It is difficult to find a balance.

Storm Water Management Plans – are expensive; are there instances when they may not be necessary?

Rural vs Serviced/Residential – The areas have a different character. If there are on-site services, those lots need to protect the area for septic systems (less space for buildings). May have more emphasis on aesthetics in a residential area.

Zoning -What should be universal and what should be specific to each zone? Different size standards are likely required for different zones.

Parkland and Open Spaces – The Miltonvale Community Park is a place to be proud of. The Rails to Trails goes through part of the municipality but is leased to the PEI Snowmobile Association in the winter so is not accessible then. Additional parking is needed near the Confederation Trail. The municipality is not in the position to manage additional parkland. Right-of-ways and easements may create strips for future trails. It would be good to be able to connect to future or existing places. Unless the municipality was planning to buy particular parcels of land, it can't pre-zone lands for public places. Miles Boulter Drive receives significant traffic, and it was believed this is due to people using the Confederation Trail.

It is important to identify the values that Miltonvale Park holds as a municipality. Sustainability for energy and food needs has been mentioned.

Many residents are not familiar with the rules and do things anyway. In another municipality it was suggested that having people like this on Council helps them understand the rationale for the rules.

Miltonvale Park is an agricultural community – the look, the feel, and the function. The Resort Municipality has a much greater emphasis on the look and feel due to their reliance on tourism.

Residents were invited to share their thoughts with the team, through the map and survey.

3. FEBRUARY 18, 2021 | EVENING SESSION

Samantha Murphy of SJ Murphy Planning and Consulting opened the meeting and introduced her team – Mitch Underhay and Greg Morrison. She surveyed those in attendance to see how many felt familiar with the Official Plan, and whether people were from the rural or residential areas of the municipality. No one in attendance was from the Sleepy Hollow area. She reviewed the Official Plan review process and the framework for the Official Plan (OP) and Development Bylaw. The consultants have been gathering and reviewing background information and data. The public information sessions and community survey are to gather feedback from residents to determine if the Official Plan and its policies and actions are still relevant.

The Province sets the minimum rules that municipalities must follow, but it is up to each municipality to set local goals, and develop its own Official Plan, which should look 15 years forward.

The current Official Plan was developed in 2016, and the community is being asked if it still reflects the needs of the municipality. The consultants will evaluate the information gathered and propose changes. In March, the consultants will meet with Planning Board to make recommendations for any changes to the Official Plan and then will determine what changes may be required to the Development Bylaws to help the municipality meet the goals and objectives of the Official Plan. Final documents are scheduled to be presented to the community in late April and should be considered at the May 2021 Council meeting. After being adopted by Council, the Official Plan and Development Bylaw are sent to the Minister of Agriculture and Land for approval.

Maps of the community were distributed, and residents were encouraged to mark workspaces, places of interest, natural areas that should be protected, and areas of problem or concern.

The consultants reviewed a PowerPoint presentation (*available on the Municipal Website*) that highlighted the 2016 Official Plan and the vision from 2016, which stated Miltonvale Park would "continue to be a rural agricultural community while supporting residential development in appropriate areas and promoting recreational and institutional services for its residents."

Consultant Mitch Underhay reviewed information from the 2016 Plan which he summarized as

- Strong sense of community identity and independence
- Small community charm, rural lifestyle
- Beauty and health of their environment
- Open space, scenic agricultural landscapes
- Commercial services within a short drive.
- Develop slowly and protect farming and other resource-based activities
- Growth focused in Sleepy Hollow area, connecting to water and sewer services
- More options for dwelling types for people of all ages and income levels, allowing people to age in place

It was suggested that more options for aging in place are needed. Housing options could include single family dwellings, duplexes, apartments, mini homes, and tiny homes.

A resident shared that her vision for the community was accessible housing, a home where she could stay forever, a house that can be adapted, energy efficient, close to net-zero, and with public transportation, but she does not see that in the current plan.

Lack of a vision can be a problem, there needs to be a target of what the municipality wants to achieve.

Another resident said that mini homes were not wanted in Miltonvale Park; but now more than ever they needed to be introduced back into the community as an affordable option, to make it easier for young people to get a start in life. *(Note: Mini home are currently permitted in the Agriculture (A1) zone and the MHP (Residential Manufactured Housing Park) Zone.)*

Smaller homes are more affordable.

