



WHEATLAND COUNTY

Where There's Room to Grow



Comment Summary

Date: May 19, 2020

Application: PL2019-01; Speargrass Land use bylaw amendment Bylaw No 2019-36

Staff circulated internally, external agencies and landowners within the community of Speargrass. The following comments were received from internal departments and external agencies.

EXTERNAL AGENCIES	COMMENTS
AB Health Services	No concerns.
AB Environment and Parks	No concerns.
AB Transportation	No concerns.
Strathmore RCMP	No concerns.
Vulcan County	No comments or concerns.
INTERNAL DEPARTMENTS	
Agriculture and Environment	No concerns.
Public Works	No concerns.
Protective Services	<p>My only comments are dealing with the enforceability of the RV parking portion.</p> <p>Enforcement would require officer to provide a notice of entry to go on the property in order to chalk mark or otherwise mark an RV in order to start the time of offence.</p> <p>In order to enforce, the County would have to issue a stop order and I would suggest that because this would be dealing with personal property, injunctions would have to be applied for in Queen's Bench Court in order to allow removal from property.</p>

	<p>There can be fines levied every day until there is compliance and that may solve issues.</p> <p>I have no comments regarding the fencing or secondary suites.</p>
Planning & Development	No concerns.

Staff also received numerous comments from Speargrass landowners. Comments were sent in prior to the circulation for public hearing and during it. The comments staff received prior to the circulation for the public hearing required permission to include in the Council package as the submitters would not have been aware the letters could become public information. All the comments staff received permission for are included below. For transparency purposes, staff did not receive permission from one commenter, who were in favour of the changes. Their letter was not included in the package.

One comment received didn't have an explicit opinion but contained several clarification questions that Staff felt were important and so were still included in the comment package with Staff's responses.

The applicant also went door-to-door prior to the Open House to obtain signatures for their application. Four were submitted, Staff included one submission in the package for brevity. All four were in favour of the amendments.

In total there were 11 comments in favour of the bylaw and 4 against it. These numbers include the letters staff was unable to obtain permission from.

Megan Williams

From: [REDACTED] FOIP 17(1) Star Note: Commentor has since moved out of the Speargrass Community -MW
Sent: December 24, 2019 9:52 AM
To: Megan Williams
Subject: File #: PL2019-01

Hello Megan, FOIP 17(1)
I recently received the letter in regard to File #: PL2019-01 in regards to the proposed land use bylaw amendments in Speargrass. Our home address is [REDACTED] My wife, Julie, and I wont be available to attend the open house. However, we felt that we would like to share our opinions.

We are adamantly against having people store their RV's on their personal property (Driveways) as we feel that it impedes the aesthetics of the community. We also feel that there is indeed no need as there is ample RV storage for all residents at Speargrass in the community storage area.
Secondly, we are against any changes to the fencing bylaws that were originally outlined within the community bylaws. We feel that the current bylaws are inline with the open community feel that exists within Speargrass, and that changes to those bylaws would adversely affect the aesthetics of the community.

If you require any further information from me, please let me know.

Thanks

[REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)

#2 From: TS Enterprises

Sent: January 2, 2020 3:20 PM

To: Megan Williams <megan.williams@wheatlandcounty.ca>

Cc: [REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)

Subject: Speargrass proposed by-law changes

Hello Megan,

I just wanted to be sure that my concerns were considered just in case we are not able to make it to the January 16 open house in Carseland.

The notice we received from the County regarding the open house indicates that the purpose of the meeting is to "inform the residents of Speargrass of the proposed amendments, and to better understand how the proposed amendments would impact them"... I read proposed which to me means not in place yet, but have they have already been drawn up and/or approved by the County? Is it possible to get a copy of them sent to me?

Firstly, the change of secondary suite from discretionary use... what is the reasoning for this? This concern was brought up at the annual general meeting of the community association last fall and I was not in favour of this then and still am not today.

Apparently there was a petition being taken door to door by a resident for this change and I trust this is the reason for this open house. Who fills out an application to change a land use bylaw - any resident of the county?

