

# Round 2 for Mayatan

By Séamus Smyth  
Staff Writer

Rainbow Beach Developments held a second open house this past Thursday to hopefully generate approval for a preliminary plan to develop an RV resort on the eastern shores of Mayatan Lake.

Developers Sandra and John McNab hosted the information session at the KeepHills community centre inviting all curious residents of the area, including members of the Mayatan Lake Management Association (MLMA) who have been against the proposal since the original open house.

"This second open house appeased a lot of concerns and we gathered a lot of positive feedback; I'm glad we had it," said McNab. The group counted 26 people who signed in at the door and McNab was content with the improved outlook that he received from the majority of those in attendance.

When asked if holding the second open house was to appease his opposition, he responded, "No it's to appease everyone. It's to start answering concerns. You come prepared; people need time to accept the information," he continued.

McNab said the group made one adjustment based on feedback they received from the original open house, which was regarding an influx of traffic.

Stantec Engineering is currently

conducting a traffic analysis for the group, which is a requirement of any development, but McNab said it would be best to have it completed sooner rather than later.

Although the development group said they have listened to the concerns from the residents, MLMA President Walter Neilson said that the presentation failed again to demonstrate how the community would benefit from the proposed development.

"We have no answer to that question. From our perspective, all we see is uncontrollable traffic on small county roads, noise, potential drunken partying, fire hazards, security problems and most importantly, the loss of a lake which is currently a healthy part of the North Saskatchewan River Watershed," Neilson said.

He argued that not only had several of the concerns not been addressed, but that the development proposal had actually escalated in size.

"Back in Nov. there was no boat launch (proposed.) Now there is to be a boat launch plus two floating docks. These will have a detrimental effect on the lake," he continued. A store was also included in the retooled plan, which he said would add more traffic to the miniscule roads.

What Rainbow Beach Developments Inc. said the MLMA was failing to recognize was that the population in the area has dropped

steadily over the past few years and this RV resort will help offset that negative impact.

McNab pointed to the closure of several coalmines that has led to the dwindling population and that it was time to bring awareness to the community.

"This type of development isn't bringing residents, but brings community awareness which may lead to other possible developments in the community that can grow and maybe offset some of the negative impact that may have come forward from the loss of some of these families," he said.

He acknowledged the disapproval from MLMA, but insisted that despite being quite verbal, they are quite a small group of people involved. He said that the area will not fall into crisis if the development fails to go through, but that someone else will eventually come along and develop the property instead.

With an RV park, he said that it offers a number of opportunities for the area to blossom.

"If we didn't have oil in Alberta, what would you want to have? Tourism. If you come into a depressed or depopulated community and offer tourism, it offers opportunities. It gives the chance for the community to grow. That is all we are suggesting."

*Séamus.Smyth@bowesnet.com*