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Reference: West Point Estates Redistricting Map and Land Use Concept Plan for Jackfish Lake, Legal Description NW & NE-9-52-2-W5M

Dear Mr. Fegyverneki,

I understand that there are plans to develop 75 more lots at Jackfish Lake with 30 of these proposed as lake-front lots. It is a significant portion of the shoreline; at a guess I would say 1/10th perhaps? Jackfish Lake is an unusual lake in that it has a very high ratio of shoreline to the surface area of the lake (and corresponding lake volume). This is the exact opposite of one such as Sylvan Lake which has a much lower ratio of shoreline to surface area. What this indicates is that Jackfish Lake is not as large a body of water as it would seem based on the shoreline. 1/10th is a fairly substantial percentage of any lake as a whole to tolerate the drastic change from a 60 to 100 metre-deep mature forest to a 75 lot commercial subdivision, even without considering the lake's complexity of bays, islands and peninsulas. What I am saying is that if you look at the lake as a whole, the proposed development could be a considerable shock to the entire eco-system of the area.

If you count the number of cabins/homes located around the lake currently and examine the ratio of buildings to the volume of the lake, and then take that data and conduct a comparison with other lakes in Canada, both thriving and dead, what do the numbers reveal? What are the logical conclusions you could make from the data? Has anyone taken the time to conduct such a simple, logical comparison? The developers have brought forth detailed documents with exorbitant words, abstruse jargon, and complex rhetoric...but has anyone conducted a simple, logical comparison or study of any type to determine the basic carrying capacity of Jackfish Lake?

Mostly the buildings located on the shoreline of Jackfish Lake are inhabited for the summer months only. There are the odd houses that have been built as permanent residents, but they are thus far in the minority. Are the new developments permanent homes or are they just cottages like most of the others? Paying attention to this small detail is important. At present Jackfish Lake can rest from October through May, recuperating from excessive human occupation during the busy summer months. If most of the proposed residences are to be permanently inhabited, what repercussions could there be to the lake when that eight-month reprieve is taken away?

Currently Jackfish Lake is experiencing some issues with Blue-Green Algae blooms (without added pressure from a new subdivision). There was a Blue-Green Algae warning put out in June 2016. In the previous year it wasn't until August that we had this Algae issue at Jackfish Lake. The earlier it blooms, the greater the threat to anyone or

anything using the water. This past year I believe it was too dry for the algal blooms and/or the water level was too low, thus we skip a year...but it would be premature to think that the issue will not return next year.

Harmful algal blooms are a major environmental problem in many Canadian lakes. Known as Red Tides, Blue-Green Algae or Cyanobacteria, harmful algal blooms have a severe impact, as they can be toxic to human health, aquatic ecosystems and the economy. In plain language, the lake would become uninhabitable...pets and children would not be able to swim or play in it, and wildlife including all the fish, birds and land animals drinking the water would be killed. This issue that is found in countless other Canadian lakes has been determined to be a direct result of over-population and/or abuse. For some reason this problem keeps recurring in other lakes. We know the cause, and we know about carrying capacity, and yet there is a great pressure to continue allowing construction on these serene, beautiful lakes...for financial gain? The idea of financial gain is a bit counter-intuitive considering that as each lake reaches its breaking point, one by one, the governing body over each lake either prevents further development or *everyone* loses when the lake dies. We have an Environmental Sensitivity Assessment (2014) that strongly advises against further construction at Jackfish Lake within 100 metres of the water without a further environmental assessment. How can we justify ignoring this warning and allowing not just one more building/lot, but 30 of them on the shoreline, at the risk of breaching the carrying capacity of the lake and ruining it for everyone?

Is it too much stress for Jackfish Lake? I am not an expert, but according to the Environmental Sensitivity Assessment (2014) posted on the Parkland County Website we are advised to procure another environmental assessment prior to approval of any development within *100 metres* of the lake. To my knowledge it is the most current study completed for Jackfish Lake; I personally asked the development team during their “info” meeting if they had or were considering such an assessment. They seemed to think the idea of them conducting an environmental study on the lake prior to their construction project was humorous...and “No”, they said, they had not, nor did they think it necessary. Jackfish Lake has previously been under Environmental Conservation protection by the authorities who have respected studies indicating its true level of sensitivity. The following is a direct quote from the Environmental Sensitivity Assessment that I found posted on the Parkland County Website:

“Parkland County Environmental Conservation Master Plan - Phase 1
Development applications within the ASP boundary should include a detailed biophysical inventory and environmental assessment...Limit and enforce OHV (Off Highway Vehicle) use in and around the ESA in order to minimize erosion and sediment loading into the lake...Limits to future subdivision development adjacent to the lakes should be considered to minimize impacts to surface and groundwater resources...Require additional environmental assessments (i.e. use of Riparian Setback Matrix model, environmental assessment studies) for proposed developments within 100 meters of the lake. Negative environmental

assessments would require significant development alterations or would be disallowed from future development”.

