

- Public Meeting -

32 Akins Drive Rezoning Open House

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Proceedings taken remotely via Zoom on the 12th day of  
January, A.D. 2021.

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1 (PROCEEDINGS COMMENCED AT 6:00 P.M.)

2 MR. MCNUTT: I guess we're good to go.

3 So hi, everyone. Thanks  
4 for coming. We would normally do these  
5 meetings in person, but due to COVID, obviously  
6 in-person meetings are not currently possible,  
7 so online it is.

8 This meeting is gonna run  
9 from 6:00 'til 8:00. We will stay as long as  
10 there are questions, so no worry about that.  
11 There's also no time limit per speaker, but we  
12 would ask that everyone be respectful of  
13 others. Just try to limit your questions or  
14 comments to two topics at a time. If you have  
15 more, we'll come back to you after others have  
16 had a chance to speak.

17 And, also, I want to let  
18 everyone know that the meeting is being  
19 recorded, both by the Zoom recording function  
20 and also by Snow's Court Reporting.

21 So, tonight our panel of  
22 members are Jamee Cherniwchan from Snow's Court  
23 Reporting. Jamee -- Jamee will be manually  
24 transcribing the meeting. Kathleen Short is  
25 here from the City of St. Albert. Kathleen is  
26 here for process questions only. Anna Gimpel  
27 is here from the St. Albert Community Midwives.

1 Anna is going to provide an overview of  
2 facility that we're talking about and its  
3 operation. Gabrielle Donoff is our planner  
4 from WSP, and she's managing the Zoom meeting,  
5 and my name is Chuck McNutt. I'm a senior  
6 planner from WSP.

7 I'll go over some of the  
8 meeting protocols quickly. We'd ask if you use  
9 the chat box as our lineup to ask questions.  
10 Please indicate in the chat box that you would  
11 like to ask a question, and we'll address  
12 questions in the order that they're received.  
13 Please keep your microphone on mute until it is  
14 your turn to ask a question. This will improve  
15 the audio quality of the meeting. Again note  
16 that this meeting is being recorded.

17 There's going to be a Q and  
18 A at the end of the presentation, and Gabrielle  
19 will give a brief tutorial about anyone -- or  
20 for anybody that's not familiar with the Zoom  
21 platform so you know how to operate things.

22 MS. DONOFF: I also just had a quick  
23 request from Scott Hayes. He's the reporter  
24 with the Gazette. Just to let you know that  
25 he's in our space as well.

26 MR. MCNUTT: Okay. Welcome, Scott.

27 So in terms of the

1 presentation tonight, we're just gonna go over  
2 a brief background. Anna will go over a brief  
3 background of what St. Albert Community  
4 Midwives is all about and what the operation is  
5 like, then we'll talk about the actual rezoning  
6 application, the location, and that type of  
7 thing. We'll go over the application process,  
8 and most of the time will be spent -- spent for  
9 questions. The presentation's not too long.

10 So I'm gonna leave it here  
11 now. I will stop sharing and I'll get Anna to  
12 jump on and talk a little about Community  
13 Midwives and what it's all about.

14 MS. GIMPEL: Hello, everyone. Thank you  
15 for joining. Can you see my presentation?

16 MS. DONOFF: Not yet.

17 MS. GIMPEL: Not yet. Sorry.

18 MR. MCNUTT: There we go. It's coming.

19 MS. DONOFF: Perfect.

20 MS. GIMPEL: Hello, everyone. Thank you  
21 for joining us today.

22 We are a group of four  
23 midwives working in St. Albert in a clinic that  
24 is located at 2506 Tudor Glen Market, and we  
25 started to look at another option to see our  
26 clients and attend birth, and because of  
27 growing demands from our clients, we decided to

1 go ahead and buy a house that will serve our  
2 clients who want to give birth out of hospital.

3 We are primary health care  
4 providers that attend birth at hospitals, home,  
5 and birth centre.

6 Birth centre is a unique  
7 and convenient facility that provides comforts  
8 of home and is equipped with furniture and  
9 equipment specifically for birthing. Facility  
10 -- the facility's physically and  
11 administratively separate from any hospital or  
12 other health care facilities. It is located  
13 within minutes of local hospital and emergency  
14 services.

15 The house that we are  
16 proposing to use as a birth centre is located  
17 at 32 Akins Drive in St. Albert and is  
18 10 minutes away from Sturgeon, if you need to  
19 use the hospital.

20 The birth centre policy  
21 supports midwifery practices of keeping mother  
22 and baby together after the birth, and usually  
23 families are ready to return home two to four  
24 hours after the baby's born.

25 Our main goal to use this  
26 house as a clinic to see our clients. We are  
27 currently operating on Mondays, Wednesdays, and

1           Thursdays, and sometimes Fridays from 9:00,  
2           9:30 to 4:00, 4:30 p.m. Because of COVID, we  
3           see only one client at a time, and client who  
4           is supposed to come after that client usually  
5           waits outside of the clinic in her car. That  
6           said that we will not need much space for  
7           parking, maximum for three cars, and this house  
8           has double-detached garage that we will use to  
9           park our own cars.

10                       We are -- last year, we  
11           attended 175 out-of-hospital births. 39 of  
12           them were birthed at -- happened at Lucina  
13           Birth Centre. We hope that we will give an  
14           opportunity to clients who live far away on  
15           acreages or in Westlock, Gibbons, and want to  
16           have this opportunity to have baby in a  
17           homelike setting, to birth in our facility.

18                       We do not expect to -- we  
19           do not expect this facility to be very busy  
20           with births. Numbers can -- we expect to  
21           attend from zero births in the months to  
22           maximum of four.

23                       Women desire to give birth  
24           at a birth centre for a variety of reasons, and  
25           one of the reasons is living far away. This is  
26           -- this will be the main use. The main -- our  
27           goal to offer clients who live far away, as I

1           said, to give birth in our centre.

