

Telkwa wants RAMP scrapped

By Smithers Interior News

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Telkwa Mayor Carman Graf wants to see an end to the committee behind the summer Recreation Access Management Plan.

Village of Telkwa council discussed the matter at their last meeting, taking the opportunity as they received for information the invitation to the Feb. 22 RAMP open house — a meeting that some councillors had already attended.

Graf was quite displeased with the Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board Recreation sub-committee, overseeing the RAMP, saying that they have no mandate.

"I thought that this organization was mandated by the province but I find that it isn't," said Graf at the council meeting. "It's just a group of people that got together and want to control this whole bloody timber supply area and want to stop people that have been here for 100 years from using those trails."

He said he has a problem with his impression of the group as wanting to stop motorized recreation on a lot of area trails.

"I think we need to write a letter to the Premier and the ministry of forests outlining our protest against this. This isn't right, what they're trying to do," he said.

His opposition runs in contrast to a council motion from their prior meeting which was for the village to write a letter asking the RAMP committee to create a seat on the panel for a member of the municipal council, in this case for councillor Rick Fuerst, who was not in attendance at this most recent council meeting.

Graf, who voted in favour of that motion, has changed his tune after the RAMP open house. He now says that to ask to be a participant in the process would mean they condone it.

Among is other concerns was that the panel has members who also are employees of the provincial government.

Rimas Zitkauskas, who had also been at the RAMP meeting in Smithers, took issue with Graf's position on asking the government to intervene in the process.

"To write the province to ask them to stop a volunteer organization of individuals from conducting the activities that they feel is a benefit to a certain portion of the residents of this valley, I think would be inappropriate Mayor Graf, because I don't believe the government should have the right to stop the legal activity and the legal assembly and the legal discussion of ideas in any community," he said.

He added, "For us to even suggest that we should somehow advocate for their dissolution and cease and desist...would be highly, highly inappropriate."

Graf countered that he thinks what the RAMP committee is doing is "highly inappropriate."

Councillor Brad Layton also took issue with the committee, saying the current problem is that they don't have a mandate. The RAMP, he said, is being developed under the Community Resources Board whose mandate was to create a Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) which, while needing updating, is done.

"If the government is going to use a tool like that to determine the RAMP...I think we should open it up a lot

broader than the Community Resources Board," said Layton.

He suggested starting over entirely, and opening it up more inclusively for the various recreation groups.

Layton recommended that council invite members of the RAMP to a meeting to discuss their mandate and how they plan to move forward, however council did not vote on any such motion.

According to the Community Resources Board website, the summer RAMP aims to guide government land-use policy, represent a range of outdoor values, and contribute to a pilot project in the B.C. government's Provincial Trails Strategy.

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