



Village of Rycroft

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January 17, 2024

Minister of Forestry and Parks
MLA Central Peace - Notley
The Honourable Todd Loewen

RE: "Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Alberta" property located at 4911 - 46 Avenue in the Village of Rycroft

Your Honourable Minister

On behalf of the Village of Rycroft Council I would like to directly bring to your attention our issue with the old Provincial Highway yard property in the center of our Village located at 4911-46 Avenue.

As you have been copied on correspondence in the past years, the site has in the past been a holding ground for fuel and oil tanks, as well as road salt, it has environmental issues. The 2020 and 2022 Annual Groundwater Monitoring Report confirms that previous environmental site assessments have noted extensive contamination in the soil. This effectively sterilizes the property from any future development until the site is remediated.

The property sits with a deteriorating building surrounded by a chain link fence. It was interesting to hear that the Town of Slave Lake had the same situation in the same location in their municipality that was cleaned up the past year.

Recently Council made a motion to write off \$4,096.53 as an uncollectible amount. The notation in the request for decision read:

Properties belonging to the Government of Alberta are exempt from municipal taxation. To account for this, municipalities are paid a grant in place of taxes (GIPOT) on eligible properties within their boundaries. This is a discretionary grant program and not a tax payment. The province reduced GIPOT payments for most eligible properties by 50% in 2020-21 and continued the same for 2023. The Village has received payment for 50% of the Taxes issued each year from 2021 to 2023. The total remaining unpaid balance for all 3 years is \$4,096.53 (\$1,357.80 + \$1,341.38 + \$1,397.53) (Old AT Highway Yard 4911 - 46 Ave).

So not only is there no plan to remediate the property issue, due directly to the previous use of the owner, but only half taxes are paid, not on time, with no penalty.

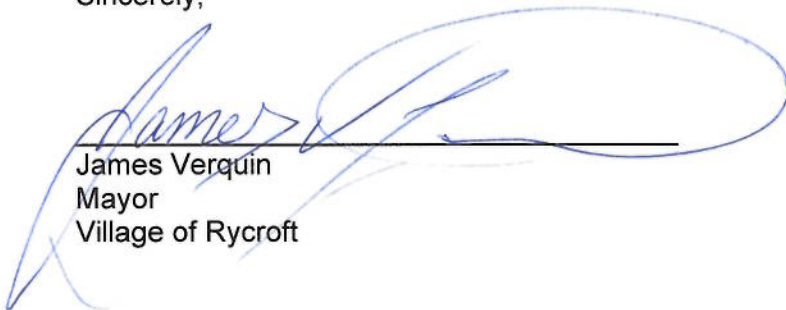
The Village would like to see the property developed for a residential or commercial use that will be a benefit to the municipality and contribute towards our future sustainability. Council considers it principal to the Village's future development plan. Therefore, as the owner, we would like the Province to take responsibility for its condition and restore it to a usable condition, then transfer it to either the Village, or to private ownership.

After the meeting request with the Minister of Transportation was refused, Council did meet with Minister of Infrastructure Guthrie on September 28. After prompting, we finally received a response on December 7 identifying that no further action will be taken, other than what appears to be perpetual ground conditions testing.

Please advise what you can do to help us with this situation so that we may move forward in the interest of the community and region.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



James Verquin
Mayor
Village of Rycroft