2                       There are currently four  
3           birth centres in Alberta: Lucina Birth Centre  
4           in Edmonton, West Country Midwives Birth Centre  
5           in Rocky Mountain House, Tree de la Vie  
6           Midwifery Birth Suite in Plamondon, and Arbour  
7           Centre in Calgary. Our centre will be the  
8           first and the only centre in St. Albert, and we  
9           hope that this will bring benefits to the city  
10          and help to attract young families to the city.

11                      We do not -- we would not  
12          believe that our centre will have negative  
13          impact on traffic or on the city environment.

14                      So, as I said, midwives --  
15          midwives are primary health care providers in  
16          Alberta and provide primary care to low-risk  
17          clients and their newborns. In case of  
18          complications that may arise during the  
19          labouring process, we transport our clients to  
20          the hospital, but because we provide care for  
21          low-risk clients, it doesn't happen often. It  
22          happens rare.

23                      So there are 123 registered  
24          midwives in Alberta, and we are a growing  
25          profession because of growing demand from women  
26          who want -- who want to receive close support  
27          from health care providers and give birth out

1 of hospital. These are all numbers how  
2 midwifery in Alberta benefits health care  
3 system and also people (indiscernible). We  
4 have very low intervention rates, and we  
5 receive mainly positive feedback from our  
6 clients.

7 We believe that having a  
8 birth centre in St. Albert will be seen in  
9 public eye as pro-choice and modern, allowing  
10 for all women to have right to choose their  
11 care provider. Attractive option for young  
12 families looking to buy house and settle. Long  
13 commute time to the only birth centre in  
14 Edmonton. Lucina give better accessibility for  
15 St. Albert and surrounding areas' families.  
16 Overall improvement in quality of care provided  
17 to expectant mothers. Families will have more  
18 options when it comes to choosing a birth  
19 centre, and as I mentioned, no harm to quality  
20 of life in the city. Thank you for your  
21 attention.

22 MR. MCNUTT: Okay. Thanks, Anna. So if  
23 you could just stop sharing. Thank you. And I  
24 will keep going. Are we good? Can we see that  
25 again? Gabrielle, can you see that, yeah?

26 MS. DONOFF: Yeah.

27 MR. MCNUTT: Good. Okay. So on to what



1 we're doing.

2 So, this is actually a  
3 rezoning application, and so what we have to do  
4 is we have to get a use available for this  
5 birth centre to -- to be able to be developed  
6 on the site. So what's going on is the site  
7 location is 32 Akins Drive, as Anna has  
8 mentioned. It's right across the street from  
9 the car wash and the Akinsdale Shopping Centre,  
10 right along Akins Drive. You can see the  
11 little gray box there identified.

12 The current zoning of the  
13 site, which is pretty much the same as most  
14 low-density residential areas in the city, is  
15 R1. Permitted uses in the R1 land use district  
16 are secondary suites, single-detached housing,  
17 group homes, and parks; and discretionary uses  
18 are bed-and-breakfasts, duplexes, garage  
19 suites, garden suites, semi-detached housing,  
20 home occupations, public utility buildings,  
21 raffles, residential sales centres, showhomes,  
22 and supportive housing. None of those  
23 permitted or discretionary uses allow for a  
24 birthing centre; however, it's believed that  
25 this site is an appropriate site for something  
26 like this. So what we're going to do is we're  
27 going to create a use, basically. It's called

1 a direct control use, and really what it is is  
2 it's a use -- land use category that is  
3 specifically designed to meet the needs of a  
4 given development. In this case, it's the  
5 birthing centre.

6 So we recognize that the  
7 birthing centre is going into a home, an  
8 existing home in a residential neighbourhood.  
9 We also recognize that there may be a time down  
10 the road where this use maybe outgrows this  
11 site. Maybe they want to go to a different  
12 location, maybe they want to enlarge. Who  
13 knows what? We don't know what's gonna happen  
14 down the road. So we've decided that the best  
15 choice would be to use the R1 regulations that  
16 are currently existing, create the direct  
17 control district around that and then add in  
18 the health service use as a permitted use  
19 within the direct control district.

20 The health service  
21 definition, right now as it currently reads, is  
22 a development used for provision of physical  
23 and mental outpatient health care and social or  
24 counselling services. Services may be of a  
25 preventative, diagnostic, treatment,  
26 therapeutic, rehabilitative or counselling  
27 nature. Typical uses include medical and

1 dental offices, health and physiotherapy  
2 clinics and counselling services. In the  
3 Integrated Care Community, ICC, land use  
4 district only, pharmacies may be considered as  
5 a health service. So although this use is  
6 pretty close and may wrap itself into this  
7 birthing centre, the City basically has decided  
8 that they want to be a little bit more specific  
9 with respect to this use. So the City's going  
10 to amend the definition in their land use bylaw  
11 to add in the birthing centre, as the list of  
12 typical uses, to avoid any confusion in this  
13 category and then create a definition for a  
14 birthing centre as well. So that's kind of the  
15 process of where we're headed.

16 We had a look at the  
17 Municipal Development Plan as well. Municipal  
18 Development Plan is the guiding document that  
19 kind of guides the City and it creates policies  
20 around land uses for residential, commercial,  
21 industrial, and social, health care practices  
22 and that type of thing. So Section 14 deals  
23 with health, social, and protective services,  
24 and it's got some objectives to help meet the  
25 health and social services of a growing and  
26 changing population to provide emergency and  
27 protective services in an efficient and

1 economic manner relative to land use  
2 development and planning, to provide emergency  
3 and protective services to uniform standard, in  
4 order to provide equitable access across all  
5 areas of St. Albert; and so there's a policy  
6 that City of St. Albert should facilitate the  
7 provision of required sites for public service  
8 facilities, and so I brought that up just to  
9 say -- just to show that there is some latitude  
10 in the Municipal Development Plan to allow the  
11 City to move forward on this.

12 In terms of some of the  
13 physical aspects of it, transportation and  
14 utilities, Anna kind of went over the number of  
15 births and the number of visits. It's a very,  
16 very low-impact development. There's no  
17 changes that we would anticipate to the  
18 roadways. There's going to be really  
19 negligible impacts on traffic and no changes to  
20 utilities or are required as a result of this  
21 rezoning.

