

**ADDITION TO:**

Regular Meeting of Council  
Wednesday, May 27, 2020  
Town of Drayton Valley Council Chambers

Pages

Addition:

Section 6.0 Decision Items

- 6.7. Letters to the Government of Alberta: Premier Kenney and Minister Madu 2-3
- 6.8. MacKenzie Conference Center Temporary Opening ~~2-3~~ 2

# TOWN OF DRAYTON VALLEY REQUEST FOR DECISION

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Letters to the Government of Alberta - Premier Kenney and Minister Madu
<b>MEETING:</b>	May 27, 2020 Regular Meeting of Council
<b>PRESENTED BY:</b>	Administration on behalf of Council

**1. PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND:**

Attached draft letters have been prepared in consequence of the lacking support of banking institutions for well-standing businesses with prospective business opportunities within Drayton Valley as well as to advocate economic prosperity in our region.

The proposed draft letters are attached for review and consideration.

**2. BUDGET / GRANT / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

**3. ALIGNMENT WITH LEGISLATION AND TOWN PLANS:**

Type of Document	Yes ~ N/A ~ Partial	Comments
Provincial Acts / Regulations	N/A	
Municipal Bylaws	N/A	
Municipal Development Plan	N/A	
Sustainability Vision 2019-2021	N/A	
Town of Drayton Valley Strategic Plan 2019-2021	N/A	
Other Plans or Policies	N/A	




**4. POTENTIAL MOTIONS:**

- A. That Council approve sending attached proposed letters to Premier Kenney and to Minister Madu.
- B. That Council decline sending attached proposed letters to Premier Kenney and to Minister Madu.

**5. RECOMMENDATION**

**6. ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1. Draft Letters to Premier Kenney and Minister Madu

REPORT PREPARED BY:		REVIEWED BY:	
APPROVED BY:			

May 27, 2020

Honourable Jason Kenney  
Premier of Alberta  
Office of the Premier  
307 Legislature Building  
10800 – 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Premier:

In the Fall of 2017, I was bestowed with the great honor of being elected as Mayor of Drayton Valley. At that time, I made the decision to run for office knowing the challenges that our community was going to face in light of falling commodity prices and was prepared to fight for my community. With that said, I had no idea to magnitude of the challenges Drayton Valley was to face, nor did I anticipate the entities that would be contributing to the challenges.

Having conversed with my peers across Alberta, I can confidently say that no community has worked harder to diversify it economy than Drayton Valley. Since elected the following initiatives were undertaken:

1. **Education** - Creating the first of its kind “Zero Fee Tuition Program” in Canada to help encourage local students to pursue post-secondary education, and strengthen our local economy.
2. **Hemp** – Built the “Alberta Hemp Alliance” to help promote the hemp industry in Alberta, and support a local business (Bio-Composite Group) which is located in our Bio-Mile.
3. **Hemp Launch** – Local competition to help promote the hemp industry, which we won by a local entrepreneur that has created a company called Biomass Harvesting Innovations Ltd.
4. **Cannabis** – Introduced local business owners to the possibilities in the cannabis industry, which has now turned into Noble Growth Corp. which has invested over \$10 million dollars into Drayton Valley’s local economy as poised to create 60+ jobs.
5. **Telus Safe Communities Partnership** – Which is a partnership between the Town and Telus that is assisting our local RCMP detachment in tracking criminal activity in and out of our boundaries.

The list provided is a sample of the initiative we have undertaken for the benefit of our community, as well as the benefit of the Province. The ironic part of our economic diversification efforts, is that they have been ill supported by any level of government beyond our municipality, and what is even more ironic, is the challenges we have had to overcome by entities that should be supporting diversification.

Honourable Jason Kenney  
May 27, 2020  
Page 2

It should come to no surprise to you that the Federal Government, under its current leadership has done less than nothing to support Alberta's economy. When I say less than nothing, I mean, if they had done nothing, we would be better off than where we are now. Instead they have created policies that have damaged our reputation as an energy leader, and removed billions of dollars of investment from Alberta. While it is easy to focus on the shortcoming of our Federal government, I would like to also highlight the provincial challenges that Drayton Valley has faced.