We could discuss whether more construction around it will kill Jackfish Lake or not all day long, but the bottom line is that nobody has attempted to prove that it will *not* kill the lake, and there is good reason to believe that it *will* decimate Jackfish Lake’s sensitive eco-system. So then the question becomes: Who will clean up this mess once it is made? I believe it will be you, Stephen. Wouldn’t it make more sense to ensure this dire consequence never takes place rather than to clean it up later (if it is even possible to clean up a dead lake)?

There is currently a depth of about 100 metres of mature forest, more or less, all along the lakeshore where the development is proposed. The plan that is proposed would require obliteration of up to 40 metres of this forest on the inland-side, and allow the 30 lake-side lot owners to *each* clear their own 10% or 10 metres of the remaining 60 metres of forest right down to the lake. This deforestation would be devastating to current flora and fauna, and the health of the lake (assisting the Blue-Green Algae by removing a very large portion of the buffer zone at the lake’s edge)...and is clearly a violation of the current environmental assessment.

This proposed development would also elevate the problem of motorized craft on the lake. With the current use and restrictions policy in place (with regard to the boat launching area and the authorized number of motorized craft on the lake at any given time) it seems a bit odd to be encouraging more motorized watercraft on the lake. How can anyone expect new home-owners located on a beautiful lake *not* to set up docks and park their boats, Seadoos etc. there? Thinking that the new owners can be prevented from doing this through government regulation is a bit naive, don’t you think?

There is currently an issue at Jackfish Lake with people disregarding regulations and doing whatever modifications to the shorelines that they desire despite the law and its consequences. Because money is not an issue with these environmentally disrespectful people, the fines given to the owners have been ineffective. The owners say “oops” and plant tiny, slow-growing trees in place of the fully mature ones they knowingly knocked down, so that their view of the lake will be clear for the next several decades. The lake suffers because of their selfishness. While regulations are constantly being brazenly disregarded, and continuous infractions have and continue to damage the lake, thus far it has had enough carrying capacity left to heal these wounds. With this current behavioral problem it is only to be expected that the same kind of issues will recur and become increasingly more problematic for the lake with the new owners of these 30 lots. If the issue cannot be brought under control with the current population, why would we expect anything different from an increase in the population?

There is understandably little enforcement of current environmental regulations due to budget restraints and lack of enforcement officers, thus for us to be opening up more opportunities for people to abuse the system is an invitation for greater abuse...don’t you think? During the open house, the development team said to me that it was the

government's responsibility to take care of these issues, not theirs...I think it only fitting that the government *does* take care of this issue...by denying their request for development approval, and leaving the land to more responsible individuals. Our family has owned a cabin at Jackfish Lake for about 50 years, and we have watched the changes occur over time. The boat traffic has gotten out of control in the last decade, and seems to be getting worse instead of better...beyond the point of being ridiculous...it is at the point of being dangerous. We often choose to stay on shore during the busy weekends of summer to allow visitors first dibs on the lake and to pro-actively prevent injury from the increased traffic threat.

Yes it is a wonderful lake, and everyone wants a piece of it...but if everyone is allowed to have a piece of it *at the same time* then it is no longer wonderful for *anyone*! Cabins are constantly coming up for sale around the lake...would it not be more reasonable to just continue to share the lake diplomatically rather than to overtax its resources all at once? I digress, perhaps, but I cannot help but to think about the fable of the golden goose and its golden eggs...the owner of the goose decides to kill it to get all the golden eggs at once...no more golden eggs. It does appear that the development would be benefitting only the owner and anyone he has paid with regard to the development, at the expense of everyone and everything else that currently enjoys the lake. If a life raft is capable of saving ten people, and 20 try and get in, then all 20 are at risk of death because they are all scrambling for a place on the raft that can only save 10 of them. When 200 cabins are around a lake that can only sustain 100 then what is the obvious conclusion?

The policy of continuing to build until the entire ecosystem collapses is a poorly thought-out plan, and would be extremely costly in both monetary expenditures, and human/wildlife distress, and ultimately the death of the ecosystem at Jackfish Lake if it is allowed to continue (have you heard of Easter Island?) During the open house I asked where the developers would be, should the lake die from their development, and the response (with a laugh) was: "Off to Bermuda". This was the level of professionalism and responsibility of the developers from the beginning of this debacle. You and I will still be here to try and salvage the situation though, won't we?