22 In terms of the site  
23 improvements, again, the expectation is to  
24 leave the house the way it is. It's going to  
25 blend in, it's going to fit in. There's no  
26 real need to change anything. They may put up  
27 a sign, but really there's no anticipated

1 exterior changes to the building as a result of  
2 this development.

3 In terms of the rezoning  
4 process, the Midwives group has had a number of  
5 initial discussions with the City. They  
6 reached out to us to help them with their  
7 (indiscernible) zoning, so we're going through  
8 that process right now. Part of that process  
9 is to hold a public meeting, which is what  
10 we're doing right now. We're gonna draft this  
11 direct control district following this public  
12 meeting, and any kind of input that we get from  
13 it, we're going to submit that to the City.  
14 They're going to review it. If there's any  
15 significant changes or any issues, there is the  
16 option to hold a second public meeting. It's  
17 unlikely that would happen, but that option  
18 exists. Following that, the City staff is  
19 going to prepare the bylaw. It's going to go  
20 to council, of which time there's going to be a  
21 statutory public hearing. So a meeting like  
22 this will happen again but with council, and  
23 then council will make a decision on the  
24 rezoning. Concurrent with that, we're also  
25 actually gonna submit a development permit  
26 application, so hopefully if this goes the way  
27 we hope it will go that they be ready to submit

1 for a development permit application and  
2 approve that fairly quickly. So overall, the  
3 process we're looking at about three to five  
4 months to get through this rezoning process and  
5 then get into the redevelopment permit process.

6 So obviously input is  
7 welcome. That's the purpose of these public  
8 meetings. So we're gonna talk about the  
9 development right now. We're certainly open to  
10 hear any questions or comments that anybody  
11 has. If there's something that comes up after  
12 this meeting and you think about it and want to  
13 send it to us, make sure that we know about it,  
14 you can send it to me at [chuck.mcnutt@wsp.com](mailto:chuck.mcnutt@wsp.com)  
15 or Kathleen at [kshort@stalbert.ca](mailto:kshort@stalbert.ca). I'll be  
16 happy to take any of that information as well.

17 So at this time I'm just  
18 gonna turn it over to Gabrielle and she can go  
19 over what's going on with the questions and  
20 Zoom meeting, how you can get involved.

21 MS. DONOFF: So thanks, everyone, for  
22 joining us on this platform. As was mentioned,  
23 we typically do this in person, but Chuck and I  
24 have done a few online public meetings this  
25 year and last year and it's gone pretty well,  
26 and I think it's actually a good way to get  
27 people involved. You could be wearing your

1 pajamas and nobody knows. So we're really glad  
2 you could all join us here today. Some of you  
3 might be tired of Zoom meetings and for some of  
4 you, this might be your first Zoom meeting  
5 ever, so I'm just gonna quickly go over how to  
6 use the controls and the process we'd like to  
7 use for asking questions.

8                               So we do have some phone  
9 callers on the line and then most people, it  
10 seems, are joining on their computer. So we're  
11 going to use the chat box function instead of  
12 -- there is a function on Zoom to raise your  
13 hand, but sometimes it goes away and not  
14 everyone can access it. So we're just going to  
15 use the chat box as a raised hand function. So  
16 you'll just type your name in the chat box, and  
17 I'll call on you in the order that your name  
18 comes up, and you'll have an opportunity to ask  
19 your question to whoever or you can just ask an  
20 open question to all of us here in the room.  
21 If you'd like, if you're not comfortable  
22 turning on your mic, you can just type your  
23 question in the chat box and I'll read it aloud  
24 so that everybody who is calling in can hear  
25 the question as well; and so if you do wish to  
26 speak, there's a mute and unmute button in the  
27 bottom left-hand corner of your screen.

1 Sometimes you have to bring your mouse down  
2 there to make it appear, and you'll just ummute  
3 yourself when you'd like to speak and then  
4 please mute yourself again. It just affects  
5 the audio quality if everybody's not on mute.  
6 So once again, just either write your name in  
7 the chat box or type your question in the chat  
8 box and we'll address questions that way.  
9 Thank you.

10 MR. MCNUTT: Who wants to start?

11 MS. DONOFF: And we're welcome --  
12 whether you have a question or you just like to  
13 express your support for the project or, you  
14 know, that's -- that's fine too. It doesn't  
15 have to be a question. We're just trying to  
16 get a sense -- a read of the room. It's hard  
17 to see how many people are smiling or how many  
18 people are frowning and scowling in this  
19 format, so just let us know how you're feeling  
20 about this presentation.

21 Yes, Ms. Zubot.

22 ZENA ZUBOT: Hi. So just mainly a  
23 supportive comment. I live on an acreage  
24 that's 30 minutes from the nearest hospital,  
25 and I've chosen to do home births for my -- we  
26 have two boys, and I have one that's due in a  
27 week, but if there was an option for a birth



1 centre where we could be in the city and a  
2 little closer to a hospital in case something  
3 went sideways, it wouldn't be a half-hour  
4 ambulance ride. Instead, it would be like a  
5 much shorter and closer commute. So that's  
6 something that is too bad it wasn't an option  
7 before, and Lucina was quite costly, so I think  
8 what I had heard is that this might be a little  
9 more cost reasonable and just -- yeah, a little  
10 better in terms of access to a hospital if  
11 needed. So I am in support of it.

12 MS. DONOFF: Thank you. And there's  
13 another comment in the comment box that says,  
14 "I 1,000 percent support the birth centre here.  
15 Such a needed resource in our community. I  
16 don't have a question. I'm just here to  
17 support Anna and the St. Albert Community  
18 Midwives. I'd happily discuss my experience  
19 accessing midwifery care in a home in Stony  
20 Plain, as well as attending births at Lucina.  
21 This is an amazing project." So lots of  
22 support. Thanks. That helps us out.

23 This might be a short  
24 meeting if there's no questions and everyone's  
25 just happy, which is great.

26 MR. MCNUTT: Happy we see support.  
27 Absolutely.

1 MS. DONOFF: Oh, here's a question.

2 (As read): "Definitely support this idea. Any  
3 idea how many births you're expecting in the  
4 first few years?"

