

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING OF COUNCIL**  
**of the Town of Whitecourt**  
held on Monday, January 27, 2025 at the Forest Interpretive Centre

Present:	Mayor Pickard; Councillors Baker, Chauvet, Lanctot, Lapointe, and Schlosser; Chief Administrative Officer Smyl; and Recording Secretary Grimstad-Davidson.
Absent:	Deputy Mayor McAree.
Call to Order:	The Meeting was called to order at 4:00pm; Mayor Pickard presiding.
Appointment of Chair:	<u>25-016    Moved by Councillor Chauvet</u>  That Mayor Pickard be appointed as Chair of the Public Hearing.  - CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
Address from the Chair:	The Chair reviewed procedures for the public to address Council. The Chair asked to hear from the Planning & Development Department.
Removal of MR Designation on Lot 15MR, Block 10, Plan 982-2153 and Bylaw 1577-3 to rezone from U-S to UD-F:	<p>The Director advised that the Municipal Reserve (MR) designation was proposed to be removed from Lot 15MR, Block 10, Plan 982-2153 in the Southland Estates area, and the property rezoned from Urban Services (U-S) to Future Urban Development (UD-F) and introduced the Development Officer.</p> <p>The Development Officer advised that the Area Structure Plan for Southland Estates was adopted in 1997 and the property was subdivided and zoned for use as an elementary school. Since that time, all school boards for Whitecourt have advised that they no longer require that space for school purposes. The proposed amendments and MR designation removal would allow future development that is compatible with adjacent residential uses.</p> <p>The Development Officer advised that the proposed removal of reserve designation and Land Use Bylaw Amendment was circulated to stakeholders on December 30, 2024 and to adjacent landowners on January 6, 2025. The Public Hearing was advertised in the local newspaper during the weeks of January 6 &amp; 13, 2025 and placed on the Town website on January 6, 2025. One inquiry was received seeking clarification on what was being proposed, but no support or opposition to the application was expressed. The Municipal Planning Commission reviewed the application on December 12, 2024 and forwarded support to Council. A public information session was also held immediately prior to the Public Hearing and was well attended.</p> <p>Chair Pickard asked if there was anyone who wished to speak in favour of the proposed removal of Municipal Reserve designation, and rezoning of Lot 15MR, Block 10, Plan 982-2153 from Urban Services (U-S) to Future Urban Development (UD-F).</p> <p>No one responded to the Chair's invitation.</p> <p>Chair Pickard asked if there was anyone who wished to speak in opposition of the proposed removal of Municipal Reserve designation, and rezoning of Lot 15MR, Block 10, Plan 982-2153 from Urban Services (U-S) to Future Urban Development (UD-F).</p> <p>Sheilagh Detka of 6 Park Place stated that there needs to be more greenspace for wildlife and play space for children and pets, and that there should be a break from the rows of houses.</p> <p>Chair Pickard asked if there was anyone who wished to speak that was affected by the proposed removal of Municipal Reserve designation, and rezoning of Lot 15MR,</p>

Bylaw 1577-4 –  
Health Services  
Amendments:

Block 10, Plan 982-2153 from Urban Services (U-S) to Future Urban Development (UD-F).

No one responded to the Chair's invitation.

The Chair asked to hear from Administration regarding proposed Bylaw 1577-4. The Director advised that amendments were proposed to definitions of the Land Use Bylaw to allow Health Services to be located within the Hilltop Commercial (C-7) and Urban Services (U-S) land use districts and introduced the Planner.

The Planner advised that the bylaw application was being brought forward jointly by the Town and a private applicant. The proposed amendment would delete the definition of "Professional, Financial, Office, Health and Business Support Service" and replace it with definitions for "Professional Office Services" and "Health Services." Both uses were proposed to continue in the land use districts where the current bylaw allows them, and Health Services was also proposed as a discretionary use in the C-7 and U-S land use districts.

The Planner advised that notice of the Public Hearing was posted to the Town website on January 3, 2025, and advertised in the local newspaper on January 15 and 22, 2025. Notice was sent to relevant stakeholders and utility companies and mailed to property owners within and adjacent to the C-7 land use district on January 3, 2025. One written response was received, indicating conditional support as long as the new use would not allow for transitional housing or emergency accommodations. Three phone calls were received but no official comments were given. A comment was also received from Louise Meier, Past President of the Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce and Executive Director of the Echo Society, indicating that she has concerns about where businesses locate and the vacancy of the downtown but that she rather see businesses locate in the community than elsewhere. She also noted that any changes to regulations or bylaws should be in the best interest of the Town. Woodlands County stated they had no concerns, and Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors provided a general statement of acknowledgement, noting the importance of the safe and effective operation of provincial highways. The amendment was presented to the Municipal Planning Commission on January 9, 2025. The Municipal Planning Commission forwarded their support of the application and provided two comments for Council's consideration:

1. The proposed amendment does not infringe on the industrial land use districts; and
2. The proposed amendment gives the Municipal Planning Commission the authority to evaluate "Health Services" as a discretionary use in the C-7, Hilltop Commercial land use district.

A public information session was also held immediately prior to the Public Hearing and was well attended.

Chair Pickard asked if there was anyone who wished to speak in favour of proposed Bylaw No. 1577-4.

Terri-Ann Masse of 41 Ravine Drive indicated that she would like to see growth in the downtown, but supported the application and felt it would be nice to have other services along the highway.

The applicant, Harpreet Rakhra, stated that allowing the medical offices in the C-7 District would aid in attracting specialists to the community which would allow residents to receive care locally, saving themselves and their caregivers' time. He noted that the proposed change would also allow the area to be developed in a more presentable manner.

Chair Pickard asked if there was anyone who wished to speak in opposition of proposed Bylaw No. 1577-4.

No one responded to the Chair's invitation.

Chair Pickard asked if there was anyone who wished to speak that was affected by proposed Bylaw No. 1577-4.

No one responded to the Chair's invitation.

Adjournment:

25-017 Moved by Councillor Baker

That the Public Hearing be adjourned. Time: 4:18pm.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

*T. Pickard*

Chair

*P. Smyl*

Chief Administrative Officer