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# RDEK to ask province for funding help to deal with Jumbo Resort processes

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*ECHO EDITOR*

The Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) will be asking the provincial government to contribute a significant amount of money to help handle the anticipated Jumbo Glacier Resort Ltd. (JGR) zoning and planning processes.

Regional board members June 9 unanimously agreed to ask the province, specifically the ministries of Community Services and Tourism and Sports, for about \$194,000.

Andrew McLeod, RDEK director of planning services, told the board the funding request, coming in advance of any actual applications by the proponents of the proposed \$500 million ski resort for the upper Jumbo Creek Valley, 55 kilometres west of Invermere, is all about "setting ourselves up so if an application does come in, we'll be ready for it."

District of Sparwood Mayor David Wilks questioned McLeod if the request for funding is an indication that the regional board can expect zoning applications from the proponent.

McLeod replied that he met with the proponents earlier this year and was told they want to make an application sooner than later."

City of Fernie Mayor Randal Macnair asked why the province should be made to fund an independent review of JGR's plans and zoning applications.

He suggested the proponents be asked to provide those funds.

"I agree that a proper review is appropriate but it's the responsibility of the developer" and not taxpayers, he said.

Board chair, Village of Radium Hot Springs Mayor Greg Deck pointed out that the province has already offered funding help to the RDEK, though no exact figure has been mentioned

"At some point, if someone else is paying for your process, it's not your process anymore," he cautioned.

RDEK' chief administrative officer Lee-Ann Crane explained to the board that it has been normal practice for proponents to fund official community plan processes and amendments, as was the case at Panorama Mountain Village and Fernie Mountain Resort, but the review of that work "has always been kept internal."

She added that the provincial government wouldn't say how much money would be made available to the RDEK.

Electoral Area E director Norm Walter said the notion of asking for money before an application "is like putting something before the horse. Lots of water could go under the bridge before we get an application."

Deck responded that asking for money now is "Just an early warning - an early request."

Village of Canal Flats director Ute Juras said she agrees with asking for the money now, noting "it takes them (government) a while to process applications."

While noting "we need an application to go forward," District of Invermere Mayor Mark Shmigelsky said he favours asking the province for funding help now.