5 MR. MCNUTT: Anna, that would be a  
6 question for you.

7 MS. GIMPEL: Yes. We do not expect to  
8 have many births in the first few years. We  
9 expect to have maybe any number of -- like,  
10 from five to 15 births in a year, maybe even  
11 less.

12 MR. MCNUTT: So that's in the facility,  
13 correct?

14 MS. GIMPEL: In the facility.

15 MS. DONOFF: Another question (As read):  
16 "In comparison to Lucina, what might the  
17 investment look like for clients?"

18 MS. GIMPEL: We haven't thought about it  
19 yet, but we want to make the birth centre fully  
20 accessible to everyone.

21 MS. DONOFF: Okay. A few other comments  
22 (As read): "I've been so impressed with these  
23 women for years. I'm so excited to see the  
24 project make progress. So great!"

25 "I don't have questions  
26 either but here to support Anna and birth  
27 centre as it is a needed thing in surrounding

1 areas. Many people will rely on it."

2 "I also wanted to express  
3 my support for this centre. I was able to have  
4 a home birth, and it was an amazing, empowering  
5 experience, and I wish everyone has the same  
6 opportunity, especially those whose homes are  
7 not conducive to having a home birth. This  
8 would be an amazing asset for the St. Albert  
9 community."

10 "My experience at the  
11 Lucina Centre with my first born was wonderful,  
12 but it would be so much better if I could have  
13 my second child here in my community, close to  
14 home. This is a wonderful thing for St. Albert  
15 and all the future mamas." Awesome.

16 So I know a few people just  
17 joined us, so just sharing that -- Chuck and  
18 Anna have given a presentation about the birth  
19 centre, and we're just inviting people to share  
20 their comments or questions in the chat box.

21 Another person (As read):  
22 "Fully support this. This would be a wonderful  
23 addition to the community."

24 MR. MCNUTT: Well, the sense I'm getting  
25 is there's lots of great support for this, so  
26 that's awesome. I'm pretty happy about that  
27 for sure.

1 MS. GIMPEL: This is why we started to  
2 think about establishing a birth centre here in  
3 St. Albert, because of demand.

4 MS. DONOFF: A few other comments I'll  
5 read out, and, again, I'm just reading them out  
6 because we have a few people joining us by  
7 phone, so they can't read the chat box.

8 Cydney says (As read): "I  
9 have had a number of clients as a doula wanting  
10 to birth at Lucina but weren't able to, so this  
11 is a wonderful opportunity for the future."

12 Sandy: "While I support the  
13 prospect of a birthing centre, as the interest  
14 becomes more prevalent, is there a plan to deal  
15 with increased traffic and parking to limit  
16 impact on neighbouring houses?"

17 MR. MCNUTT: Well, we haven't got that  
18 plan right now. From what we're seeing,  
19 certainly for the numbers, the traffic on  
20 neighbouring houses in the neighborhood is  
21 very, very minimal. Generally speaking, if  
22 there's only a handful of people a day coming  
23 in, one client at a time type of thing, there  
24 is maybe six, eight clients a day, I would  
25 think, Anna. How many clients would you think  
26 you'd see in a day?

27 MS. GIMPEL: Yeah. Anywhere from four

1 to eight clients in a day.

2 MR. MCNUTT: Four to eight clients in a  
3 day. Plus --

4 MS. GIMPEL: (Indiscernible).

5 MR. MCNUTT: Go ahead.

6 So that plus -- plus one or  
7 two staff in the neighbourhood. And normally  
8 we would count anyway, in a typical residential  
9 subdivision, of ten vehicle trips a day. This  
10 is really of no consequence when it comes to  
11 transportation impacts for sure.

12 MS. GIMPEL: We are considered a small  
13 practice, and we wanted to offer this  
14 opportunity to give birth in our centre only to  
15 our clients.

16 MS. DONOFF: Okay. I'm just gonna read  
17 a few more comments. (As read): "I'm a birth  
18 doula close to the area, certifying with Dona  
19 International. This is such an exciting  
20 opportunity for midwives, but more importantly  
21 for the elevated, positive outcomes for women  
22 in the community concerning health and overall  
23 wellness. I've given more of my two cents on  
24 the recent Facebook post." Thank you.

25 "I'm due in late March,  
26 early April. Any way we could make the  
27 administrative process faster?" Yeah. If you

1 figure that out, let -- everybody's interested  
2 in that.

3 "Even though I do not know  
4 much about these birth centres, I believe it is  
5 a good idea and support it; however, being that  
6 it is in St. Albert, we're known as a NIMBY  
7 community. I'm curious to know what the  
8 residents in the proximity think or are they  
9 even aware? I would be disappointed to see  
10 this project knocked off the rails due to a few  
11 objections."

12 And then (As read): "I  
13 fully support it. Wish that was an option when  
14 I had my babies."

15 Chuck, could you just  
16 comment on how residents were notified?

17 MR. MCNUTT: Yeah. So we've sent out  
18 notifications to everybody within a hundred  
19 metres of the area, and this is their  
20 opportunity, basically, to come. They've all  
21 been notified. There's also been notifications  
22 in the paper as well. So, really, we would  
23 expect if there was some significant  
24 opposition, these are the types of -- this is  
25 the venue that we would first expect to hear  
26 about it and then we -- there's another  
27 opportunity at council to join the public open

1           -- or the public hearing to hear about it as  
2           well, but we haven't seen anything yet. We  
3           haven't seen anything in the way of negative  
4           feedback by e-mail. Certainly, there's a lot  
5           of support here. Haven't really seen anything.  
6           There was one minor comment in regards to  
7           transportation, so I'm not -- I'm not right now  
8           seeing any of that. That could still happen,  
9           and certainly we have to address it. That's  
10          the purpose of a public consultation meeting.  
11          So -- so generally speaking, everything looks  
12          very positive.

13                               Kathleen, you could chime  
14          in on that if you've seen anything different,  
15          but I haven't seen anything.

