

Snells Beach Ratepayers and Residents Association – SBRRRA

Minutes of bi-monthly meeting – Tuesday 07 July 2020

Betty Paxton Room Mahurangi East Community Centre after the AGM

Present: 71 people present incl: Greg Sayers AC Rodney councillor, Beth Houlbrooke RLB deputy chair, Tim Holdgate RLB, Steve Garner RLB

Apologies: Mark Dobson, Peter Caccia-Birch, Ray Bull, Simon & Marilyn Owens, Chas Benest, Robyn Duffy, Steve Popham, Mark Stallworthy, Dave Parker, Dorothy Hodges, Mike & Christine Hodges, Lorraine Buswell, Bev & Phil Rowe, James Addis(Mahurangi Matters)

Confirmation of previous minutes 02 March 2020: confirmed Maurie Hooper/seconded Diane Taylor

From the floor: member Rosemary French voiced concern that the previous minutes didn't reflect the strong objections voiced re the loss of green space along the foreshore in the discussion arising from a draft proposal document on exercise equipment

Motion that the following wording : **Our concerns regarding the future loss of green space along Snells Beach foreshore were not recorded accurately as the parking was only 1 part of the concerns raised from the proposal obtained from SBRRRA.** – be noted

Comment from member June Turner. That our green spaces are set aside for recreational activity for the benefit of the whole community and that she thought the draft proposal didn't take up much of the large reserve proposed in the draft document.

Motion carried that Rosemary's wording be added to these minutes.

Matters arising:

Roading: Matakana Link Road – Contract has been let and the contractor is now on site. It will be a 4 lane Road. Thanks to the sustained lobbying from Greg Sayers and Mark Mitchell (MP for Rodney)

Exercise Equipment: The evaluation of various sites in Snells Beach and suitable equipment is ongoing. When a proposal is more evolved it will be brought back to members and the community for further input

Boathouse Bay: Mark has received word from the Council compliance officer Kerry Flynn stating that the methodology plan for carrying out the dune work is to be submitted by the developer by end of this week. Suitable sand and spinifex have been sourced. The time frame of 31 July remains, however a minor time overrun may be accepted to achieve the desired outcome, within reason

Beachfront Bird signage: Draft proposal is for gabion baskets topped with signage set at an accessible/readable height. 4-6 locations along the waterfront. Costings are now being pursued. More information coming.

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Correspondence: Submissions: NZTA Tolling, Sandspit Rd/Mahurangi East Road intersection changes (online submission), **Letterhead:** AC dog control, AC Recycle bins on waterfront. Multiple correspondence re Boathouse Bay. **IN:** Notification from AC re proposed pedestrian safety improvements outside Horizon School

Financial report:

Financial Activity since 01April 2020

Income: \$190.00 subscriptions

\$2391.00 planting grant for Walkway group

Total: \$2581.00

Outgoings: \$3389.00 transfer of funds to Mahurangi Trail Society Inc

\$60.00 Presentation

Total: \$3449.00

Walkway	2391
Camera	784
General	3382
Total Funds (as at 30 June 2020)	6557

Walkways update (now Mahurangi Trail Society Inc): June Turner gave an update. **Te Whau walkway:** The community planting of 240 plants on 20 June was successful. **Next Community planting day is Sat 18 July 10am.** Another 240 plants to be planted. All welcome. Park in Cornel Circle and walk along till you find the planting site. **Walkway/cycle way community planting day** Wednesday 8 July. 10am. The Society is now working on landowner approvals for a connection between the end of the Te Whau walkway and the start of the cycle trail in Hamatana Road (along the oxidation ponds green ways) and also making the connection between the trail and Muncaster Road.

Guest speaker: Greg Sayers. Rodney Councillor: *How Auckland Council is responding to the financial hole brought about by Covid19*

Greg acknowledged the government's grant of \$9 million to our area for the Mahurangi River dredging and riparian planting. Good news for our area.

- The main focus of Auckland Council at the moment is the annual budget. The Council's financial year runs from 1st July to 30th June. This year's budget will be severely restricted by the fallout from Covid 19. They are now calling it an Emergency budget rather than an Annual budget
- Council's income is 40% derived from levying rates and 60% from variable income streams such as Auckland Airport/ Ports of Auckland dividends, transport charges, water charges, rental incomes, building consents and other fees and charges
- While the income from rates will largely be consistent with pre-Covid times, the 60% income from the variable income sources is predicted to be greatly affected, with a

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big deficit expected. Estimated to be a 525 million shortfall. Final deficit will depend on how fast we recover from the Covid impact. Is it a bounce or a long flat line?

- To completely recover the variable income deficit with a rate increase would mean a 30% increase in rates across the board. This not a viable option to even be considered.
- So, for the emergency budget - Two rate increase options are being canvassed from the Auckland ratepayers. Submissions have now closed.
- A 3.5% rate increase would leave a deficit of \$525million,
- **OR** a 2.5% rate increase would leave a deficit of \$590million.
- **NB:** If there is no rate increase there would be a deficit of \$750million.
- Any rates increase is to be ratified by the end of July.

Auckland Council cannot borrow to cover any shortfalls as the Council has borrowed up to its maximum already. Council is allowed to borrow \$2.70 for each \$1.00 of income it earns. But as the income is projected to be well down for this year there cannot be any further borrowing. This means that even with a rate increase, the Council will still have to make expenditure cuts. Choices are Savings or Sale of assets.