We currently live in an ever aging population with continually rising health care costs and it is my understanding that governments throughout the country are encouraging secondary suites or even second residences on single lots where in the past they were not allowed. This to allow residents to assist in daily care and living of elderly family members, have additional income, or have population density without additional physical housing. A good example that is close to us are Calgary and Strathmore. Calgary is changing or reducing their basement suite development bylaws to encourage this development and Strathmore currently has one development with a second smaller residence on the same property and are currently in the development stage of a second development. Why is Wheatland County looking to step backwards in not allowing similar developments? As was stated by a board member at the fall AGM, that "Speargrass is an estate golf course development" or refer to some fellow residents as "just those renters" is pure pompous and disrespectful and not a message that we as a community or you as a municipality should want portrayed. The argument of reducing property values is a myth... look at areas in Calgary where they have changed the bylaws - those property values in some cases increased by up to 35%. Those who say it will hinder the view or the optics of the other residences are also unfounded... these secondary suites in most cases are invisible. Detached secondary suites on the other hand, like those in Strathmore, are not invisible.

Perhaps there are residents who need the secondary suite rental income to make ends meet because they are laid off in this current economy, perhaps they need this secondary suite for an aging parent because there is no senior housing available, perhaps they need this secondary suite because the resident is aging and likes the security of someone else in the house... there could be many reasons, all of which are **NONE** of our business.

Secondly, RV parking on private property... If this becomes the case, then I strongly believe the County should take control back of the RV Storage area that they rent to the community association and use of this storage area by residents be free and included in our property taxes.

Thirdly, fencing within Speargrass... my understanding is that this is already spelled out in the development information that homeowners already have? I am quite certain that I was provided this information when I built my house in 2015... What is there to discuss? Perhaps the existing rules (there are many more than just the type of fencing that are being ignored) need to be enforced first!

I think Albertans in general are tired of additional taxes being implemented and rules being put in place to tell citizens what they can and can not do on their own property, and so why on Gods green earth would Wheatland County even entertain an idea that will put themselves in a position of unnecessary conflict? The current provincial government even went as far as to create a "Ministry of Reducing Red Tape", so even they are working towards less government involvement.

Regards,

[REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)

#2 response

Megan Williams

From: Megan Williams
Sent: January 8, 2020 11:11 AM
To: TS Enterprise
Cc: Matthew Boscariol
Subject: RE: Speargrass proposed by-law changes

Good afternoon [REDACTED] FOIP 17 (1)

Thank you for your email. The open house on the 16th is an opportunity for me to get some feedback from Speargrass residents before I take the application to Council for First Reading. There will also be a public hearing, which will be advertised and landowners in Speargrass will receive mailed notification of the date once it's scheduled. This will be another opportunity for you to provide comment. If you'd like, I can include your comments below as part of the public hearing (meaning, it will be public information) so you won't have to resubmit them. If you do not want them to be included as a comment for the public hearing let me know and I won't include them.

The proposed amendments haven't gone before Council yet, so Council hasn't had an opportunity to review or make a decision. I'll be making a presentation for the open house to explain to the residents what the proposed changes are, and to gather feedback to supplement the report that will go to Council. Once I've completed that presentation, I'll email it to you so you can view it as well.

Anyone can apply to amend the land use bylaw, they don't necessarily have to be a resident of the County.

As the fencing requirements are part of the community's architectural guidelines and not in the land use bylaw, the County cannot enforce those guidelines. The purpose behind the applicant asking for the fencing requirements to be put in the land use bylaw is so the County can enforce those guidelines.

I believe that touches on all of your questions below, if I've missed any or if you wanted further clarification, please let me know. If you don't receive the presentation from me by the 16th, just send me a reminder email.

Thanks again!

Megan Williams, BCD | Planner II | 403-361-2162



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Megan Williams

From: [REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)
Sent: January 23, 2020 3:37 PM
To: Megan Williams
Subject: Re: Speargrass land use bylaw amendment open house summary

Hi Megan,

I didn't send in my comments in time, but I would like to let you know that I am opposed to the possible Secondary Suite Amendment. It is already discretionary use so if the situation is inappropriate the county already has checks in place for this. Completely disallowing certain uses of our homes that we own is not something I am in favour of. Also there is nothing wrong with renters, they are valuable members of our community.

