



BACKGROUND

Wedgewood Estates Land Issue

Since 2012, four homeowners in the Wedgewood subdivision have approached the County numerous times seeking financial assistance to identify the problems and determine solutions to prevent damage to their properties.

The County has no legal responsibility to help these landowners. The subdivision approval that created the lots required a caveat attached to the titles for the lots in question. This caveat acknowledged that site-specific geotechnical work should be completed on the land prior to development. Specific instructions within the caveat outlined steps to protect future developments, including items such as ensuring a sufficient setback, not installing underground irrigation systems, and avoiding disruption to existing vegetation. The caveat attached to the titles was created in 1994, which applies to owners of these properties that backed onto Bear Creek in the subdivision of Wedgewood.

Development of the lands by former and existing property owners and the lack of property owners following the specific instructions within the caveat to protect future developments has resulted in damage to the properties, as well as increased land erosion and slides.

Council offered to share the costs with the residents to have a geotechnical investigation completed to identify the problems and determine solutions to prevent damage to their properties. Residents disregarded this offer and instead, attempted to implement several costly solutions to the problem that they devised without the advice of an engineer.

The County had site assessments completed over 2014 and 2015 and a preliminary geotechnical engineering study completed in 2016 to look at ground survey and determine next steps that the geotechnical investigation would include. According to the preliminary geotechnical investigation, the failure to follow the steps in the caveat, the lapse in time, the refusal to stop development, and the attempts to fix the problem without professional advice, have all increased the slope failure risk, damage to properties, and costs to implement a solution.

Later in 2016 and early 2017 the County voluntarily had a geotechnical investigation completed to further identify the problems and determine solutions to prevent damage to their, properties, and surrounding County infrastructure, and look into any impacts the sloping may have on land that can be accessed by the public. The investigation determined that County land and infrastructure in the area surrounding these private properties has not been damaged nor is there an immediate threat to County land and infrastructure. Recommendations that could potentially mitigate the damage and risk were also included; however, a second, more comprehensive study would be need to be completed.



The geotechnical investigation was shared with the effected landowners, which then returned to Council in August 2017 requesting the County have this second geotechnical study completed. Council voted to take no action as they felt they have met the commitment to the residents through the completion of site assessments, a preliminary geotechnical study and geotechnical investigation. As well, the County believes it is unfair for taxpayers to pay for costs associated with actions and decisions made by private landowners on private land. Council has agreed to look into possible provincial and federal funding that can potentially assist these private landowners in covering costs to remediate the slumping occurring.

For more information, contact:

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