

Delta Mayor Suspends Public Hearing for ALR Inclusion of the Southlands

Written by News Desk

Tuesday, 08 March 2011 21:15



On the scheduled fourth day of the Public Hearing to consider an ALR application for the Southlands, Delta Mayor Lois Jackson suspended the Hearing and called a “Mayor Summit” to discuss further options. The first three days of the Public Hearing consisted of speakers on both sides of the debate and the presentation of a [petition of over 1300 names](#) supporting the ALR designation, and a banned video called [“Saving the Southlands”](#)

Citing a lack of consensus in the community, Jackson’s Summit would consist of a variety of involved parties, with the hope of coming up with a solution that would satisfy everyone. The Public Hearing will be resumed on April 14 with a presentation given from the Summit.

“Given the strong public support for protecting agricultural land, including 63% support in a recent Ipsos Reid survey and a petition of over 1300 names, I am disappointed with this decision” stated Dana Maslovat, one of the organizers of Southlands the Facts, “I expect our elected officials to show leadership through difficult issues, even with the presence of a vocal minority. While we always strive for consensus we need to respect the majority opinion.

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The Public Hearing represents a long line of contentious meetings regarding the Southlands. This piece of farmland was the cause of the longest public hearing in Commonwealth history and a resident run plebiscite in 1989, which prevented a 2000 unit development that was proposed for the same property.

The Southlands was originally in the ALR, but was removed by a Provincial Order-in-Council in 1981, even though its exclusion was rejected by the Agricultural Land Commission due to the high soil quality. In 1988 an application to change the designation to accommodate 1900 homes was eventually rejected, following the longest public hearing in Commonwealth history.