I also oppose the fencing amendment because right now not allowing a back fence defeats the purpose of having even side fences. I think we should allow black chainlink fences on the back behind the wooden ranch fencing because they are not very visible and much classier than chicken wire. Chicken wire does not stop dogs, coyotes, or deer. The chicken wire is an eyesore for this community. Many houses already have the black chainlink and it looks nice.

Thank you,

[REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)

#4

Megan Williams

From: [REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)
Sent: January 24, 2020 12:29 PM
To: Megan Williams
Subject: Speargrass Proposed Land Use Bylaw Amendment

01/24/20

Hi Megan

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our concerns on the Proposed Land Use Bylaw Amendment 01/16/20.

We are in favour of amending the bylaw to totally restrict secondary suites in the community.

In our opinion secondary suites could;

Lower our property values by changing the character of our community from a golf course community to a high density one.

Create parking problems with the extra vehicles/rv's etc that could come with higher population density.

Increased crime with a more transient population.

The suggested 5 day time limit on driveway rv parking would be great. We have no time limit now and I think most residents would honour the 5 day period.

The suggested restriction to 5ft black chainlink fence and/or rail fence would also be good.

Thank you,

[REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)

Megan Williams

From: [REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)
Sent: January 25, 2020 3:44 PM
To: Megan Williams
Subject: proposed Land Use Bylaw Amendment

Good afternoon Megan: Thank You to You and the additional staff that were able to attend the open house Jan.16 in Carseland. As a resident of Speargrass both Raelene & Myself agree that the bylaw be ammended to remove secondary suites as a discretionary use for a number of reasons.

- * additional parking in Our cul de sac
- * vehicles parked on street. Impeding emergency vehicle's,snow removal etc.
- *I've witnessed first hand how properties are maintained (or lack of) particularly rental units.
- *Property value's eroding due to the nature of secondary suite's & rental's *increased noise level's
- * If the current owner's were to sell My concern would be that now the property could be rented as two units.

We have lived in this community for almost 11 years and We purchased under the assumption that Speargrass was built as a upscale golfing community.
We feel that allowing secondary suite's to go forward will drastically change the fabric of Our community .

Thank You for considering Our concerns !

Respectfully

[REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)

Having attended the Open House meeting on Jan. 16 regarding proposed bylaw changes for the Speargrass Community, I came away with many questions, some confusion and some personal uneasiness.

Questions/Concerns:

- 1) **When did Secondary Suites as a discretionary item become part of the existing Land Use document for Speargrass?** Has this always been on the document? Did original homeowners simply not know of its existence? If not an original part of the Land Use regulation – how and when was it included?

Why is it now an item of contention? It appears that a recent indication by a home owner that they would like to pursue creating a secondary suite has produced a very strong reaction from residents. Despite the current allowance of a secondary suite, provided that it meets the requirements determined by the County – many Speargrass residents would like to squash this existing right.

- 2) **How is municipal policy determined?**

I have strong reservations about the process which could enable some residents to determine how other residents are allowed to use (or not use) their privately owned property. How is it that the County will determine a policy that will affect all residents? Is a majority vote by Speargrass residents required? Is that based on attendees of particular gathering or through an owner registry format? Does public opinion determine municipal policy?

A portion of attendees at the Open House were vocal about their opposition to Secondary Suites. Within the community there has been a strong drive to gather support for this position which has included an element of pressure. In this small, closely connected community, it can be uncomfortable to voice an opposing viewpoint. I would suggest that this “hot item” drew a louder voice at the Open House and may have reflected the position of many of the Speargrass residents, but certainly not the only position. Time restrictions meant that not all people wishing to speak had the opportunity. (My hand was raised more than once- but I was not able to ask my questions). While I appreciated the address of the Peace Officer – his lengthy discourse took up a lot of time. Perhaps having slips of paper where comments/questions could be written would be an expedient way to gather information.

There were several statements that were made as if they were facts. I submit that most were opinions.

- a) secondary suites would cause parking issues. (I believe all units have double wide driveways and the depth to accommodate 2 cars deep **plus** the garage space). There are currently a few vehicles that are often parked on roadways and aren’t causing adverse impact to driving through the community.
- b) property values would be negatively impacted. (I don’t know if this is true – is it just a perceived fear?)

