CANADA

PROVINCE DE QUÉBEC

MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE DE COMTÉ DE PONTIAC

LITCHFIELD

Draft By-Law Number 269-2021 repealing and replacing By-Law Number 210-2015 enacting an Interim Control By-Law aiming at regulating the Uses of the Former Canadian National Railway Corridor crossing the Municipalities of Bristol, Clarendon, Litchfield, and Portage du Fort

Public Consultation Report

The comments period went from December 17, 2020 to January 10, 2021. 22 comments were received. This report was presented to the Pontiac Regional County Municipality Council during the January 13, 2021 plenary committee and was tabled at the January 20, 2021 council meeting.

Noise

Noise concerns from Pontiac Station residents due to expected high volume of snowmobile and ATV traffic as well as modified exhaust and muffler systems for some snowmobiles and ATVs. Negative impact on the quality of life for the residents living near the trail. A Pontiac Station bypass is requested.

Safety

Safety concerns regarding the non-compliance from snowmobiles and ATVs of stop signs (Pontiac Station Road and trail crossing), as well as high speed on local roads and trail.

When going off the trails, users expose themselves to unknown obstacles that may lead to injuries. Ambulances were called in the past.

Parking

Parking concerns on Pontiac Station Road where people may park their pick-ups and trailers to access the trail, causing problems for fire safety (fire trucks use the water from the Ottawa River in case of a fire) and traffic (no turning area at the end of Pontiac Station Road). It is requested that municipal parking by-law forbid the parking on Pontiac Station Road and that designated areas to park and access the trail be identified. It is also requested that the use of off-highway vehicles be prohibited by municipal by-law on Pontiac Station Road.

Trespassing and Littering

Trespassing concerns regarding ATVs on private roads and private properties that cause damages. Some off-highway vehicle users remove their spark arrestors which is an issue for fire safety. Garbage is not always kept by off-highway vehicle users.

Security

Security concerns for Pontiac Station residents due to the visibility to off-highway vehicle traffic that some dwellings are uninhabited during the winter (theft and vandalism). Dwelling values may go down.

Biodiversity

Impacts on fauna, flora, and habitats represent some concerns (mortality, habitat fragmentation) from people and Nature Conservancy Canada.

Non-Motorized Uses and Snowmobile-Only Use

Some people would prefer that the trail be used by non-motorized uses (walking, cycling, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing). Others propose to allow only the snowmobile use in order to mitigate the nuisances.

Farms

Farmers, cattle, and equipment crossings raise safety concerns due to lack of visibility at some areas (bushes hinder visibility). ATVs on farmland sometimes destroy fields and crops.

Liability, Maintenance, Regulation, and Enforcement

Some people raise concerns about liability, as well as maintenance of the trail. A lot of complaints are expected due to illegal use of the trail or non-compliance with the regulation. Implementing regulation and increasing the enforcement of such regulation are requested.

Signs

Adequate signage is requested, including farmers' crossings signs.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation

The realization of a feasibility study is suggested in order to assess and mitigate the risks. Hiring a consultant is also suggested as a way to provide some options for the governance and management of the trail.

Definitions of Off-Highway Vehicles

It is suggested that off-highway vehicles be better defined in the by-law.

Length of the Comments Period

Some people mentioned that the comments period was not long enough.