16          MS. SHORT:                Sorry, Chuck. I had my  
17          mute on.

18                               We have not received any --  
19          sorry?

20          MR. MCNUTT:               Yeah, go ahead.

21          MS. SHORT:                We have not received any  
22          phone calls or questions in regard to the open  
23          house tonight or any of the advertisements in  
24          the paper, so that's a good thing, and we're  
25          anticipating the same reaction as tonight's  
26          presentation is resulting in with all the  
27          positive support.

1 MR. MCNUTT: Sounds good.  
2 Gabrielle, anything more  
3 out there?  
4 MS. DONOFF: Nope. I'm just -- oh,  
5 sorry. I was letting a few people in. No. I  
6 think it's just all positive support.  
7 MR. MCNUTT: Okay. So I think what I  
8 can just summarize then is, you know, this is  
9 great. There's obviously some good support for  
10 this. The next steps, as I've mentioned  
11 before, will be to --  
12 HEATHER BOON: Excuse me. I'm not in  
13 favor of it --  
14 MR. MCNUTT: Okay.  
15 HEATHER BOON: -- for a lot -- for a lot  
16 of reasons here.  
17 MS. DONOFF: Okay. Go ahead.  
18 HEATHER BOON: Well, some of the reasons  
19 is it's in a private home and they're funded by  
20 the government, aren't they, for part of their  
21 funding?  
22 MR. MCNUTT: Can't comment.  
23 HEATHER BOON: No?  
24 MR. MCNUTT: Anna?  
25 MS. GIMPEL: Birth centres --  
26 HEATHER BOON: I'm sorry. I can't hear  
27 you.



1 MS. GIMPEL: Birth centres are not  
2 funded by government.

3 HEATHER BOON: They are funded?

4 MS. GIMPEL: No, they are not.

5 HEATHER BOON: They're not funded. So  
6 what made them decide that the private home in  
7 a residential area would be suited to that? I  
8 would think all the residentials -- all the  
9 commercial space, with being that they're going  
10 to use a contractor anyway, can be made very  
11 comfortable for women. I just don't think it's  
12 right that -- to convert a private address for  
13 that purpose because you'd have to change the  
14 bylaw which would in turn -- in turn change  
15 other law -- other bylaws and things, would it  
16 not? They'd all have to be changed to  
17 accommodate birthing centres?

18 MR. MCNUTT: No. What this process is  
19 is we're creating -- it's what's called a  
20 direct control district, and so the direct  
21 control district is going to be a mirror image,  
22 basically, of the land use zoning for all of  
23 the surrounding areas, with the single  
24 exception that the birthing centre will be one  
25 use that's allowed for this lot only, and so if  
26 this -- if this site gets -- if St. Albert  
27 Community Midwives moves on to a different

1 site, the use will basically be able to revert  
2 back to exactly the way it is with no problems,  
3 no issues.

4 HEATHER BOON: So they're hoping to get  
5 the zoning changed so they can put a business  
6 in that home?

7 MR. MCNUTT: Yes.

8 HEATHER BOON: Well, yeah, I just don't  
9 think that's right. I don't think exceptions  
10 should be made for them because they are a  
11 business. That just opens the doors for other  
12 businesses to say, Hey, I'm going to run -- I  
13 want to run a business out of my home too, and  
14 I want to have my property changed over to  
15 accommodate my garage business or my other  
16 businesses. I just don't think an exception  
17 should be made for a business, period. They're  
18 in a tough spot for rent, I can understand  
19 that, but the point is, so are a lot of other  
20 businesses.

21 MR. MCNUTT: Okay.

22 MS. DONOFF: I'm just gonna read a few  
23 more comments for getting in.

24 (As read): "This is such a  
25 necessary opportunity for growth in our city's  
26 birth community. Thank you for taking the leap  
27 in favour of positive birth experiences and

1           impactful maternity care, Anna."

2                               "Passages Midwifery has  
3           been open in Stony Plain for many years,  
4           operating out of a residential property  
5           offering midwifery care but not operating as a  
6           birth centre. In my experience, accessing care  
7           there with two of my babies there was ample  
8           parking and little, if any, disruption to  
9           neighbours. Lucina operates out of a private  
10          residence in Edmonton and there is very little  
11          disruption to surrounding homes."

12                            "Anna, is it correct that  
13          commercial landlords won't permit births within  
14          their commercial facility?"

15          MS. GIMPEL:               Yes, this is correct.

16          HEATHER BOON:            So what you're saying is  
17          council's made up their mind? They think it's  
18          all right and they'll push it through anyways?

19          MR. MCNUTT:               This has not yet been  
20          brought before council.

21          HEATHER BOON:            It has not yet been  
22          brought? So when can you -- when are you gonna  
23          bring it towards council?

24          MR. MCNUTT:               So what happens is is after  
25          this, we will prepare the revision, the direct  
26          control district. We'll make the application  
27          to the City of St. Albert. This is the first

1 step in the overall process. We'll make the  
2 application to the City of St. Albert, and  
3 they'll take some time to review it. They'll  
4 send it to a number of reveal agencies, as  
5 staff will prepare a bylaw, and then council  
6 will have a public hearing on the matter, which  
7 will be just basically like this except in  
8 front of council, and then council will make a  
9 decision, and that process is about three to  
10 five months long. So this is gonna probably  
11 come before council sometime this summer.

12 HEATHER BOON: Okay. So what I thought is  
13 when the land use bill, if something wants to  
14 make an amendment to the land use bill and  
15 that's what you're talking about doing?

16 MR. MCNUTT: Yeah.

17 HEATHER BOON: In turn, therefore, the  
18 municipal planning bill and the other -- the  
19 area structure planning bill is also affected,  
20 am I not correct saying that?

21 MR. MCNUTT: No. There's no area  
22 structure plan here for Akinsdale. This is a  
23 land use bylaw issue. It may have a municipal  
24 development plan impact, but there are some  
25 policy in the MDP that council could support  
26 with this. So this is mostly a -- basically a  
27 rezoning issue with the neighbourhood, and so

1 we are going through the public consultation  
2 process because it is a change, and so this  
3 public consultation process does basically  
4 provide the public input to make this land use  
5 change in the zoning format as opposed to going  
6 through an area structure plan.