- 3) **Additional comments**

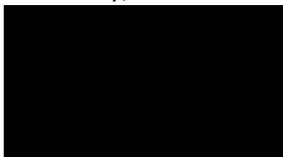
- a) There are some dwellings in Speargrass that are currently being rented out. In the recent past – one of these was the home with garbage left sitting and a derelict vehicle. In this case, lack of supervision of the owner seems to have been part of the problem. The owner, however, had every right to rent out his property.
- b) There seems to be a fear that there would be an increase in Secondary suites. My understanding is that there has only been one previous application (which was denied). For the higher priced home properties – it seems unlikely that there would be more than the occasional circumstance when a secondary suite use would be pursued. Most homeowners who can afford these houses would not be looking to have renters and quite appreciate the lifestyle of single dwelling home ownership.

- c) There is an undercurrent of elitism that appears to be tied to this golf course / estate home community. Whether this status is perceived or tied to the original concept of the developer and the way the development was marketed, it has little room for the inclusion of other options within the community. Again, I find this interesting, given that the existing Land Use Policy for Speargrass includes the possibility of Secondary Suites at the discretion of the County.
- d) I trust that the County committees would look at all factors affecting the development of a Secondary Suite and that an approved application would not open the floodgates to a heavy conversion of single family homes to multiple family use.
- e) One last question that would address the concern that a home with a secondary suite could become a **two unit rental**. Is it possible to restrict a secondary suite to be in use only when the primary homeowner continues to be living in the home?

My husband and I, ironically, are current renters in Speargrass, who have found living here to be a wonderful experience and who have subsequently worked diligently to find and complete the transaction of the purchase of a home in the community. We will take possession of our new home in May and our current residence is likely to continue to be a rental property with new tenants. Our landlord lives in the Speargrass community, and the option of a rental property has been a great situation for both him and us. I don't see secondary suites as being much different.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the opinions presented in this letter.

Sincerely,



FOIP 17(1)

#6 response

Megan Williams

From: Megan Williams
Sent: February 3, 2020 12:56 PM
To: [REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)
Subject: RE: response re: Speargrass bylaw amendment proposal

Good afternoon Maureen,

Thank you very much for your response. Would you permit me to include it in the package I present to Council? If you agree, it would become part of public record.

I've answered your questions below:

- 1) When did Secondary Suites as a discretionary item become part of the existing Land Use document for Speargrass? Has this always been on the document? Did original homeowners simply not know of its existence? If not an original part of the Land Use regulation – how and when was it included?**

I did a bit of sleuthing and found in the original iteration of the Speargrass Districts, 'secondary suites' were not a use. The Land Use Bylaw was amended on July 16, 2012 which added 'secondary suites' as a discretionary use in 6 residential districts throughout the County, which included Speargrass Low Density Residential and Speargrass Medium Density Residential Districts. It was advertised in the Strathmore Standard for two weeks prior to the public hearing. It does not appear that the amendment was circulated to individual land owners. This amendment was carried forward in the most recent version of the land use bylaw.

- 2) Why is it now an item of contention?**

There was recently an application for a secondary suite. This has been the first development permit application for a secondary suite since the aforementioned amendment.

- 3) How is municipal policy determined?**

The public can request a change/a new policy (or regulation, or bylaw), staff may bring forward a change/a new one, or it may be a direction from Council. Whether a new (or amendment to an existing) policy, regulation or bylaw is passed is Council's decision. Depending on how the policy/regulation/bylaw is enacted, the public, County staff, and other governing bodies (Alberta Health Services, other municipalities, Alberta Environment and Parks etc) can provide comment. I'll give you an over-view of the process for this bylaw change to help explain it:

Some residents from Speargrass came forward with proposed land use bylaw (LUB) amendments. Any amendments to the LUB must have three bylaw readings and a public hearing before the amendments can be enacted. As the proposed amendment would be removing a use and creating more restrictions for the community, I opted to hold an open house to gather feedback and to give the residents of Speargrass some notice ahead of the public hearing that a change had been proposed. I will be taking all the comments I've received thus far (with permission), as well as those submitted for the public hearing and compiling them for Council to review. This will include a summary that shows how many comments I received in support and those in opposition of the proposed amendments.

