

Delta Council Approves ALR Application for Southlands

Written by News Desk

Monday, 07 February 2011 23:38



On Monday, February 7th, Delta Council unanimously approved the preparation of an application to have Southlands included in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). This decision was made based on a report filed on Friday, February 4th, by Delta CAO George Harvie. The report also included a proposed update to the Tsawwassen Area Plan which recommended modest growth and increased protection of agricultural land. Both the ALR application and new Area Plan will go to a Public Hearing on Tuesday, March 1st. The report was created following a highly contentious public hearing on October 26 & 27, which involved two days of criticism from the community and resulted in a rejection of the proposed update to the Tsawwassen Area Plan. Following the public hearing, Harvie was instructed to create a report that more closely reflected the majority public opinion.

At the previous public hearing, citizens were outraged at a plan that proposed densification of the town center and changes in land-use designation that would see the possibility of town homes under the power lines and the destruction of many communities including the Highlands and Camaro Drive. These changes would have allowed for a possible 45% increase in population over the next 10 years.

“I’m very pleased with Council’s decision to apply for the return of the Southlands to the ALR,” stated Dana Maslovat, one of the organizers of Southlands the Facts, “This sends a strong message that agricultural land is meant for agriculture and hopefully puts an end to the controversy surrounding this piece of farmland.”

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The Southlands was originally in the ALR, but was removed by a Provincial Order-in-Council in 1981, even though its exclusion was rejected by the Agricultural Land Commission due to the high soil quality. In 1988 an application to change the designation to accommodate 1900 homes was eventually rejected, following the longest public hearing in Commonwealth history.