

West Cove Yesterday and Today

1. Introduction

1.1. Municipal Characteristics; Place, History and Culture

West Cove is located on the south shore of Lac Ste Anne. West Cove can be reached by paved roads on range road 43 and secondary highway 633. The municipality is located 80 kilometers from the City of Spruce Grove and 100 kilometers from the City of Edmonton. The Summer Village of West Cove was incorporated as a municipality in 1963.

West Cove is a diverse community. Its residents enjoy the rural outdoor environment and all that it has to offer. Much of the activity centers around the lake. Residents enjoy boating, canoeing, waterskiing and fishing during the summer months. In the winter there is snowmobiling, skating and cross country skiing. The Summer Village of West Cove is also part of the Lac Ste Anne Multi-use Trail Committee. The residents enjoy riding and walking these trails on a year round basis.

The permanent population of West Cove is 169 souls as of the 2006 census. This is an increase of 61% over the 2001 census or an annual increase of 12%. We have 305 lots, most of them developed or in varying stages of development. We have approximately 600 temporary residents.

1.2. Quality of Life Assets

The Summer Village of West Cove provides a wide range of community and municipal services. We maintain and operate a sewage lagoon system that can accommodate the needs of our community. We offer weekly trash pick-up and provide road maintenance and snow removal. During the summer months we have a three person maintenance crew that is responsible for the care and maintenance of our nine parks. West cove has a developed boat launch that is utilized by the residents and people from the surrounding communities. The Summer Village has a Community Centre and a maintenance garage.

The Community Center may be used by residents for special events or meetings. Fire protection is provided by the Darwell Volunteer Fire Department for a per lot fee. Policing is provided by the Stony Plain R.C.M.P. detachment and Community Police Officers.

The residents of West Cove celebrate West Cove Days every July with a parade and a street dance. There are children's activities and special performances. Volunteers from the community contribute a lot of hours to make this event a success. The community also comes together to celebrate Canada Day at the community centre. Many residents of West Cove volunteer in the surrounding communities and schools. Our residents are involved in the snowmobile club both as members and as part of the executive board. Residents of our village participate in the seniors organizations of Darwell and Alberta Beach. The parents of our youngest residents volunteer many hours at the school and for activities after school hours such as baseball. West Cove also has a registered Community League.

2. Building a Community Plan

2.1. Community Sustainability Plan Overview

3. Municipal Sustainability

3.1. Economy and Governance

West Cove was initially a Summer Village that consisted of a few developed lots with a small number of permanent residents and was utilized primarily as a summer resort. Over the years we have continually evolved to the present situation that has seen a dramatic increase in our permanent population.

The economy of West Cove is linked to providing services for the residents of West Cove. The Summer Village has several large projects on the go such as the installation of drainage ditches and the resurfacing of the main roads.

In 2001 the assessed value of lands in the Village was \$10,981,780.00 and in 2006 the assessed value of lands was \$18,939,160.00. This reflects a 72% increase or an annual increase of 14%. Our Village has experienced a construction boom in recent years that has seen the development of many high end homes and the renovation of existing properties. We are continuing to experience an increase in property values and development despite the economic downturn.

3.2. Our Vision For The Future

The Summer Village of West Cove is a healthy, sustainable, family oriented community that pursues responsible development and builds on its local assets.

3.3. Our Values

The Summer Village of West Cove has a diverse population that reflects all aspects of society. Collectively, the values of the residents define the community today and will continue to guide us as we plan for the future. While we recognize that our residents have different perspectives on many issues we believe that our community can continue to accommodate and thrive on a broad range of values.

Our residents value the “green” lifestyle and the small community atmosphere that is enjoyed by our community. The proximity to Lac Ste Anne and wilderness areas such as Buck for Wild Life and Crown Lands provide many recreational opportunities and contribute to the quality of life we all enjoy.

The children in our community enjoy a freedom rarely experienced in larger urban areas. Community members appreciate West Cove as a safe and healthy place to grow up. Many elements contribute to creating the conditions to allow members of our community to reach their full potential. Healthy and active lifestyles, a sense of safety and security and the close proximity of family and friends are essential building blocks to a happy and productive life.

3.4. Environment and Infrastructure

The concept of sustainability is the ability of people to meet their basic personal needs. These include the infrastructure and resources that allow people to live comfortably both physically and emotionally.

It is equally important that these personal needs are met in a way that does not infringe on the rights of others or their quality of life. We must also try to limit the environmental impact of our development.

The Summer Village of West Cove has from its conception worked in conjunction with other communities to minimize our ecological impact. We were one of the first communities in the area to build and maintain a sewage lagoon system. We have successfully managed our lagoon for in excess of 25 years. Many of our residents and the local government are involved in Lake Stewardship programs. We have been active in the shelter belt program and have planted about 2000 trees in our area.

West Cove has always functioned in an economically responsible manner and has always maintained a balanced budget with a healthy reserve fund.

The Summer Village of West Cove currently owns an undeveloped quarter section of land bordering on its eastern boundary and an undeveloped reserve area within the boundaries of the Village that could provide for future developments. The undeveloped reserve land could be re-zoned and developed into approximately 40 additional lots. If all these lots generated an average price of 30,000.00 West Cove would have an extra \$1,200,000.00 in income. The current average price of a lot is 50,000.00. The quarter section of land can not be zoned residential because the sewage lagoon is located there. However, there are other opportunities for this area such as a wilderness sanctuary with walking trails in the treed areas. We are currently investigating the possibility of becoming part of Alberta TrailNet that connects all Albertans to trails including the Trans Canada Trail.

West Cove is a member of the W.I.L.D. Water Commission. This commission was established to represent the Summer Villages and other Small Communities to bring potable water to the area. Parkland County and Lac Ste County and The First Nations of the Paul Reserve and Alexis reserve also form part of this group.

West Cove has had a feasibility study completed by Associated Engineering that would be the basis for laying Water and Sewage lines to all properties in West Cove. This plan would include a hydrant system for fire suppression. The Summer Village would then have to reevaluate the current sewage lagoon to ensure that we would have sufficient capacity due to the increase in water usage.

The Summer Village of West Cove has plans to add to our playground equipment as the need arises or to meet the needs of our growing population.