Any comments received may have an influence on Council's decision, but ultimately it is their own to make.

- 4) Is it possible to restrict a secondary suite to be in use only when the primary homeowner continues to be living in the home?**

No, this would be beyond the County's jurisdiction to enforce.

Again, thank you very much for your comments and questions. Please let me know if there were any I missed, or if you have further questions.

Megan Williams, BCD

Planner II, Wheatland County



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From: [REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)
Sent: January 31, 2020 1:24 PM
To: Megan Williams <megan.williams@wheatlandcounty.ca>
Subject: response re: Speargrass bylaw amendment proposal

[REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)

February 9, 2020

FOIP 17(1)

Megan Williams, BCD Planner II
Wheatland County
242006 Range Road 243
RR1, Hwy. 1
Strathmore, AB
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Phone: 403-361-2171
Email: megan.williams@wheatlandcounty.ca

Re: Proposed Land Use Bylaw Amendment Speargrass

Dear Megan,

Thank you so much to you and your staff for: sending out letters and organizing the Open House, held at Carseland Community Hall, on January 16, 2020. This meeting was to discuss three proposed land Use Bylaw Amendment for the Speargrass Low Density Residential & Speargrass Medium Density Residential Districts Wheatland County.

The first amendment was to discuss removing Dwelling, Secondary Suites as a discretionary use in Speargrass. As a Speargrass resident for twelve years we are in total support of this amendment to remove Dwelling, Secondary Suites as discretionary use.

We left the busy city and built our dream home, on the "*Banks of the Bow*" on Speargrass Golf Course - we love the country lifestyle! Speargrass is still a growing community and unfortunately due to the land developer passing away, his will being probated and the down turn economy, Phase II remains unfinished. Speargrass is still trying to sell lots; we want people to buy homes not rent suites. We need stability in our growing community and people who display pride of ownership. Never in my imagination would I have thought, we would face this issue. It is unbelievable that someone would want to rent out part of their home when they live on a golf course! Renters are more transient than home owners and in many cases do not take care of the property as well as home owners. When my husband and I purchased our home in Speargrass, we were told we were buying an *Executive home on the Banks of the Bow*. We support the bylaw amendment to remove Dwelling, Secondary Suites as a discretionary use in Speargrass Low and Medium Density Districts. It is our belief that if Wheatland County does not amend this bylaw that it would set a dangerous precedent; one that would change the fabric of our community and its potential growth for years to come.

In respect to RV Parking and not allowing residents to park their RV's on their properties for longer than a five-day period, we also support this amendment. Ten years ago, with the help of Wheatland County we built an RV Storage area in our community. This was done to help beautify our community but it is also a safety issue. When backing out of your driveway and your neighbor has a 40' RV on their parking pad, it can be very challenging especially when kids are walking to catch the bus in the mornings. The Speargrass Community Association has made RV Parking very reasonable (\$200.00 - \$250.00 per year)

for their residents; to encourage resident's not to park in their driveways. For the most part most resident's do use the community RV parking; however, in the past we have had issues with dilapidated units parked on driveways indefinitely; which made the community look run down.

Lastly, to the issue of amending the fencing bylaw to the type of fencing material to a maximum of 5' high. By doing this it will keep our Speargrass Community with a uniform look; we are also in support of the proposed bylaw amendment. We are only allowed fences in our back yards. If properties all have either *Corral Fencing* or *Black Chain Link Fencing* it keeps a nice consistent look for our community. It is also the reason why some residents who have pets, put up chicken or hog wire on their corral fencing; because we live in the country with wide open spaces where you can see for miles!

Normally Megan, I believe community residents are not so involved with these types of issues. With Jim Goodbrand (Speargrass land developer) passing away and the family not interested in our community; it has left us as residents, the ones to maintain our community standards. We as land owners have invested in both Speargrass and Wheatland County and we need to try and protect our financial investment which is our home and the fabric of our community. Thank you for your time and your help – we believe that by making these three Bylaw Amendments it will help make Speargrass a desirable place to live in the future; once the economy turns around.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

FOIP 17(1)

Megan Williams

From: [REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)
Sent: February 9, 2020 8:40 PM
To: Megan Williams
Subject: Secondary Suites in Speargrass

Hi Megan,

I hope my email doesn't come to you too late!