Education is a key component to our economic strategy, simply because Town Council realizes the importance education can play in creating a sustainable and viable community. We were told to work with the Regional Stewardship framework, which we did. We worked tirelessly to promote education in our community, with a seemingly unwilling partner, Norquest College. We continued to build the "Zero Fee Tuition Program" until last month Norquest College, through email, informed us of their intention to pull onsite programming from Drayton Valley. Two years of hard work disappeared without a phone call or consolation.

One industry that the Federal Government created, was the cannabis industry. Cannabis, while it has its stigmas, is still a crop that is in demand and labor intensive to produce. That is why the Town of Drayton Valley supported Noble Growth Corp. in transitioning an oilfield building into a state of the art grow facility that would create employment and investment at a time when both were lacking. However, with the onset of COVID-19, their project, which is 85% completed, is in jeopardy due to a shortfall in capital. Plan A was to raise private investment and the day the schools were shutdown they saw \$1 million in private investment back away, but they always had a Plan B. Plan B was to secure \$6 million in loans through a bridge financing company, which would later be converted to a term loan through ATB Financial, which is the bank for Albertans. The paperwork was prepared, more than double the security was provided (mostly in commercial property in Drayton Valley), but ATB Financial walked away at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, due to the fact that commercial property in Drayton Valley is essentially valueless in the eyes of the bank.

I do not share these stories looking for sympathy, I share them to show the challenges that rural Alberta, and specifically Drayton Valley has faced in the eye of diversifying our local economy. We have tried harder than anyone else, only to be swept aside by academic institutions that are unhappy with the funding model review, or worse, by a very bank that is supposed to help Albertans in time like this. I can certainly say they are not "here to help". I also share these stories to highlight the impact that the media has had on our community.

Over the last few years, Drayton Valley has been portrayed in a negative and inaccurate light by the media as well as lobby groups who do not represent or reflect the ideologies of the community. I have been asked countless time to do interviews, and have since started refusing interviews due to the negative messaging that is always portrayed. The media wanted to show how impacted Alberta was, and they used Drayton Valley to get that message across. Because of that, we are suffering as a community.

After 5+ years of challenging economic conditions in rural Alberta, Drayton Valley had done everything in its power to diversify, on the backs of our taxpayers none the less, with no support. And the wins we have achieved are now in jeopardy of failing due to Provincial government mandates.

Honourable Jason Kenney  
May 27, 2020  
Page 3

If the provincial government doesn't take rural diversification seriously, I can assure you that there will be a much larger fight that will occur. I'm talking about the dissolution of communities. Shrinking tax bases and increased regulation from the Province has created a scenario where communities like Drayton Valley may not be viable long term. Obviously, I do not want this to happen, and I will do everything in my power to ensure that the 63 year history of Drayton Valley doesn't end here, but we need to always look at the ramifications of our decisions, or lack thereof.

Drayton Valley has brought billions of dollars of wealth into this province, and now we need the support of the Provincial government more than ever. We are not looking for handouts, we are looking for a partner in diversifying our local economy, or at a very minimum, support so our local entrepreneurs can get the loans necessary to move Drayton Valley to a new and better future.

Sincerely,

Michael Doerksen  
Mayor

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DRAFT

May 27, 2020

The Honourable Kaycee Madu  
Minister of Municipal Affairs  
Legislative Assembly of Alberta  
132 Legislature Building  
10800 – 97 Ave NW  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Madu:

**RE: Economic Prosperity**

Regionalization of urban and rural municipalities has become a reoccurring topic of conversation among many municipal leaders amid a struggling economy. The amalgamation of municipalities is being looked at as a way to fast track economic prosperity in Alberta.

The way in which borders are structured and municipalities deliver services is becoming a burden to taxpayers across Alberta. Many urban municipalities provide essential services to their surrounding rural neighbours and support a larger population that is delivered at the expense of the urban taxpayer. This often forces urban centers to raise taxes to accommodate increasing demands on infrastructure and operational costs for facilities and services. This includes RCMP services, road construction, rehabilitation and maintenance, underground infrastructure requirements and repairs as well as the operation of recreational facilities. If municipalities were to act in the best interests of the region, taxation could be administered in a consistent manner to ratepayers.

