

Ritchie Brothers gets development permit

City councillors got their first look at detailed design drawings of the new Ritchie Brothers Auction buildings Monday and they liked what they saw.

Council unanimously approved design drawings of the new auction site as long as screening and clusters of trees are planted to improve sightlines for nearby residents and highway traffic.

The city and ministry of highways have yet to approve final access, road widening and subdivision plans in the area.

Superstore grows

The Real Canadian Superstore may be the city's biggest current big box store, but it's still growing.

Westfair Properties Ltd. applied for and got a permit to expand their store and gas station at council chambers Monday. The development permit will see the store grow on three sides to allow for an extra 2,360 square metres of floor or warehouse space.

Managers will also add two more gas pumps on the north side of current facilities.

The store will also pave the northeast and southwest corner of the lot (closest to the highway) to make room for lost parking stalls.

The additions puts the store's total floor area at 13,445 square metres.

City Council Briefs

Beetles invade city

Got a favourite park or treed area?

City staff say trees in your favourite greenbelt could be home to destructive pine beetles which have invaded city limits over the past few years.

Parks and recreation staff with the McGregor Model Forest Association are phoning city residents to see how they use, value and worry about city trees.

The information will be used to draft the city's first urban forestry management plan, a policy document on how trees are cut, counted and reforested.

And it's not only pine beetles they're concerned about. Besides harvesting more than two hectares of beetle wood from inside city limits in recent years, staff also respond to 400 tree complaints a year from city residents. A good windstorm, like the one we had last year, can spark hundreds more calls.

Manager Rae Roer says of the city's 128,500 trees more than 300 are pruned annually and WCB regulations required 500 more trees to be pruned or completely removed for public and city staff safety.

The plan will be presented to council when complete.

Wheelchair access

The Twin Rivers Art Gallery is a beautiful centrepiece for the city to brag about, but it's not wheelchair compliant.

That is until staff install a handrail, which will help wheelchair customers get in the front door.

The brand new building's entrance had to be built higher than architect drawings to allow the door to sit above the flood plain and a ramp was built to allow access from the street.

But the city's special needs advisory committee, which was privy to Art Gallery blueprints, complained and asked the city to fix the door.

But instead of leveling out the entrance way causing a problem with slippery winter ice, the group got together and decided a handrail from the bottom of the ramp to the handicap door activator button would fix the problem.

The handrail is yet to be installed.

Hotel rooms galore

It's just a simple comment, but it really got the mayor's pen buzzing.

Mayor Colin Kinsley has fired off a letter to VIA Rail marketing director Joe Valk who said in the June 27 Vancouver Province that the company needed to boost its sched-

ule rather than add cars to current runs between Jasper and Prince Rupert because Prince George doesn't have the hotels to accommodate them.

"I would be delighted to show you our excellent hotels which stand ready and waiting to accommodate them," the mayor wrote to Mr. Valk in a July 24 letter.

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