My opinion regarding the secondary suites is that we should not have this approved. When we, my husband & myself, bought our house in Speargrass back in 2013 we gladly accepted long commute to Calgary for work and such. We've seen Speargrass as a wonderful, secluded oasis that is worth the commute.

This is not a place where you buy a property only to have a secondary suite so to actually make some money; this is a place where you buy a property to live and enjoy a life that feels peaceful, friendly, a place where you know everybody and everybody knows you, a place where I even don't bother locking my door, a place where when I forgot my garage door opened and left my house, nothing bad happened, a place where my neighbours shovel my driveway snow when they know I am not home or when I had a busted knee.

Secondary suites would not only bring our properties' value down but also a feeling of insecurity.

Thank you very much for all your and your team at Wheatland County work and continuous effort to make all of us feeling that you care about us!

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
FOIP 17(1)

Megan Williams

From: [REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)
Sent: April 21, 2020 1:07 PM
To: Megan Williams
Subject: Re: Speargrass LUB amendment Public Hearing Date

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Comments for meeting

We are opposed to some of the new requested bylaw changes:

Discretionary suites should still be allowed, especially in these times when there are so many people unemployed. Strathmore times had a recent article on the front page indicating how advantageous suites can be to a community. In the article, the opinion of realtors was that this did not impact property values negatively. It seemed one of the main objections was that there were concerns it would not be owner occupied. If you have to make a change make that a requirement. Renters are not criminals. I think it is discriminatory to view secondary suites as bringing in undesirable elements. Owners will review the applicants as they want the best for their properties as well. There are times in people's lives where extra income support might be needed for periods of time, due to illness, breakup of marriage or temporary loss of employment. They should be given community support and time to get back on their feet. They should not be penalized and forced to sell their homes because some individuals do not LIKE the idea or concept of secondary suites.

Parking was only indicated as an issue when people were having parties etc. This has nothing to do with secondary suites if the property can support the parking.

Parking of trailers

Do not support this change as well. It will cause dissent in the community because it cannot be properly monitored and cause people to be angry and report on each other. It would be better to have it as something more sustainable ie allowed from May to end of October only. This way it is clear to all and can be enforced.

Respectfully

[REDACTED] FOIP 17(1)

January 1, 2020

Megan Williams, BCD
Planner II
Wheatland County
Hwy 1, RR1
Strathmore, AB T1P 1J6

