

Minutes of the Red Deer River Municipal Users Group Regular Meeting held on July 16, 2015 at 12:00 PM, Canalta Jurassic Hotel, Drumheller, Alberta.

1.0 Call to Order: Co-Chair P. Churchill called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM.

Attendance: Co-Chair P. Churchill – Town of Innisfail, L. Stulberg – Cty of Stettler, S. Grudecki- MD Acadia, A. Campbell – Town of Stettler, G. Ennis – Cty of Stettler, B. Shaw – City of Red Deer, (RDRMUG), T. Yemen – Town of Drumheller, K. Fegan – Village of Delburne, G. Rusaw – Village of Delburne, K. Neill – Town of Hanna, P. Weran – Town of Blackfalds, J. Lazzari – Town of Oyen, J. Slemp – Special Areas, M. Kreke – Starland Cty, M. Thompson – Town of Sundre, R. Romanetz – Town of Drumheller, J. Wittstock – Kneehill Cty, L. Wright – Town of Olds, K. Lewis – Red Deer Cty, J. Hanger – RDRWA, J. Methot – RDRWA, D. Brand – Town of Sylvan Lake, R. Olfert – Town of Blackfalds, K. Koester – Town of Threehills, G. Champion – Town of Hanna, R. Michalak – RDRMUG, Keith Ryder – RDRMUG.

2.0 Agenda: This meeting was dedicated to the RDRMUG Water Quality Action Plan Workshop. The workshop was a partnership session with the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA) and RDRMUG. The Workshop was facilitated by J. Methot, RDRWA and R. Michalak, Lead Project Coordinator, RDRMUG.

Note: As this meeting was dedicated to the Action Plan Workshop no RDRMUG regular business was conducted at this meeting.

3.0 Meeting Notes Attached.

4.0 Next Meeting: September 17, 2015, Badlands Community Facility, Drumheller

5.0 Adjournment: 4:00 pm

Meeting Notes

July 16, 2015 (12pm - 4pm)

Canalta Jurassic Inn

Drumheller, AB

Introduction and Background

From March through July of 2015, preliminary in-person conversations on municipal action on water quality were held with RDRMUG members. These conversations were inclusive of administrative, operational, and elected representatives and will continue into August and September.

The Municipal Water Quality Protection Action Plan (MWQPAP) was introduced to members and a supporting Water Quality Backgrounder was distributed beforehand to help frame the conversation. This short backgrounder was developed with content from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association *Water Primer and Discussion Paper* and will be further refined with information collected in the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Municipal Guide*.

The preliminary conversations identified five areas of focus for current and historic action on municipal water quality actions in the Red Deer River basin:

- 1) Watershed Governance
- 2) Source Water Protection
- 3) Stormwater Management
- 4) Climate Change Impacts
- 5) Water Literacy

This consultation is the first of two, and perhaps three, consultations of RDRMUG members in development of the MWQPAP. Both member and non-member municipalities were invited including administrative and operational staff with a total **27** people attending including two representatives from the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance.

The objectives of this first consultation were to:

- 1) Co-host the event with the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance to gather municipal sector feedback on the draft Integrated Watershed Management Plan Implementation Recommendations and present an overview of water quality matters in the Red Deer River basin
- 2) Ensure baseline understanding of the Municipal Water Quality Protection Action Plan for RDRMUG members and non-member municipalities and collect additional

information and feedback on the focus areas identified in the preliminary conversations for development of the MWQPAP.

World Café Tables - Presented Topics and Results

The World Café facilitation model was used to engage participants and a brief explanation of the five focus areas along with a brief synopsis of conversation highlights was given. Key questions to consider were also provided as the World Café conversations proceeded:

- 1) *What's currently being done to manage water quality in the municipality?*
- 2) *What's worked or is working well for your water quality mgmt routine?*
- 3) *What do you expect will work well into the future?*
- 4) *What's been a challenge and what can you predict as serious challenges?*
- 5) *Where would you like to be as a municipality with water quality protection?*

The results of the World Café conversations are detailed below and the meeting agenda is attached as an appendix.

1. Watershed Governance

Suggested conversation starters:

- a. Watershed Planning and Land Use Planning
- strange bedfellows or a match made in heaven?
- b. Regional Water Consortia
- economies of scale; is it right for everyone?
- c. Intergovernmental Relationships for Water Management
- Hu's on first...?

Limited discussion on this topic; a sense that not a lot of understanding is there for most people to have an in-depth conversation... regional water commissions are relatively new and esoteric but most agree that they work well, ongoing confusion about responsibility and interrelationships between levels of government with respect to water management - more education and awareness raising needed

2. Source Water Protection

Suggested conversation starters:

- a. Land Use Tools to Protect Sensitive Areas
- tread softly and carry a big stick
 - b. Drinking Water Safety Planning
- I thought you were doing that...!
- What is source water? Where does it come from? Distance? Ground water?

