

MEDIA RELEASE

March 1, 2004

More Information on Abraham Glacier Wellness Resort

Martha Kostuch has received information from Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIPP). Similar to the information received from Alberta Environment (AENV), the information from SRD indicates there was a desire to have an environmental impact assessment (EIA) done on the proposed Abraham Glacier Wellness Resort.

In a March 3rd 2003 e-mail, Don Livingston, Land Management, said, "we need to know whether an EIA would be required. This plan is quite "Fluffy" and there is a lot of information that we need. I expect that the info will come out in the EIA."

A March 5th 2003 fax note from the proponent to Don Livingston, Land Management, states, "Also [took] to Mike Cardinal [the Minister of SRD] and gave him a package. His comment is that he does not feel we need an assessment."

An April 29th, 2003 memorandum from Don Livingston to Andy Lamb, AENV, outlines many deficiencies in the information provided in the disclosure document including insufficient information about water supply, sewage disposal and electrical service. The memorandum also states, "The document talks about massive hot springs in the area that will be available to the resort user. There is currently no hot springs in the area. The developer does not state that they will artificially heat spring water to create "hot springs". If this is their plan they need to provide information on source, transport, etc."

A March 8th 2003 e-mail from Mel White, Land Use Operations Branch, to Andy Lamb, AENV, states, "it is obvious there is not enough economic or environmental information to make an informed decision on the project."

"This report does not address what the environmental effects of the project are. Regardless of whether this project will require an EIA, there is not enough information here to meet our requirements for a detailed plan for review under the ATRL process. Given the location and extent of the development, I believe that an EIA is required to substantiate the need for the project and its environmental effects. The fact that the municipality has created a land use bylaw for the Node is not substantial enough to just plunk down developments that meet with the intent, a thorough review of any proposed development is needed."

A list of the approvals required for the proposed development is included in the handwritten notes of a July 29th 2003 meeting. The same notes includes a list of concerns and an opinion that the County's land use bylaw would probably need to be amended to accommodate the proposed development.

An August 8th 2003 e-mail from Jim Allen, Fish and Wildlife, says, "I would like to see a qualified consultant do a wildlife travel corridor analysis with an emphasis on bears and cougars."

Hand written notes from a November 7th 2003 meeting state, "A letter from the applicant in regards to comments from myself states, "The affect of any new activities will be minimal on the surrounding lands due to the fact that we are using existing operations and trails. The wellness resort is designed to attract people to activities inside the Resort with a minimal of activities off site."

This statement is contradicted by a statement on page three [of the information package] that states, "You can take part in some of the best Trout fly-fishing in Cline River." This clearly [encourages] resort users to take part in activities outside of the resort. Further on page 4 you expand on the attributes of Whitegoat and Siffleur Wilderness Areas. This is also clearly encouraging more than just the use of the Resort.

Encouraging even a small portion of the 155,000 to 230,000 visitors to the Resort to visit these areas will have a significant impact."

* 30 *

For more information contact Martha Kostuch – 403-845-4667.