7 MS. DONOFF: I'm just gonna read a few  
8 more comments that are coming in, flooding our  
9 comment box.

10 (As read): "All birth  
11 centres in Alberta are currently in residential  
12 houses. The reason for the birth centre for  
13 being in a house is due to it having an at-home  
14 environment. Research is available to show  
15 that improves birth outcomes."

16 I had some comments around  
17 some other home business uses. (As read): "So  
18 they're also close to hair salons and day  
19 homes. How are day homes zoned within St.  
20 Albert? Those are also businesses in  
21 residential neighbourhoods."

22 HEATHER BOON: So how are they zoned? How  
23 are the homes that are -- day homes, how are  
24 they zoned?

25 MS. SHORT: They are controlled through  
26 the land use bylaw, and it's a home occupation  
27 or a family day home, which council has already

1 designated as a permitted use in a  
2 single-family residence.

3 MR. MCNUTT: These are a list of  
4 discretionary uses that are available in the R1  
5 district, which includes bed and breakfasts,  
6 garage suites. It includes home occupations  
7 that you're mentioning. So there's a number of  
8 home occupations that are out there in the  
9 residential areas already.

10 HEATHER BOON: But that doesn't -- that  
11 doesn't -- in -- those don't include changing  
12 the zoning, do they?

13 MR. MCNUTT: No, because they are  
14 discretionary uses. So there's a definition of  
15 home occupation in the land use bylaw, if you  
16 fit that definition, and one of those would be  
17 -- I believe it's having to reside in the  
18 property. Is that correct, Kathleen?

19 MS. SHORT: Yes.

20 HEATHER BOON: Okay. So what you're  
21 saying is provisions for a birthing centre is  
22 not under the provisions for in the land use  
23 bylaw; therefore, you have to rezone it to  
24 something different in order to allow that on  
25 that property?

26 MR. MCNUTT: That's correct.

27 MS. SHORT: And I think it's also

1 important to note that council's the approving  
2 authority on this. It's not that anyone can  
3 open anything. They have to do the same  
4 process. Everything is presented to council,  
5 who are the ultimate approving authority. So  
6 if the citizenry is a negative reaction to the  
7 use, then they'll certainly be aware of that  
8 and they'll take that into account for their  
9 decision.

10 HEATHER BOON: Okay. And on their  
11 newspaper site, it said that they were  
12 expecting to have a certain percentage increase  
13 in business next year. How can a three-bedroom  
14 home accommodate that increase in their  
15 business to accommodate more births?

16 MR. MCNUTT: Well, the number of births  
17 -- Anna, how many births are you gonna have in  
18 a month?

19 MS. GIMPEL: In a month?

20 MR. MCNUTT: Yeah.

21 MS. GIMPEL: From zero to maybe three,  
22 four, but...

23 MR. MCNUTT: Very, very low.

24 MS. GIMPEL: We do not expect to see to  
25 have many births there because we are going to  
26 offer this opportunity to our clients only and  
27 mostly to those who live far away, like in the

1 surrounding areas, surrounding St. Albert  
2 areas.

3 MS. DONOFF: There's a question you had  
4 been mentioning about council process. That's  
5 similar to the way it is. (As read): "Who can  
6 object? Anyone or only those within the  
7 hundred-metre distance?"

8 MR. MCNUTT: No. The public hearing  
9 process is a statutory public hearing that's  
10 open to anybody. The online process is a  
11 little bit more complicated now than it was in  
12 person in the sense that you have to register  
13 to get on. I don't think -- I don't think  
14 you're open to just jump on at the meeting, but  
15 I could be wrong on that, but that said,  
16 anybody -- anybody can speak at the public  
17 hearing. It's completely open to everybody.

18 MS. DONOFF: And then it remains  
19 council's decision.

20 I'm just going to read a  
21 few more comments.

22 (As read): "The move to a  
23 residential home is not financially motivated  
24 at all. St Albert Midwives have successfully  
25 rented a commercial space, which is not  
26 appropriate for a birth suite."

27 "Great point with regards



1 to the day homes, hair salons, and so on."

2 "For what it's worth, I  
3 don't want to give birth in a commercial space,  
4 hence the need for a birth centre when home is  
5 not a possibility."

6 "I live in Akinsdale and  
7 have no objection to a business run out of a  
8 home."

9 "Does one of the midwives  
10 own the home?"

11 MR. MCNUTT: Is that the question? Does  
12 one of the midwives own the home?

13 MS. GIMPEL: Yes. Yeah.

14 MR. MCNUTT: The answer is yes.

15 HEATHER BOON: So it said in the newspaper  
16 article that they -- their rent went up, so  
17 they could no longer afford the space that they  
18 were in, so, therefore, they're looking for  
19 somewhere else that would be more affordable.  
20 So this -- so this member, staff member,  
21 offered up her house?

22 MR. MCNUTT: I believe the home was  
23 purchased for this purpose; is that correct,  
24 Anna?

25 MS. GIMPEL: Yeah, the home was  
26 purchased for this purpose. We are not a type  
27 of business that sell products or sell

1 services. We are paid by Alberta Health  
2 Services. We do not get any money from our  
3 clients, and --

4 HEATHER BOON: So who pays for all of  
5 this?

6 MS. GIMPEL: I'm sorry?

7 HEATHER BOON: So who pays for this if you  
8 don't take money from your clients? The  
9 article said that it could cost up to \$4,600 to  
10 have this service, if patients had to pay for  
11 it out of pocket.

12 MS. GIMPEL: Our clients do not pay for  
13 midwifery service -- services.

14 HEATHER BOON: Who pays for it then?

15 MS. GIMPEL: Alberta Health Services.

16 HEATHER BOON: Okay.

17 MS. GIMPEL: We get money from Alberta  
18 Health Services.

19 HEATHER BOON: So it's like being  
20 subsidized by Alberta Health Services to run  
21 your business?

22 MS. GIMPEL: Um --

23 HEATHER BOON: Because they're paying for  
24 it, right, and, therefore, you get paid for  
25 providing it?

26 MS. GIMPEL: They -- Alberta Health  
27 Services pay for the care we provide, and we

1 pay from our pocket for all expenses, including  
2 rent and our supplies and everything. We pay  
3 for this from our pocket.

