

Motion **SRD 959/23**, moved by Director John Rice and seconded by Mayor Kermit Dahl, served as a critical procedural "save" to keep the **Bylaw No. 519** rezoning application moving through the legislative pipeline in late 2023. While the motion simply set the date for further Board consideration on December 13, 2023, the sources and our conversation history reveal that this file became the primary evidence of what has been labeled "**Phase 3**" of the rural block's obstruction strategy.

The Technical Scope of Bylaw No. 519

Bylaw 519 was an "omnibus" application involving a coalition of property owners for **eight adjoining residential lots** located on Neigel Crescent, Jody Lynne Way, and **Craig Road** in Electoral Area D.

- **The Transformation:** It proposed rezoning the parcels from **Country Residential Four (CR-4)** to **Country Residential Three (CR-3)**.
- **Density Increase:** This change lowered the minimum lot area from 2.0 hectares to **1.0 hectare**, facilitating a subdivision that would turn the eight existing parcels into **16 individual lots**.
- **Policy Alignment:** Regional planning staff explicitly recommended the bylaw, noting that this "infill" proposal directly supported the **Housing Action Plan** and the SRD's application for the **CMHC Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF)** by increasing responsible density.

The Conflict: "Quasi-Judicial Abuse"

Motion **SRD 959/23** was necessary because the application had encountered a significant block at the board table. Despite the file having the full support of the community through the public hearing process, the endorsement of professional planners, and alignment with the **Official Community Plan (OCP)**, Directors **Gerald Whalley and Robyn Mawhinney** initially voted to reject the permit.

The sources identify this specific obstruction as a **severe administrative failure**:

- **Legal Liability:** By voting "No" on a fully compliant application without a data-backed land-use rationale, Whalley and Mawhinney exposed the Strathcona Regional District to a major lawsuit for **bad-faith decision-making** and procedural unfairness.
- **The Forced Reversal:** The directors only rescinded their "No" votes after being faced with the **explicit threat of a private lawsuit**. This reversal forced the applicants to endure a redundant second public hearing, which resulted in even more community support than the first.
- **Cost to Taxpayers:** This tactic has been described as a waste of thousands of taxpayer dollars in **unnecessary staff hours** and legal consultations.

The 2026 Election Narrative: "Hostage-Taking Politics"

As the **October 17, 2026 local election** approaches, the record of motion **SRD 959/23** and the subsequent battle over Bylaw 519 are central to Director John Rice's "**Forward or Backward**" campaign.

- **Consistency of Obstruction:** This incident is framed as the culmination of a multi-year pattern where the rural block used **"targeted administrative friction"**—weaponizing routine land-use files to punish the urban/Area D majority for unrelated regional disputes, such as the Strathcona Gardens expansion.

- **Accountability for Incumbents:** Debate questions for 2026 ask Whalley and Mawhinney why they chose to use **local families as "political pawns"** and how they justify risking the regional district's legal standing to engage in political "bullying".
- **Leadership Contrast:** Director Rice uses this file to demonstrate his commitment to **due process and "Building Tomorrow Together,"** having partnered with Mayor Dahl (the Rice/Dahl motion) to ensure the file was heard despite the efforts of his peers to scuttle it.

In summary, while **SRD 959/23** appears to be a routine scheduling motion, it represents a successful effort by the pro-stability majority to bypass what the sources describe as **"administrative malpractice"** and "quasi-judicial abuse" by the rural block.