

Thank you to everyone who took part in the 15th Annual Fall Festival this month. It was great to see just over 215 people join us for pulled pork and corn on the cob for dinner at the Reunion Centre. A great afternoon of live music, games, wagon rides, face painting, craft sales and entertainment for all ages. I wanted to express my sincere appreciation to the members of the Community Events Committee as well as other volunteers who make these activities possible.



The new proposed land use bylaw has received first reading and is scheduled for a public hearing on October 16th. The Land Use Bylaw sets out the rules for what kind of building or activity can take place on private property and outlines the process for issuing Development Permits that give approval for new buildings and activities. If you are planning to build on your property, you would typically interact with the Land Use Bylaw. Council, sitting as the Municipal Planning Commission, has been reviewing potential changes to the land use bylaw over the last 16 months.

Some of the key proposed changes include:

- Allowing alcohol sales in future Class A establishments like family restaurants but prohibiting the retail sale of liquor in a retail store. (No changes to current special event permit processes for facilities like the Community Centre.)
- Maintaining the look and feel of our community by prohibiting certain housing types including: earthship homes, shipping container homes, shop houses or shouses, yurts or similar construction.
- Prohibiting moved-in dwellings and moved-in buildings in residential zoned districts.
- Updating definitions and requirements to better align with current provincial legislative changes made since the last version of the land use bylaw was approved in 2008.
- Increasing acceptable heights for residential buildings and accessory structures.
- Providing the development officer with more discretion to reduce the number of applications that must be reviewed and approved by the Municipal Planning Commission.
- Adding provisions for direct control districts if needed in the future.



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You can review a copy of the bylaw and find out more about the public hearing here:

<https://stirling.ca/archives/15220>. Presentations as well as written submissions from residents are most welcome.

This month Council was presented with potential projects for the ten-year capital budget. We remain focused on replacing and upgrading core infrastructure like our sewer lift station, potable water lines and storm water management system. This summer's water crisis in Calgary showed just how important investing into the infrastructure under the ground can be. There can be a temptation in some communities to build expensive new recreation facilities or focus on "nice to have" projects. Stirling has limited resources and we want to ensure a viable community that is ready for growth in the future.

Speaking of budgets... Council is very mindful of the challenges everyone faces when it comes to the cost of living these days. Each year we are asked to review and approve municipal franchise fees collected by the utility companies and paid to the Village. These additional charges appear on your monthly electricity or natural gas bill. The costs vary widely from town to town. We have been focused on ensuring Stirling's costs are competitive with other communities in our region knowing that every penny you can keep in your wallet matters.

Municipal Franchise Fee Riders are collected by the utility companies on behalf of local government as a charge to access municipal land to construct, maintain and operate distribution systems serving the residents of the community. Municipal Assessment Riders are applicable to customers in municipalities that receive a property tax under the Municipal Government Act. Said differently, utility companies pass the costs of any property taxes they pay in a community on to their customers in that community. The rate is the estimated percentage of gross revenue required to provide for the tax payable or specific costs incurred each year.

Fortis Alberta – Wire Services Provider – Electricity (as of July 1, 2024)

Community	Municipal Assessment Rider A1	Municipal Franchise Fee Rider	Total Municipal Charges	Compared to Stirling
Coaldale	1.05%	18%	19.05%	+6.08%
Magrath	1.04%	15%	16.04%	+3.07%
Milk River	1.54%	12%	13.54%	+0.57%
Raymond	1.20%	16%	17.20%	+4.23%
Stirling	0.97%	12%	12.97%	
Taber	0.95%	18%	18.95%	+5.98%

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An electrically net zero
municipality powered by:



ATCO Gas & Pipelines Ltd. – Natural Gas (as of April 1, 2024)

Community	Municipal Assessment Rider “B”	Municipal Franchise Fee Rider	Total Municipal Charges	Compared to Stirling
Coaldale	2.1%	20%	22.1%	+7.1%
Lethbridge	4.3%	27%	31.3%	+16.3%
Magrath	4.3%	15%	19.3%	+4.3%
Milk River	4.6%	30%	34.6%	+19.6%
Raymond	3.1%	15%	18.1%	+3.1%
Stirling	3.0%	12%	15.0%	
Taber	2.4%	18%	20.4%	+5.4%

Our regular council meeting for Wednesday, October 2nd is cancelled. The regularly scheduled council meeting on Wednesday, October 16th will include the public hearing for the land use bylaw, our annual organizational meeting as well as a month’s worth of items for discussion.



Trevor Lewington

“Investment in infrastructure is a long-term requirement for growth and a long-term factor that will make growth sustainable.” – Chanda Kochhar