

Calgary Planning Commission Member Comments



For CPC2025-0362 / LOC2025-0052
heard at Calgary Planning Commission
Meeting 2025 April 10



Member	Reasons for Decision or Comments
Commissioner Hawryluk	<p>Reasons for Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on Administration's report, I understand the following about this application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1952, the Province of Alberta authorized TransAlta Corporation to construct, operate, and maintain the Bearspaw Dam and Reservoir (Attachment 6, page 1). In 2024, the operators of a marina began using City land to access the Bearspaw Reservoir. Jurisdiction of the Bearspaw Reservoir is complicated: the area of the Reservoir is within Rocky View County, water is typically regulated by the Province, and waterways and fish are Federal responsibilities. Because the marina does not have a business license, the City cannot remove the operators' license. It is unclear to me whether the marina operator applied for a license and whether both the City and the County would have needed to license the marina because access was through City land and the Reservoir is in Rocky View County. TransAlta has asked the City to close the unimproved and undesignated Road Right-of-Way. TransAlta argues that the Reservoir's water level "can rise or fall by more than 2m throughout the day," which poses "significant safety hazards for the public, especially for recreational users such as boaters and swimmers" (Attachment 6, pages 2-3). The City is recommending closing two Undesignated Road Rights-of-Way that are surrounded by City land in Haskayne Park and amending their Land Use to the Special Purpose – Urban Nature (S-UN) District. The City could then add fences as needed. <p>Administration notes the following Economic Implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Potential for Increased Healthcare Costs: Contaminated water can cause widespread health issues, leading to higher medical expenses and lost productivity. Infrastructure Damage: Poor water management can result in floods or droughts, damaging roads, buildings, and utilities, which are costly to repair. Higher Utility Costs: Treating polluted water or sourcing alternative supplies can increase operational costs for municipalities" (Cover Report, page 3).

	<p>Administration notes the following risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- “Risks to approval include loss of a business and reputational risks.- Risks to not approving include public safety, dam operations and source water protection – clean drinking water” (Cover Report, page 4). <p>During Commission’s review, Administration reported that no jurisdiction provides emergency rescue on the Bearspaw Reservoir. Commission asked about this. The Fire Department reported that if something happened on the Reservoir, Rocky View County would respond first. The County does not have an Aquatic Rescue Team, so the County would then ask Calgary’s Fire Department to send their Aquatic Rescue Team to come to the Reservoir. However, the Fire Department reported that they are busy taking care of water rescues in Calgary and do not have resources for rescues on the Bearspaw Reservoir.</p> <p>In theory, Council could increase funding for the Aquatic Rescue Team to provide emergency rescues on the Bearspaw Reservoir. However, that is not a planning matter. That approach would not respond to all of TransAlta’s concerns nor to what appears to be private construction on public property (Slide 6, https://pub-calgary.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=321761).</p>
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