

September 14, 2016

Report To: Planning and Development Executive Committee

From: Operations and Facilities Executive Committee

RE: Request to rent property for the purpose of cash crops

The property being considered is at the corner of McIrvine Road and Frog Creek Road as well as a portion of the Airport property. In the past the Airport property was cut for hay under agreement with Cornell Farms from September 1, 2006 to September 1, 2016. The property known as 1003 Frog Creek Road has been cut for hay by the neighboring property owners, Mr. & Mrs. Schmid, under agreement, from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2018. In 2010 Copperlight LP (Sky Power) began discussions with the Town to erect a solar farm on the property and entered an option agreement with the Town to lease the property for this purpose. In July of 2016 this agreement was terminated incomplete.

The use of the Airport property has to be with consideration of the safety of air traffic and the potential of any crops being planted which would entice animals airside, specifically birds. A further evaluation of the proposed cash crops would have to be completed to understand the implications with growing these types of crops within an airport setting. The use of the Airport property has recently been discussed with the Airport Supervisor, Tom Batiuk where the extents of the land being harvested was discussed. It would be preferable to work-up and harvest a larger amount of the airport land so as to cut down on the amount of grass required to be cut by the Airport Operations staff on an ongoing basis.

The 1003 Frog Creek Road property is zoned Resource Development which permits the agricultural use. The current use agreement for 1003 Frog Creek Road terminates March 31, 2018 or by 30 days written notice by either party. On September 14, 2016 I spoke with Mrs. Schmid about the agreement, that a request had been received by Council and the potential sale of their property and they were open to terminating the agreement should someone be interested in working that land. They have allowed Cornell Farms to harvest that land as they no longer have horses at their property so they have no need for the hay. There has been no harvest in the 2016 year which shows that there may no longer be an appetite by Cornell's to cut this property.

Based on the previous agreement, 1003 Frog Creek Road was approximately 37ac of harvested area with approximately 100 ac available and the Airport has approximately 118 ac available to be harvested. Both properties would have to be evaluated to determine the final amount of useable lands to be planted and harvested. It is the recommendation of the Operations and Facilities Division to evaluate the properties to determine the amount of land available to work up and further discuss the crops that Mr. Esselink is interested in planting to ensure that there will not be an adverse effect to the Airport Operations. Once this is complete a counter proposal will be brought back to Planning and Development before being taken to Mr. Esselink. Should Mr. Esselink be satisfied with the evaluation of available property and constraints in crop type, the drafting of a land use agreement will follow.

Respectfully Submitted

Paul Ryan, Chair
Operations & Facilities Executive Committee