
MEMORANDUM

To: Chair & Members of the Electoral Area Services Committee
Chair & Members of the Regional Board

From: Lisa Grant, Planner 1

Date: October 29th, 2010

Subject: Updated snow avalanche report for Hemlock Valley

File No.: 6480-30-039

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Regional Board

1. Receives “Hemlock Valley Snow Avalanche Assessment” dated October 8th, 2010 prepared by D&E McClung Enterprise Ltd.; and
2. Directs staff to provide a copy of the report to property owners in the snow avalanche hazard area, local ratepayers, the resort owner and provincial agencies; and
3. Directs staff to facilitate a meeting between provincial agencies, affected property owners, the resort owner and the local ratepayers.

ISSUE

A snow avalanche report was commissioned to provide up-to-date snow avalanche hazard information for the proposed Official Community Plan and zoning bylaw amendments.

BACKGROUND

Through the late spring and summer staff has been coordinating with David McClung, a snow avalanche engineer, to update the existing 2000 snow avalanche hazard report. This new information is incorporated into the proposed Official Community Plan amendment and zoning bylaw amendment. For approximately 75% of property owners the report advises the hazard is reduced to a safe level, therefore allowing development to proceed. For the remaining properties the situation remains the same.

DISCUSSION

Comprehensive Approach

The updated snow avalanche report improves the situation for most property owners. For approximately 75% of property owners in the avalanche risk area the report advises the hazard is reduced to a safe level, therefore allowing development to proceed. For the remaining properties the situation is largely unchanged.

However for the remaining 19 properties, uncertainty continues. Construction on vacant lots or re-construction of an existing townhouse is not guaranteed without site specific evaluation and potential mitigative works. The report advises community protective works in the start zone may be required to mitigate the hazard. These are often costly to construct.

Details about how the findings and recommendations of the updated avalanche study are proposed to be implemented are outlined in the 2nd reading OCP amendment bylaw memo and 2nd reading zoning bylaw amendment memo, both of which are separate items on this agenda.

As a next step, the province should be engaged to fund a comprehensive snow avalanche evaluation to determine if community protective works or properties should be relocated. The Regional District can assist by facilitating discussions with the province and affected property owners. Proposed OCP amendments support a comprehensive approach; this will be a lengthy process requiring cooperation from senior government, the Regional District, residents, ratepayers and resort owner.

Next steps:

- Zoning and OCP amendment bylaws should proceed.
- Provide a copy of the snow avalanche report to property owners in the snow avalanche hazard area (Edelweiss Drive, Snowmist Place and Snow mist Drive), Provincial agencies, ratepayers association and the resort owner.
- The Regional District will facilitate a meeting between provincial agencies, affected property owners, the resort owner and the local ratepayers association.

Attachments

COSTS

Budgeted for in the 2010 financial plan.

COMMENTS

Acting Chief Administrative Officer:

Reviewed and supported.

Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services:

Reviewed and supported.

Lisa Grant
Planner 1