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RM ponders development options

The StarPhoenix

Tuesday, August 14, 2007

The Rural Municipality of Corman Park council is set to meet with Saskatoon city council next month to hammer out an agreement on what to do with a ring of "very valuable land" circling Saskatoon city limits.

The city is eyeing the doughnut of land, dubbed the "district planning area," for several new neighbourhoods as it expands, especially to the west, north and east.

Meanwhile, the RM of Corman Park is contemplating whether to do away with zoning restrictions -- some decades old -- that would allow for new high-density developments unlike anything else in the RM's countryside.

Four of five proposed developments would be in the district planning area, RM Reeve Ed Hobday said.

One proposed development includes four 30-unit condominium towers, 105 homes on half-acre lots and a nine-hole golf course on land currently housing the Greenbryre Country Club.

On Monday, RM administrators asked council for more direction in drafting updated zoning bylaws that could potentially allow for more dense housing, allow smaller lot sizes, and let developments encroach closer to Saskatoon city limits, among other possible changes. Council has a spectrum of choices between no change and dramatic change to its zoning policies, and it must decide where in that spectrum it wants to fit, Hobday said. Council's choices must be sustainable and "something better than a knee-jerk reaction" to the currently high demand for housing around Saskatoon, he said.

Although councillors spent an hour answering administrators' questions about what kind of developments they'd like to see in the RM's core, none of the proposed changes can take place until the RM strikes an agreement with the city over what to do with the area. Councillors from both bodies are set to meet in the city Sept. 6.

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