

Ken Allred tells city council province has already chipped in for powerline move

MLA warns province won't back proposal

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St. Albert shouldn't expect any more provincial help to move the Big Lake power line, says the city's MLA.

Ken Allred, MLA for St. Albert, met with city council Monday to discuss what the province and city could do about a contentious transmission line that runs through Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park.

Residents and provincial officials have raised concerns the 138-kilovolt AltaLink line is killing birds and will interfere with the province's preferred site for an interpretive centre.

Three weeks ago, council turned down

an offer from AltaLink and the province to split the cost of moving the line to follow Ray Gibbon Drive — about \$1.05 million, \$450,000 of which would come from the city. Instead, they proposed to have AltaLink and the province bury the line or run it along the ground at a cost of \$6.3 to \$8.5 million, none of which would come from the city. AltaLink and Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation officials reached by the Gazette said they would not support such a proposal.

Allred said he told councillors the province had already committed \$300,000 to move this line and was not likely to give more. "The province is not prepared to go for the underground proposal," he said.

This line was here long before the province created a provincial park around it, Allred said, and it was the city that asked to move it.

"It seems the city is sort of renegeing here a bit," he said.

Up to the city

"The city has made a proposal. The province has ponied up \$300,000. AltaLink has been very co-operative and offered \$450,000."

There's nothing more the province or AltaLink could do at this point, he said. "It's really up to the city to determine what it wants to do, if it wants to do anything."

If he had to pick a solution, Allred said he

would prefer to see the line moved to follow Ray Gibbon Dr. "The underground [option] is not feasible, in my opinion."

The province has not yet allocated the amount of money needed to either bury or run the power line over-ground, said Mayor Nolan Crouse. City manager Bill Holtby will now officially follow up with Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation to see if it would support the city's proposal, Crouse said.

"I would think the chances are fairly slim, based on what Ken [Allred] told us."

Holtby will then report back to council, which would then decide what to do about the line.

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