



Environmental Law Centre

Hypothetical New Rec Centre:

Your community is considering rebuilding your local recreation centre. The current building is too small to accommodate the new sports being offered in your community. In addition, the building has serious structural problems that would be very costly to repair. The community has considered expanding the current building or even demolishing and rebuilding on the same lot. After looking into the different options, the community's preferred alternative is to build an entirely new rec centre at an entirely different location. The community has found a potential new site and has consulted you (their lawyer) to determine what issues it should be aware of when deciding whether to purchase the property.

The site

The potential site is large site about two km from the existing building. The site is bordered on two sides by residential neighbourhoods, on one side by light commercial development and on the fourth side by Snowy Stream. The site is currently vacant and largely undeveloped. There is, however, an abandoned 'tank farm' on the southeast corner of the property bordering commercial development, and two condemned houses along the southeast edge of the property. The tank farm consists of several old storage tanks that were once used for a gas station but now sit empty and rusting. The tank farm covers about one half acre of the property and the houses also take up one half acre. The rest of the site is undeveloped. The Snowy Stream is about 5 metres across and is a fish bearing stream. The stream is bordered by trees. Finally, there is a small wetland close to the centre of the property with grizzly bears living there.

The new rec centre

The footprint (or site area) of the new centre would cover one acre. It would likely cover most of the wetland and would require cutting some of the trees along the stream bank. In addition to the actual building, the community plans to build a turf playfield, four tennis courts and two parking lots. There will be enough parking for 1,000 cars and there is also on-street parking in the nearby residential areas.

Your job?

Evaluate the rec centre's plans and the proposed sites. Identify any legal issues that the community should explore in greater detail.

Need help or want to provide some feedback?

Contact elc@elc.ab.ca or 780-424-5099

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