- Is the source where you take it out or where it begins?
- Walkerton, ON and North Battleford, SK have serious lessons to teach
- Challenges - unfair / uneven application of the rules (e.g., federal vs. municipal, Bowden)
 - Real world implications of changes need to be considered
 - Mixed messages exist (rules vs. guidelines)
 - Quality of raw water
- Current
 - Source water protection plans (partial funding available?)
- Solutions
 - compare raw water intake data along the river length
 - farmer accountability
 - Province needs to take more responsibility
 - NPS and PS monitoring and communications, lake monitoring

Drinking Water Safety Plans

- Completed for Delburne and Sundre, not sure about Red Deer County, not completed in Sylvan Lake (staffing turnover, lacking accountability); currently being done in water quality management
- Land use plans
- BMP extension / facilitation
- Gap for municipalities - what happens underground (groundwater)
- Challenges: how federal and provincial jurisdictions communicate regulations to municipalities, the rules and people keep changing
- In Sylvan Lake, stormwater management standards are more stringent than the provincial requirements
- In Sundre, 2019 is the anticipated timeline for more lagoon capacity or other waste water treatment facilities (e.g., treatment plant)
- Delburne wastewater - mainly irrigation (?)
- Aging water and wastewater infrastructure are a problem, differences between provincial and federal rules exist
- Ponoka was charged over \$200k for improper lagoon discharge (pollution)
- \$\$\$ challenge - remember it's cheaper to meet the requirements now than later (i.e., added cost of penalties and fines, not to mention health risk)

3. Stormwater Management

Suggested conversation starters:

- a. The Stormwater Master Plan
 - *is stormwater an asset or liability?*
- b. Low Impact Development
 - *how can nature do the work for us?*

- Storm ponds - development issues, can enhance development (e.g., “waterfront property”)
- Some face capacity issues and it’s very expensive to expand capacity
- Can be used as wetland restoration option
- Inflow and infiltration can be very expensive to municipalities
- Education to citizens re: sump pump being tied into sanitary rather than storm lines
- Use storm water ponds for supplementary usage – treat stormwater as an asset instead of a liability
- Curb cutting to capture runoff from streets and parking lots (Hanna example of gravel parking lot being paved and increasing concentration of stormwater flow on low capacity infrastructure for that kind of flow)
- Hard to manage as a retention lake because of regulations from Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- County - wetlands and drainage management, preservation of natural areas, farming every square foot of land (removes trees and damages riparian areas)
- Natural drainage throughout communities needs effective management (i.e., retention ponds)
- Catch silt – big \$\$\$
- Undersized and outdated (aging) infrastructure
- BMPs currently developed by Red Deer County have been beneficial – need to be shared through events like this

4. Climate Change Impacts

Suggested conversation starters:

- a. Drought and Flood Preparedness
 - *are you ready to handle the unexpected?*
 - b. Integrated / collaborative action approaches
 - *none of us are as smart as all of us*
- Climate change is real; it doesn’t matter what’s causing it... “it’s real”
 - 1 in 100 year storm management model isn’t practical any more, we need to adapt to the current conditions
 - weather will become more extreme and frequent events of intense flooding and drought
 - plan and build in a different manner
 - quantity of water is important to quality
 - erosion, silt increases with events of heavy rainfall when withdrawing directly from the river
 - land use practices can impact events (i.e., clear cutting)
 - drought preparedness and fair water sharing with users
 - prepare for future on/off stream storage (preserve high run offs)

- flood preparedness – needs consistent treatment and planning

5. Water Literacy

Suggested conversation starters:

- a. Understanding Water and our relationship with it
 - *it's all Creek to me!*
 - b. Alberta Water Conversations
 - *Water Management, Drinking Water and Wastewater Systems, Healthy Lakes, Hydraulic Fracturing and water*
- Water, stormwater, sewer literacy - flush toilet vs. oil and car
 - Public awareness
 - continuous education (FB and twitter)
 - form an idea group / stop reinventing the wheel
 - why a water meter?
 - Municipal resources
 - Administration and others
 - Shared information (water, sewer, stormwater)
 - More templates (e.g., drinking water safety plans) - “fill in the blanks”
 - Challenge
 - Funding, public perception (how much it costs)
 - Solutions
 - Continuous and detailed education
 - Open houses (tired and played out - “a dinosaur”)
 - Use social media and go to where people are (e.g., coffee shops, markets, malls etc.)
 - Trade show project night and food, prizes
 - Admin staff at municipal offices (front line staff)
 - Disciplined communications policies (routine habit) -> how?
 - Dedicated communications expertise
 - People just don't get it, they aren't paying attention
 - Level 2 restrictions (water ban) has more effect when coupled with drought situations
 - Sylvan Lake has a number of initiatives - sump pump, water conservation every year
 - Sundre - water is metered, lawn watering is not allowed at certain times, wells can be tested in town
 - Water rates - tiered rate system still doesn't reduce consumption
 - Little understanding about water use, land use and water relationships
 - Lake Days (via RDRWA and ALMS)
 - Aquatic Invasive Species campaign (GoA)
 - Peer pressure, social proof (e.g., bicycle helmets), legislation

AGENDA

July 16, 2015 - Municipal Water Quality Protection Action Plan Consult

Networking Lunch

Welcome and Consultation Overview

Roundtable Introductions (brief)

Water Quality Introduction

Integrated Watershed Management Planning (*interactive*)

Networking Break (10 – 15 minutes)

Municipal Water Quality Protection Action Plan Update

World Café Conversations (*interactive*)

Closing Questions, Next Steps, and Farewell