Economies of scale could be achieved through a merger process, thus creating efficiencies and considerable cost savings. A number of services could be delivered more economically, including water and wastewater systems, waste management, recreation and program delivery, transportation and road maintenance, policing, development processes including permitting and assessments could also be streamlined. Conflicts over cost sharing would cease as municipalities would be operating as a unified region. This situation is crippling many communities across the Province as disagreements can lead to delays in service or capital projects being put on hold. Further to this, operational efficiencies would be realized as the number of elected officials, administrators, staff, and equipment could be reduced as municipal offices are combined.

../2

Honourable Minister Kaycee Madu  
May 27, 2020  
Page 2

Considerations should be given when merging municipalities. Enormous wealth disparities exist among municipalities who are able to collect significant revenue from linear assessments. Regional boundaries should encompass the appropriate territories to ensure fair and equitable distribution of resources. This will ensure efficiencies are created and wealth is distributed in a meaningful way to evoke positive change that rebuilds Alberta's economy and provides for increased stability across the Province.

Through the creation of larger, economically stable regions, investor confidence will return, and true regional economic development can be achieved. As Alberta's economy continues to face challenges, both within Canada and abroad, municipalities are looking to the provincial and federal governments for grants and other revenue sources to help fund capital projects and maintain existing infrastructure. Neighboring municipalities often end up competing for the same granting or investment opportunities. Merging municipalities would create a shared vision for the region with increased resources and assets, making these new regional zones attractive for investment. Greater opportunities for growth and economic resilience exist with this governing model.

Drayton Valley Town Council is asking that the Province take proactive measures to create efficiencies and cost savings for tax payers, and that sets the frame work for Alberta's economic resurgence.

It is obvious that the future holds many changes and arguably some of the most important in our history. The Town of Drayton Valley and many other communities view regionalization as an economic strategy that equalizes wealth and provides opportunities for economic growth and future success. We hope that the Province takes a proactive approach to Alberta's future with consideration given to regionalization.

Sincerely,

Michael Doerksen  
Mayor

cc: Honourable Jason Kenney, Premier of Alberta

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# TOWN OF DRAYTON VALLEY REQUEST FOR DECISION

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	MacKenzie Conference Center Temporary Opening
<b>MEETING:</b>	May 27, 2020 Regular Meeting of Council
<b>PRESENTED BY:</b>	Administration on Behalf of Council Winston Rossouw, CAO

**1. PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND:**

Due to COVID-19, the Town of Drayton Valley decided to close various facilities, including the MacKenzie Conference Center, to the public. This measure was taken in support of Alberta Health Services' priority to limit larger social gatherings in our community and to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The Province of Alberta is moving forward with Alberta's Relaunch Strategy Stage One effective May 14, 2020. On May 25, 2020 the Province of Alberta revised the gathering restrictions to specifically address worship services and funerals.

On May 26, 2020, the MacKenzie family requested that the Town open the MacKenzie Conference Center from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 29, 2020, for the sole purpose of facilitating a funeral service for the late Mr. John MacKenzie.

This request from the MacKenzie family that Council give consideration for a temporary opening of the MacKenzie Conference Center for this funeral service only. All users will be required to follow all current Public Health orders and all safety precautions and recommendations from the Government of Alberta. Information can be found on the Government of Alberta website under "Restriction on gatherings."

**2. BUDGET / GRANT / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

**3. ALIGNMENT WITH LEGISLATION AND TOWN PLANS:**

Type of Document	Yes ~ N/A ~ Partial	Comments
Provincial Acts / Regulations	Yes	<i>Municipal Government Act</i>
Municipal Bylaws	N/A	
Municipal Development Plan	N/A	
Sustainability Vision 2019-2021	N/A	
Town of Drayton Valley Strategic Plan 2019-2021	N/A	
Other Plans or Policies	N/A	



**4. POTENTIAL MOTIONS:**

- A. That Council approve the temporary opening of the MacKenzie Conference Center for the sole purpose of facilitating a funeral service for the late Mr. John MacKenzie from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. on May 29, 2020, with the requirements that all users follow the current Public Health orders and all safety precautions and recommendations from the Government of Alberta.
- B. That Council decline to temporarily open the MacKenzie Conference Center.



5. RECOMMENDATION

6. ATTACHMENTS:

REPORT PREPARED BY:		REVIEWED BY:	
APPROVED BY:	