

One of the biggest challenges for a growing municipality like Chestermere, is maintaining “balance”. By that I mean, a balance between residential and business development for taxation purposes; a balance between the identification of recreational and service needs and wants and appropriate development to meet those needs; a balance between greenspace and concrete/asphalt and planning for those things in a very strategic and systematic way. The planning horizon for municipalities like the City of Chestermere is pretty much like our lives. We have to plan for short, medium and long-term needs in our own lives and municipalities have to do the same for it’s residents and the business community. Services like utilities, schools, churches, libraries, restaurants, stores, aesthetics, clinics, recreational amenities, parks, playgrounds, golf courses, the lake, walking and bike paths, and the list goes on, are all things where a balance has to be established between getting them, maintaining or supporting them today and well into the future and keeping within a cost envelope that makes it possible while maintaining an affordable community for the residents.

One of a municipality’s greatest treasures is it’s greenspaces and every development must commit to a certain percentage of it’s land to green space. Some are better than others but such is life- it’s the usual way that municipalities get their parks, paths, etc. When we developed our annexation proposal which went through in 2009, we estimated that we’d have enough land for a 35-40 year development future to meet the growing residential needs of the community.

What was never anticipated, was the possibility of the golf course wanting to shut down a very valuable amenity for the community and convert it to a residential community. That’s a lot of greenspace that would never come back. It will be argued that it’s “our” land, we can do what we want. Not so, which is exactly why municipalities have zoning rules and regulations so we don’t end up with a chicken eviscerating plant next to our house where there once was a nice well-kept home. It’s part of the “balance”. Many hundreds of home owners purchased homes on or near the golf course to enjoy the ambience and beauty of the area and the accessibility to the course. That will all be a thing of the past if re-development is allowed to go through. I’m sure that the course owners didn’t tell prospective buyers of the homes built on the old driving range tees, “By the way, in a few years we’re going to retire and will be converting the course to a housing/condominium development.” I think not. They probably sold them on the proximity, view, beauty, tranquility of living on the course. Everything that will cease to exist if this is allowed to go through. Talk to Council, let them know how you feel.

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