



**TEMPORARY USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. PL2022-183
820 CORCAN ROAD, ELECTORAL AREA H**

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Board receive the Report summarizing Community Engagement as provided in Attachment 5.
2. Following public notification, that the Board approve Temporary Use Permit No. PL2022-183 to allow temporary farm worker housing on the subject property for a term of 3 years and subject to the terms and conditions outlined in Attachment 6.
3. That the Board direct staff to complete the required notification for Temporary Use Permit No. PL2022-183.

BACKGROUND

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) has received an application for a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) from Watt Agricultural Consultants on behalf of Bonnefield GP Inc. to temporarily allow farm worker housing in conjunction with a raspberry growing operation by OSO Berry Farms Inc.

The subject property; legally described as Lot 9, District Lot 90, Newcastle District, Plan 36719, Except That Part in Plans 39792, VIP57498 and EPP62828, is approximately 33.6 hectares in area and is located entirely within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The property is bound by Corcan Road to the east, Flail Road to the north, and currently contains an agricultural operation growing raspberries (see Attachment 1 – Subject Property Map). The property is serviced by a well and onsite sewage disposal.

A Non-Adhering Residential Use Application No. PL2022-104 (ALC Application 67173) in support of the proposed temporary use was recently considered by the Board and a resolution in support of the application was forwarded to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). The ALC granted conditional approval of the Non-Adhering Residential Use application by way of Resolution #137/2023 released on April 18, 2023 (see Attachment 2 – ALC Non-Adhering Residential Use Decision).

Proposed Development

This application is to use a portion of the subject property for temporary farm worker housing in support of a raspberry growing operation. More specifically, the applicant intends to expand the operation to include 15 hectares of fresh market raspberries in the 2024 crop year.

As a result, the applicant is proposing to provide temporary housing for up to a total of 77 farm workers in a maximum of 11 site-built housing units on the subject parcel.

The property is subject to the Freshwater and Fish Habitat Development Permit Area per the “Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Area ‘H’ Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1335, 2017” (OCP), however, the proposed development will not occur within 30 metres of a stream and therefore a Development Permit is not required.

The development is proposed to be serviced by an existing well and an on-site septic system and storm water management systems (see Attachment 3 – Proposed Site Plan and Attachment 4 – Planning Implications).

Official Community Plan Implications

The subject property is also designated as Resource Lands pursuant to the OCP. The OCP supports the Agricultural Land Commission’s mandate of preserving and encouraging the use of land for agriculture. The applicant’s proposal supports more intensive agricultural use of land in the ALR, which is consistent with its intended use.

Farm Worker Housing Justification

The applicant has justified the need and legitimacy of the proposed temporary farm worker housing in a number of ways including the following:

- The applicant is currently operating a raspberry growing operation on the subject property and intends to significantly expand the operation.
- The applicant is proposing to grow raspberries for the fresh market. Fresh market raspberries require hand harvesting, which is a very labor-intensive process.
- The applicant indicates that the farm has struggled to find sufficient local labor to support its operations and relies on Temporary Foreign Workers to fill the labor needs.
- The farm is using a general rule of thumb of two harvesters per acre of planted farmland and two to three supervisors and quality control staff per 25 harvesters. Given the intent is to have 15 hectares in production by the 2024 growing season, the applicant is proposing a total of up to 77 employees.
- On-farm housing reduces the need for daily transportation and improves the efficiency of farm operations.
- The applicant is proposing to hire workers under the AgStream program and has received a Certificate of Registration from the Ministry of Labour.
- The ALC has approved a non-adhering residential use application in support of the proposal.

Public Consultation

Community engagement was conducted online through the RDN’s Get Involved webpage at www.getinvolved.rdn.ca/pl2022-183. Notices were sent to all properties within 200 metres and a notice was published in the Wednesday, May 19, 2023 edition of the Parksville Qualicum Beach News.

The RDN Get Involved program tracks statistics on the traffic to the website in terms of visitors who are aware, informed and engaged, in which engaged and informed are subsets of aware. The report identified ‘45’ aware visitor who visited the webpage at least once though may not have clicked on any information; ‘7’ informed visitors who have viewed the attached information; and ‘0’ engaged visitors who participated in the webpage

content. There were no community comments received in support of or against the proposal (see Attachment 5– Summary Report of Community Engagement).

Pending the Electoral Area Services Committee’s recommendation and pursuant to the *Local Government Act* and the "Regional District of Nanaimo Development Application and Notification Procedures Bylaw No. 1845, 2022", property owners and tenants of parcels located within a 200 metre radius of the subject property will receive a direct notice that approval of the proposal will be considered by the Board and an advertisement notifying of the proposal will be placed in one edition of the Parksville Qualicum Beach News. All persons who believe their interests in property are affected by the proposed permit will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed TUP prior to the Board’s consideration of the application.

Land Use Implications

The applicant has satisfied the general zoning bylaw criteria for a TUP and has demonstrated the need for the proposed temporary farm worker housing. In addition, the proposed temporary farm worker housing is not anticipated to result in any negative impacts on the environment, surrounding properties, or groundwater resources (See Attachment 4 – Planning Implications). Further, the ALC has approved a non-adhering residential use application in support of the proposed use. Therefore, it is recommended that the Board approve the draft TUP (see Attachment 6 – Draft Temporary Use Permit) subject to the conditions contained in the draft TUP.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed development has been reviewed and has no implications related to the Board 2023 – 2027 Financial Plan.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The proposed development has been reviewed against the 2019-2022 Board Strategic Plan and the proposal is in keeping with Action 4.1 – Protect Agricultural Lands and Promote Agriculture and Food Production in the Region as the proposal would support and intensify food production.

REVIEWED BY:

P. Thompson, Manager, Current Planning
L. Grant, General Manager, Development and Emergency Services
D. Holmes, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Subject Property Map
2. ALC Non—Adhering Residential Use Decision
3. Proposed Site Plan
4. Planning Implications
5. Summary Report of the Community Engagement
6. Draft Temporary Use Permit