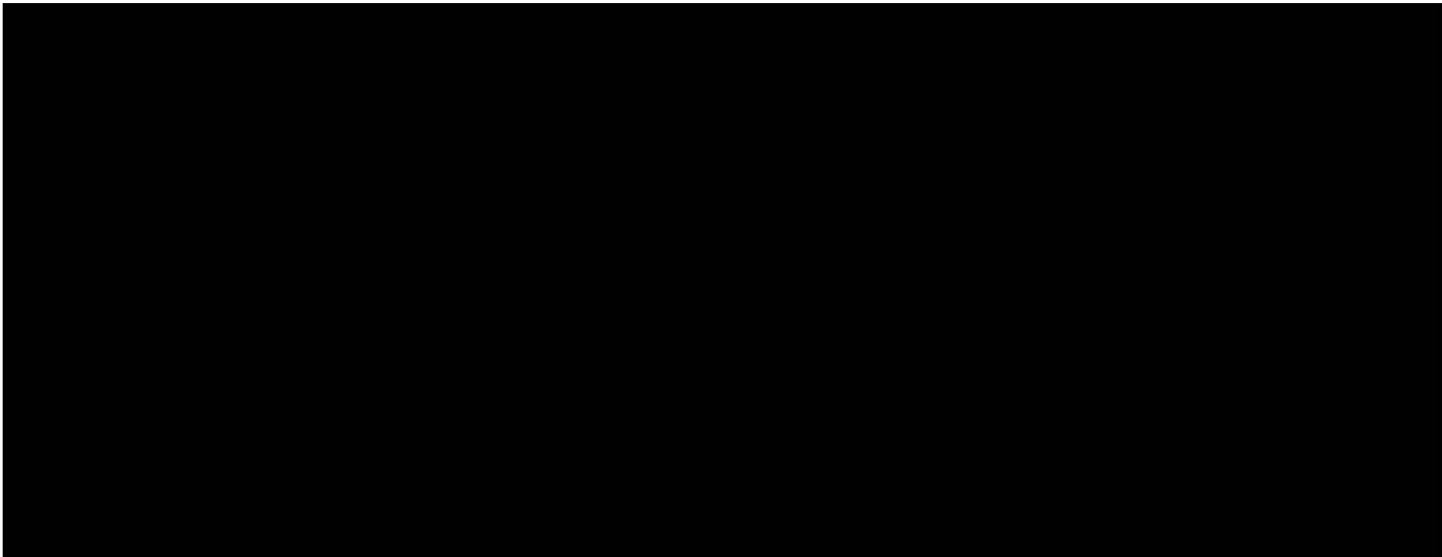
Dear Megan,

I am a Speargrass resident and unable to attend the meeting at Carseland Community Hall, Thursday January 16, 2020. I understand this meeting is to discuss the proposed Land Use Bylaw Amendment's for Speargrass Low Density Residential (SLDR) & Speargrass Medium Density Residential (SMDR) Districts in Wheatland County.

It is my understanding we will be discussing three Bylaw Amendment's for Speargrass Low Density Residential & Speargrass Medium Density Residential Districts in Wheatland County which are:

- 1) To remove Dwelling, Secondary Suites as a discretionary use
☒ I Agree RL (initials) ☐ I Disagree _____ (initials)
- 2) To eliminate RV's being stored on private properties for longer than a five (5) day period
☒ I Agree RL (initials) ☐ I Disagree _____ (initials)
- 3) To restrict fencing to "corral" fencing or black chain link fencing to a maximum of 5 feet high
☒ I Agree RL (initials) ☐ I Disagree _____ (initials)

In my absence and as a resident of Speargrass (SLDR) of legal age; please accept this letter as my vote in respect with the above three (3) proposed Land use Bylaw Amendments for the Speargrass districts (SLDR and SMDR) in Wheatland County.



February-12-2020

Sherry L. Baers
Manager of Planning & Safety Codes Services
Wheatland County

✓ Cc:

FOIP 17(1)

Re: Land Use Bylaws for the Speargrass Community

This is written as a follow-up to the Open House held in Carseland on January 15, 2020. I was one of the residents who spoke that evening as both my wife and I feel very strongly about the issues presented.

Secondary Suites in Speargrass

I believe the County should be well aware of how the majority of our residents feel based on the written comments signed by most of our residents which were presented to the Councillors prior to the County Meeting on October 08th, 2019. At this Meeting the Application for Secondary Suites was turned down.

FOIP 17(1)

and I, like many residents, decided to purchase a home in Speargrass because we believed it represented a community of executive and professional style properties. Owners take great pride in their homes whereby they work continually to upgrade their properties. Rental properties do not draw, on average, the type of residents who have "pride of ownership". Also, rental properties where there are absentee owners, show less interest in maintaining the property up to the same standards as an owner. This has been demonstrated clearly over the past few years here in Speargrass i.e., garbage accumulated and left on the front entrance or on the driveways, old vehicles and camper trailers with flat tires left on driveways indefinitely. Can you imagine how these problems would double in size if there were two rentals on the same property? Allowing secondary suites will absolutely destroy the quality of properties in Speargrass and definitely lower all resale values.

Trailers, Campers and RV's Parked on Driveways

We currently have a problem as some residents feel they have the right to park their RV or truck and camper on their driveway from May to October whether they are used once, twice or never. The more RV's parked on driveways the greater the negative impact it has on the appearance of our Community. In some cases RV's and such mentioned vehicles, are left on the driveway for the full year.