4 HEATHER BOON: From your pocket? So who  
5 pays you then? Like, how are you paid then?  
6 You're a business, am I correct?

7 MS. DONOFF: I think, Jennifer, you have  
8 some information to share?

9 JENNIFER THOMSON: Hi. I'm one of the other  
10 midwives that (indiscernible) with Anna. I  
11 just wanted to respond to that, that we are a  
12 not-for-profit business. Yes, we are a  
13 business, but that's how midwifery is funded in  
14 Alberta. So, yes, we are funded by the  
15 government. We have to pay all our own  
16 overhead and all our (indiscernible) to buy all  
17 of our own supplies. That's on us. So I don't  
18 know where this article got this information.  
19 I haven't read it myself, but from what I'm  
20 hearing that they're saying it, the  
21 information's not true. Like, nobody pays that  
22 money for a midwife. She has to pay money to  
23 birth in the birth centre. There will be a  
24 small fee for that, just like with any other  
25 private birth centre in Alberta, but it's just  
26 that -- the information in the article is not  
27 correct, and I just had to answer to that

1 because --

2 HEATHER BOON: Okay. Thank you very much  
3 because -- thank you very much.

4 JENNIFER THOMSON: I'm sorry. I haven't seen  
5 the article. I don't know what you're talking  
6 about --

7 HEATHER BOON: I've been basing some of my  
8 --

9 JENNIFER THOMSON: I know, but we were  
10 approached by the media and we were advised not  
11 to give them an interview before this meeting.

12 HEATHER BOON: I see.

13 JENNIFER THOMSON: So I haven't seen -- I  
14 haven't seen the article, so I really  
15 apologize. I just wanted to give you the right  
16 information. We are funded by the government,  
17 but like I say, we have to pay. Every midwife  
18 in our practice pays in a percentage of their  
19 salary to run our business because that's the  
20 way we have to do it.

21 HEATHER BOON: I see.

22 JENNIFER THOMSON: So this is not -- this is  
23 not a financially motivated move into this  
24 birth centre. This is to provide a service for  
25 the community. St. Albert's a young community,  
26 and it's to provide that service because --

27 HEATHER BOON: You must be fairly confident

1           -- you must be fairly confident it's gonna pass  
2           because you already purchased the property?

3           JENNIFER THOMSON:     We had to purchase the  
4           property to do this -- to do this.

5           HEATHER BOON:           To do the rezoning?

6           JENNIFER THOMSON:     Yes.   We had to have this  
7           property --

8           HEATHER BOON:           I see.

9           JENNIFER THOMSON:     -- first.

10          HEATHER BOON:           I see.

11          JENNIFER THOMSON:     If it doesn't go through,  
12          that's a risk we took as -- as our practice,  
13          that's a risk we took, and that was the process  
14          we had to have the house to do this.

15          HEATHER BOON:           I see.   Okay.

16          JENNIFER THOMSON:     So we took that risk of  
17          buying the house, but that is why.   We didn't  
18          want to do it that way, we just had to.   So --

19          HEATHER BOON:           I see.

20          JENNIFER THOMSON:     -- yes, there will be a fee  
21          for the clients, but it's nowhere near what the  
22          article says.   Midwifery service, nobody pays  
23          for.   That was in the article.   With the  
24          clients birth there, they have to pay for that  
25          because it's not -- birth centres are not  
26          funded by the government.   The same for Lucina  
27          in Edmonton, it is paid for by the client

1 privately as they go in. We're just trying to  
2 keep the costs down for our clients. This  
3 birth centre will only be for our clients. We  
4 are a very small practice. There's only four  
5 of us, and not everyone wants to birth at  
6 hospitals. We do have hospital clients. We  
7 have home birth clients. We have birth centre  
8 clients. So we do -- really do not expect --  
9 if this is passed, which it might not be, but  
10 if it is, it will be very low impact. We'd be  
11 lucky if -- like Anna says -- zero to four  
12 clients per month. So I just wanted to answer  
13 your concerns because I haven't seen this  
14 article, but what's obviously in it is not  
15 true.

16 HEATHER BOON: Okay. Thank you very much.

17 JENNIFER THOMSON: You're welcome.

18 MS. DONOFF: Okay. I'm just going to go  
19 through a few more comments.

20 So agreeing. (As read):

21 "They are primary health care providers. They  
22 are paid like doctors, nurses, teachers, other  
23 government employees."

24 "They get paid by AHS just  
25 like a doctor. It would be an alternate  
26 health care provider to an OB. So instead of  
27 women going to an OB, they choose a midwife as

1           their primary care provider during pregnancy."

2                       "Just like any other health  
3           provider, massage, acupuncturist, naturopath."

4                       Okay. I think we're all  
5           caught up on comments. So are there any other  
6           questions or lingering comments?

7                       (As read): "Is there a  
8           limit on how many babies each midwife can catch  
9           each year?"

10          MS. GIMPEL:            Yeah, there is a limit.  
11          Each midwife can catch up to 40 babies each  
12          year.

13          MS. DONOFF:            "So this is  
14          not-a-for-profit growth business, just so that  
15          is clear."                       "Currently  
16          are only funded for two-thirds of that."

17                       So maybe just to wrap up,  
18          Chuck, could you just reiterate what the next  
19          steps will be going forward from this meeting?