Solar panels – It was noted that the location is very important in positioning solar panels, so they receive an optimal amount of sunlight. It was suggested that if two systems might go side-by-side, the height on one could be limited to prevent shadowing the potential placement of a neighbouring system. Solar panels should not have a negative effect on a neighbouring property. A resident felt that the community has no bylaws in place for solar panels, and there should be bylaws before they are allowed in the municipality. There are bylaws for wind energy to mitigate the impacts on neighbours.

The consultant asked what residents wanted to limit with respect to solar power – aesthetics? Encroachment? It was suggested that they be on roofs, away from neighbours if on an acreage, and not facing neighbours or in the front yard. It could be treated like an accessory structure, although it was suggested that it was not a structure and not a building. Lot line setbacks should be considered. It was noted that it should be put by the landowner where it is convenient and there needs to be freedom to optimize the solar gain. It was noted that shadows, lights on the back of the structures, the charm and character of the community when solar panels are on the front lawn are potential impacts. It was suggested that solar panels do not have to face south, and that roofs should be structurally designed to support solar panels. People were asked to write their ideas regarding solar panels on the comment sheets available.

Planner Greg Morrison reviewed the objectives in the current Official Plan and shared an example of how the Development Bylaw was used to meet one objective in each category.

Future Land Use Objectives

- Agriculture dominant land use
- Resource commercial & industrial development in appropriate areas
- Serviced residential development where possible
- Protection of environment
- Future recreation & open space

Social Objectives

- Rural character
- Social interaction

Housing choices E.*g.* ***OP Objective*** *- Support a variety of residential dwelling types to meet the changing needs of a diverse population.* ***OP Action*** *- The Development Bylaw will permit the addition of an accessory apartment in a single detached dwelling or in an accessory building to a single detached dwelling.* ***Bylaw Regulation*** *- Section 4.3.1: One (1) accessory apartment may be constructed in or as an addition to an existing single detached dwelling …*

Section 4.3.2: One (1) accessory apartment may be permitted in a detached building or in an accessory building on a lot with a single detached dwelling …

Physical Objectives

- Improve transportation system
- Effective disposal of wastewater

Safe supply of potable water E.g. -***OP Objective*** *-To establish a plan for future development that minimizes land use conflicts.* ***OP Plan*** *-The Development Bylaw will require buffering (e.g., setbacks, vegetation, screening, landscaping etc.) for commercial and industrial developments in order to mitigate negative impacts on surrounding areas and uses.* ***Bylaw Regulation*** *- Section 4.18.1: Between adjacent land uses, a minimum 4.6 m (15 ft.) wide landscape buffer shall be maintained, or in the absence of a landscape buffer a fence of a type that forms a visual barrier shall be erected, on the side lot line and/or rear lot line of a lot …*

Environmental Objectives

Protect groundwater -E.g. ***OP Objective*** *To protect and enhance the quality of groundwater and surface water.* ***OP Plan*** *-Council will work with the provincial government to ensure that buffer zones adjacent to watercourses and wetlands are appropriately protected and managed.* ***Bylaw Regulation*** *-Section 4.10.1: A buffer zone shall be in place for any watercourse or wetland in accordance with the Watercourse and Wetland Protection Regulation prescribed under the Environmental Protection Act.*

- Protect natural areas
- Renewable energy generation
- Minimize pollution

Economic Objectives

- Protect farming
- Support businesses
- Limit new non-resource commercial & industrial

•Minimize land use conflicts – E.g. ***OP Objective*** *- To minimize conflicts between resource and non resource land uses.* ***OP Action*** *- The Development Bylaw will require that any new intensive livestock operation provide a buffer between the proposed development and primarily residential areas.* ***Bylaw Regulation*** *- Section 4.20.2: New livestock operations shall not be located within 152.4 m (500 ft) from the MHP Zone, R1 Zone and RS1 Zones.*

Residents were asked to consider if the existing objectives are still valid.

Consultant Mitch Underhay reviewed the land use and zoning maps for the municipality and asked residents to review the maps at their tables to indicate places where people work, natural places to protect, areas where they might have a problem or concern. The municipality must consider where growth should happen.