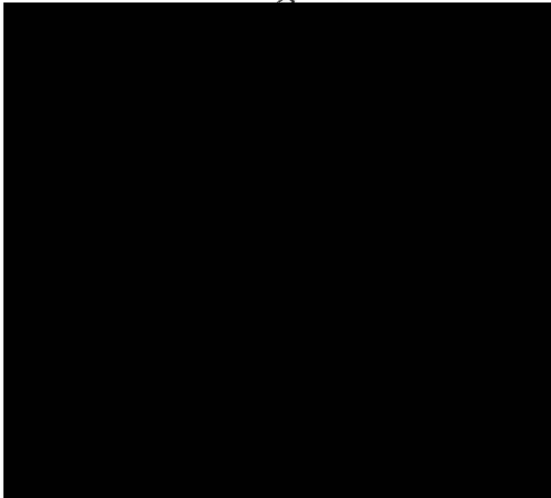
We believe the Bylaw should state that RV's and such vehicles are only allowed on a driveway for a maximum of 5 days prior to or after using.

Architectural Guidelines

To maintain high and consistent standards in a Community like Speargrass is a must. We have one example of a recent construction that used white siding. This property is on the main roadway through our area and it shows what a disgrace and problem you can have where there are NO building standards in place.

After attending your Open House on January 15th, I came away very concerned. It seemed that the very few residents who supported secondary suites and allowing RV's etc. to be parked on driveways, were quick to voice their comments. Unfortunately the silent majority who believe like [REDACTED] and I do, are often too quiet. However, when most residents were contacted prior to the County Meeting on October 08, 2019, almost everyone strongly agreed and signed the letters presented.

FOIP 17(1)



FOIP 17(1)

Att'n Megan Williams
Wheatland County

I feel compelled to add my voice to the issue surrounding the land use bylaw amendment.

On the issue of secondary suites:

I heard people say that they bought an executive home on a golf course and expect it to stay that way. I would like to point out that Speargrass as an "executive" community is currently failing, and for the benefit of all residents a more progressive attitude is required.

When I bought my home, secondary suites, on a discretionary basis, were allowed and I would like it to stay that way. So, are my rights less important to those who would now like to make a change? I don't think so.

I was able to be on the outside looking in as these concerns began to arise. It appeared that there were bullying tactics being used to gain signatures on the petition that was circulated. I personally felt intimidated into signing the petition and strongly regret doing so. A number of people, I have talked to, feel the same way.

Regarding the comments surrounding parking due to increased occupancy. Speargrass is very far from being a sold out community and is likely to remain that way for the foreseeable future. There is adequate room for parking on the large driveways and I don't see this as a concern. I think it's highly unlikely that every house in Speargrass is going to suddenly put in a secondary suite. I would be surprised if there were more than a handful during the next decade or so.

It also appeared to me that some of the people objecting to secondary suites on the grounds of insufficient parking, were all too willing to overlook the parking of their trailers on their driveways for extended periods of time. Whilst I do not have concerns regarding the parking of trailers on somebody's personal property, the hypocrisy was not lost on me.

Many Albertans are struggling in the current economy and converting their home to have secondary suite may allow them to stay in their home to ride out the recession.

It may also encourage some younger people to get on to the property ladder in this community. If they were given the option to enhance their financial circumstances by being able to rent out a suite, they may be able to reach their goals of home ownership. Incase some folks have not noticed more and more young people are choosing to rent. If this continues, the possibility of being able to sell your "executive" home for a decent value will become more remote. If nobody is getting on the ladder at the bottom there will be nobody to move up into a bigger home. It's time to open our eyes.

I'm also concerned about our aging population. Many seniors are on a fixed income and whilst that income seems adequate right now It may not be adequate 10 or 15 years from now. A secondary suite may be a way for a senior to remain financially independent. It could also be an option for a caregiver to have separate living quarters whilst remaining close at hand.

I strongly oppose any amendment to the bylaw regarding secondary suites.

I would also encourage the county to allow the current application for a secondary suite. I applaud people using their common sense and ingenuity to pursue a successful retirement in whatever way they can. It makes sense to me in a difficult selling market to make the best of what you have.

I hope that my comments will be considered in the decision making process. I do however expect my privacy to be respected. I feel like this issue has the potential to have a polarizing effect on our community and I don't wish to have any ugliness banging on my door.

Regards

[REDACTED]