20          MR. MCNUTT:            I can. Let me just go back  
21          to this slide here.

22                       So this is the process that  
23          we're going through. As I said before, we're  
24          right at this public hearing. We're going to  
25          draft the direct control district in accordance  
26          with what we basically commented on. We'll  
27          talk with the City. We'll submit it to the

1 City. They're gonna have their own review and  
2 circulation process and then they'll prepare  
3 the bylaw. Once they've gotten through their  
4 review and circulation process, council will  
5 hold a public hearing. That will be  
6 advertised. Everybody will be notified again  
7 of this. It'll be the same type of  
8 notification that we did, plus it will be  
9 advertised in the paper as well. It will go to  
10 council for the public hearing and then council  
11 decision, and submission before the public  
12 hearing is open to anyone and everyone that  
13 wants to speak at the public hearing.  
14 Everybody's welcome. It's a completely open  
15 council-held public hearing. The one  
16 difference at the council meeting versus here  
17 is that there are limits on time for people.  
18 You'll get one opportunity with five minutes to  
19 speak to council and then they'll take all that  
20 information, debate it, and then make a  
21 decision. That process is expected to take  
22 about that three to five months, and so the  
23 expectation is that we'll be able to submit it  
24 fairly shortly, and that will get into the  
25 council -- the City system and council system  
26 likely sometime, I'm going to say, May-ish. I  
27 don't know.



1 Kathleen, do you have any  
2 comments on the timing? On the process?

3 MS. SHORT: I think you're about there,  
4 Chuck. May.

5 MR. MCNUTT: So you guys can expect to  
6 see something probably in and around that time,  
7 in the papers again, and then there'll be a  
8 notification of a public hearing.

9 MS. DONOFF: So in that time, that  
10 sparked a few more questions and comments. So  
11 first comment (As read): "Loving the support  
12 for St. Albert Midwives. Thank you all."

13 A question from Paul (As  
14 read): "I just joined. Perhaps I'm asking a  
15 question already provided." No worries. "How  
16 many births at any one time would the centre be  
17 able to support?"

18 MR. MCNUTT: Anna, do you have more than  
19 one birth at a time?

20 MS. GIMPEL: As Jennifer said that we do  
21 not attend births -- birth in birth centres  
22 only. We -- some of our clients give birth at  
23 the hospital or their homes. We -- we expect  
24 to see any -- like, in a month, from zero to  
25 four births in a month. Maybe --

26 MR. MCNUTT: Would there be a  
27 possibility of having more than one at a time

1 at the centre?

2 MS. GIMPEL: One at a time --

3 MR. MCNUTT: Could you have two there at  
4 the same time?

5 MS. GIMPEL: Potentially could, but it's  
6 very hard to predict. At least even at Lucina  
7 Birth Centre, we seen -- we do not see this  
8 happening a lot. Maybe a couple times in a  
9 year.

10 MR. MCNUTT: Okay. Does that answer the  
11 question?

12 MS. GIMPEL: We are planning to  
13 accommodate only one room --

14 MR. MCNUTT: Right. Okay.

15 MS. GIMPEL: -- in the house.

16 MS. DONOFF: So more often than -- most  
17 of the time or as planned, it would only be one  
18 birth at a time.

19 Next comment (As read): "I  
20 have had midwives in three provinces in Canada  
21 and am super happy that Alberta is finally  
22 funded by the government, as 21 years ago I did  
23 pay out of pocket to give birth in Alberta but  
24 not in BC or Ontario."

25 A question (As read): "What  
26 else, aside from showing up for public  
27 meetings, can we do to show support for this

1 rezoning and venture?"

2 MR. MCNUTT: So questions and comments  
3 can be provided in writing to -- I would say to  
4 Kathleen, but I will accept them as well, to  
5 the City of St. Albert, and at any time between  
6 now and the public hearing and then -- and then  
7 obviously to show up at a public hearing if you  
8 have any additional questions or comments.

9 Anything else you can  
10 recommend, Kathleen, on that? If somebody  
11 wants to provide additional comments or  
12 questions or concerns or issues?

13 MS. SHORT: No. I actually think the  
14 e-mail is the best way to go because then we  
15 can respond, you know, effectively to each  
16 person. So I think that's the best.

17 MR. MCNUTT: Okay. And then you would  
18 be providing a summary of all the comments that  
19 are received in your report?

20 MS. SHORT: Right.

21 MS. DONOFF: Okay. Great. Thank you.  
22 Sounds like that satisfied those questions and  
23 thanks. That's a good question about next  
24 steps and how you can continue to show your  
25 support or continue to ask questions. So,  
26 Chuck has put those e-mails up on the screen  
27 again.

1 I think -- unless anyone  
2 has any final thoughts rather than sitting in  
3 silence --

4 MR. MCNUTT: Okay.

5 MS. DONOFF: -- waiting. Any final  
6 thoughts? We can just refer -- any final  
7 thoughts that come to you will probably -- as  
8 soon as you leave the meeting, something might  
9 come to your head, and just feel free to e-mail  
10 Chuck or Kathleen with any final comments or  
11 thoughts.

12 MR. MCNUTT: Great. So thanks again,  
13 everybody, for taking the time to show up.  
14 Great comments, and we look forward to -- to  
15 moving forward on this and -- yeah. We will  
16 certainly -- everybody will be -- you'll see  
17 some more information as time goes on, and feel  
18 free to e-mail either Kathleen or myself if you  
19 -- if you want any other additional information  
20 in the next coming months. Okay.

21 MS. DONOFF: Awesome. All right. I  
22 will -- "Thanks for the presentation." A point  
23 of order -- yeah. Doing these online is --  
24 can be a bit tricky with all the formalities of  
25 the public meeting, so we're all learning.  
26 Thanks for that point.

27 So I will end the meeting

1 now. You'll all be kicked out, but feel free  
2 to send your questions and comments, of course.  
3 Thanks, everybody.

4 MR. MCNUTT: Thanks, everyone.

5

6 (PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED at 7:00 P.M.)

7

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11 I, Jamee L. Cherniwchan, Court Reporter,  
12 hereby certify that the foregoing pages are a complete  
13 and accurate transcript of the proceedings taken down by  
14 me in shorthand and transcribed to the best of my skill  
15 and ability.

16 Dated at the City of Edmonton, in the  
17 Province of Alberta, this 20th day of January, A.D.  
18 2021.

19

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22 -----  
J. L. Cherniwchan,  
23 Court Reporter.

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