Therefore, the most important point to the government may be this: If the development goes through, and the unthinkable happens as a result (the lake is overwhelmed and everything in it dies) what will happen next? Will the property values of the houses around the lake continue to be high and the government continue to benefit from the taxes, or will they plummet? Who will be responsible for cleaning up the mess? Environmental disasters happen all the time...who generally cleans them up? How happy will the Parkland County residents be when they find out that the largest natural gem of their community has been destroyed because their project development officials did not prevent the over-development of the lake? Who will take responsibility? Who will people blame?

I would like to suggest that rather than using the land for housing, we find a better way to utilize the land in a non-environmentally damaging way that is organic in nature. Responsible, organic gardening would seem like the ultimate solution for responsible

planning (and because it is trendy already to go organic, the groundwork is already laid). I believe that *further* protection of the lake is needed, and at the very least we need to work together to protect current natural resources.

I have been studying Aquaponics and believe that the land in question may be the solution to the Blue-Green Algae problem that Jackfish Lake has been experiencing. Aquaponics is an innovative idea that uses fish waste and other biological ingredients in fish-populated water as a resource to fertilize grow beds containing a pebble/rock medium instead of soil. It is more efficient with water than traditional agricultural methods, thus rain would be sent directly to the lake through the grow bed operation instead of being lost to the soil in the fields. The food grown via this operation is entirely organic, thus more valuable than regular crops...and may provide a solution to both the Blue-Green Algae issue and also the problem of finding a responsible use for this piece of land.

What I am suggesting is that grow beds be set up in the open fields adjacent to the lake, and water be pumped from the lake to continuously feed the grow beds. The grow beds would simultaneously be cleaning the lake water of extra phosphorus (the main cause of Blue-Green Algae) fish waste and other natural organisms in the water. The water would then be pumped back to the lake. There would be no need to destroy the forested land that currently acts as a buffer to the lake, which does its share of contamination clean-up naturally. The water pipes could easily be brought up through the forest to the fields, and back to the lake. This operation is entirely organic, thus there would be no resistance from environmental groups...in fact they would applaud your efforts to clean up the lake and strengthen one of the natural gems of Parkland County!

Parkland County could lead the way in cleaning up all Canadian lakes, by showing Canadians that we are innovative thinkers and environmentally conscientious here in Alberta! Is it possible to purchase the land from this landowner at fair market value and offer the people of Parkland County the opportunity to turn an obstacle into an opportunity? I would be willing to orchestrate an Aquaponics operation on this land, and wish only to have the opportunity to gather Aquaponics enthusiasts who would be willing to create it for you.

Although the land-owner is determined to develop the land, this plan may not be in the best interest of the lake and its voiceless community of wildlife. It may not be in the best interest of Parkland County residents who utilize and enjoy this natural resource. It may also not be in the best interest of the government officials who will be left with the less-than-pleasant, expensive, and heart-wrenching reclamation of a lake that was needlessly exposed to excessive exploitation. While the very short-term future looks glorious: More properties paying high taxes to support Parkland County; the near distant future could look very different: Minimal taxes collected from angry people who feel that their government was responsible for their property value losses because nothing was done to protect their healthy lake from human over-development. Who would want a cottage on a lake that poisons their children and pets when they go in the water?

We have a choice, Stephen. Either a mature, life-sustaining, environment-protecting forest that has existed for probably hundreds of years buffering against humanity's poor choices can occupy that space, or newly constructed housing can. Visualize earth-moving equipment deforesting the land, chemicals, plastic, and human activity polluting this sensitive eco-system (including potentially 30 plus more watercraft to pollute and disturb the water). Once the door is open there is no going back. This future would be a poor substitute for a previously peaceful and environmentally-stabilizing forest filled with a thriving community of flora and fauna, whose healthy ripple effect has balanced the entire lake's ecosystem for countless years. If approved, housing would *necessarily* reduce and/or eliminate that life-sustaining buffer zone presently keeping the balance between human contamination and natural diversity.

Everyone and *everything* has the right to enjoy Jackfish Lake. Please help us to take care of the health of our lake so that EVERYONE may continue to enjoy it. Your decision will affect thousands to millions of non-human inhabitants (some species are quite small). We have Blue Herons, Pelicans, Canada Geese, Ducks, Terns, Red-Winged Blackbirds, Hummingbirds, Owls, Hawks, Pickerel (Walleye), Northern Pike, Perch, Burbots, Frogs, Toads, Salamanders to name a few...there are countless other birds, fish, amphibians, and microorganisms essential to the food chain and our environmental stability (that wasn't counting the larger animals that depend on Jackfish Lake as a source of drinking water). We are all responsible for the current problems at Jackfish Lake, but some of us would prefer to amend and help reduce the negative effects of humanity, while others would prefer personal monetary gain in exchange for the desecration of a natural gem in Parkland County...your county; our county.

On behalf of Jackfish Lake's voiceless community I thank you for preventing their unnecessary deaths. Sincerely,


Family-Owned Cottage Resident of
Jackfish Lake