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January 6, 2020

Agricultural Land Commission
Regarding file: 58744

To all whom are concerned:

Hello, I am writing on behalf of the RDEK Electoral A Advisory Commission. We are a volunteer citizen advisory board. Our role is to make recommendations on local land planning matters. The ALC has refused the proposal of Application 58744 to add an additional residence to accommodate farm workers. Our Advisory Commission is feeling disappointed about this decision. We recommended the proposal be accepted based on the following reasons.

The proposal...

- IS consistent with the property's zoning designation and the RDEK OCP designation
- positively impacts the agricultural utility of the property
- encourages, enables and accommodates current farm use of the land
- is needed as there is very little local agriculture in our valley and a need to support current operations
- long term impact would increase local agricultural production
- would accommodate the next generation of farmers, agriculture awareness and growth for a young family

The ALC panel stated *"that the current farming operation does not justify the increase of residential use"*. Our Advisory Board would like the ALC to reconsider its decision based on the current farming operations. We support the proposal because we CAN justify the addition of a farm worker residence based on the current farming operations. 106 ha (56%) of the property is currently being hayed for sale entirely for outside sources, it is the biggest hay source in our valley. In our valley hay is in high demand and local hay in even more of a demand. A letter of support from the purchasers can be provided to stress this current necessity. Haying operations do not just shut down in the winter months. There is a need to maintain the property and it's equipment for the next season. This does require the farm workers to attend to the property year round. For the past 5 years a young family with 3 small children have been working land (with Dad working full time at the coal mine, one of the only ways to financially survive while farming, this I know from personal experience). They drive to the property almost every day. The highway from Elkford to the lower Elk Valley Road can experience extreme winter conditions from late October to May. It is all of our hopes that the future generations take up and develop a passion for agriculture. One of the best ways to do this is to have them live the life and learn it as they grow. The Advisory Planning commission feels for these reasons this is a legitimate agriculture business that justifies the need for a secondary farm worker residence.

Our Advisory Board bases its recommendations on our land, people and community that we have intimate knowledge of. It is the reason we volunteer our time on this Board. It is also noted that the RDEK Board recommended this proposal as well on May 3rd 2019. There is a need to recognize our recommendation as it maintains and increases local agricultural production in our valley. We would like to request that the ALC reconsiders its decision on this file. If you would like more information you can contact me by email or better yet we welcome you all to attend one of our monthly meetings (3rd Tuesday, Fernie Information Center, 7:30pm).

Thank you for your consideration on this matter,
Yours in farming,

Karen Alexander
RDEK Electoral A Advisory Planning Commission Chair