- Staff cuts have already happened. All contractors have gone. All outstanding leave accruals have to be taken by staff
- A reduction of 300 staff will occur with a 3.5% rate increase
- A reduction of 450 staff will occur with a 2.5% rate increase
- A reduction of 900 staff will occur with a 0% rate increase

Service levels will also be cut back, and investment in infrastructure will be reduced.

- A 3.5% rate increase would mean broken playground equipment, hall maintenance, etc would probably still be able to be done in most cases,
- A 2.5% increase would mean the playground would be roped off and the hall maintenance deferred or the hall might need to close.

Building upgrades might be delayed

- For a year with 3.5% increase
- For 2-3 years with a 2.5% increase.

Road seal extensions options

- \$1million will be available for 3.5%
- Zero for 2.5%.

Library services would likely get some cuts in staffing and services (hours of opening, collections and programmes) in both scenarios as well. This decision is done at a local board level

Council-owned properties may be sold in order to save money so Greg advised us to be vigilant and vocal if important buildings such as the Baxter St Carpark(opp New World) are targeted for sale.

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Auckland Transport had \$900 million of council allocated funding to spend this year pre-Covid, \$600million is already allocated to projects.

- 3.5% rate increase their budget would be \$700million which would leave \$100million for other projects
- 2.5% increase would mean only \$60million was available for other projects

Council is grateful that Central government is making \$3billion available for 'Shovel-ready' projects eg: the recent Mahurangi River projects. \$500million of this fund is for the Auckland region. Council can also apply for this funding too for shovel ready projects.

In conclusion:

Council is aware of fixed incomes in the community and personal financial fallout from the Covid impact. It will be a back to basics emergency budget. NB: Greg has taken a 20% salary cut.

We are all aware of the budget blowouts eg: CRL project, the rampant expenditure/salaries in the CCOs, and the salaries and business class travel offered to staff

The effects from Covid19 cannot be under estimated. Greg suspects there may be a very different council structure in the future.

Rodney Local Board update: Beth Houlbrooke RLB deputy chair

RLB is pleased that it can support local initiatives eg: the community planting days, the refurbishment of our local shopping centre toilets. Beth was also pleased to see such a wonderful community spirit in Rodney during the lockdown.

Now to the Emergency budget: Local Boards in the Auckland region were all asked to look for areas where they could make savings of 20% . Only the Waiheke Board and the Franklin Board submitted areas where they could make savings, but disappointingly, no other Local Boards did so. Other Local Board's spending to date has involved a lot of community events (ATeed events, Festival events, Music in the parks, Movies in Parks, Families in Parks) which, while desirable, will not be as sorely missed.

The Rodney Local Board did submit a draft, showing where they could make savings. The funding distributed by Rodney Local Board goes almost entirely on core projects such as footpaths, bus services, maintenance, etc which would be sorely missed if these had to be cut. Our budget is mostly operational so any funding reductions will mean a loss or reduction in these core services. The RLB will be fighting to keep as much of their budgeted items as they can. We hope that there will not be a large budget cut and the recession will not be severe. The RLB is planning for the worst but hoping for the best.

Another repercussion of the cutbacks is that funding for allotted projects that are budgeted for but don't actually start in the intended financial year will no longer be carried over to the next financial year as was previously the case. This has led to a scramble to get projects that were budgeted for, but not yet started, underway. This hasn't always been possible. Our priorities will be moved around to fit the budget. EG: the skatepark refurbishment, new community safety projects, repair & replacement of footpaths could be deferred or pushed out 1-2 years.

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The income from the targeted rate is secure. So the Park n Ride facility will proceed and any surplus will be put toward new footpaths / road sealing

Steve Garner RLB: There is concern re equity of funding between RLB and the rest of Auckland's local boards. Lack of local amenities, transport, events etc. There is not an even division of the available funding.

Tim Holdgate RLB: The level of debt in AC is of concern. Expenditure needs to be looked at. Cuts have already been made; contractors have gone but still some big decisions are still to be made as outlined. We have to make sure every \$ counts. Re the targeted rate – This is a significant amount and Tim would like to see it used on our local roads. A park and ride is a nice to have but it can be deferred. He would like to see this fund put back into local roading.

Questions/Comments from the floor:

- Concern voiced that the recent sale of the Orewa Council Building was well below valuation. Greg agreed but noted that only one valuation was received and the sale proceeded on that. Universal business practice is for at least 3 valuations be sourced. (Panuku CCO). CCOs have their own CEO and directors and it is difficult to hold them to account. Be aware that the Warkworth carpark opp New World is also being reviewed for sale.
- Are the community aware that they can report any road/footpath maintenance issues straight to the council 09 301 01 01 and keep following up on the issue.
- On financial mismanagement – is there any chance the Govt will bail out AC in this funding crisis. Greg felt it is Central Govt's job to support council in the recession. Still waiting for notification if this is to happen along with all the other NZ councils.
- Regional Fuel Tax – Is AT still able to access this fund? Greg: The Matakana Link Road will be funded from this account
- Concern voiced at the lack of accountability when we contact AC – eg: recent contact re abandoned car. Eventually 2 council officers from Orewa came up and posted a notice on the windscreen. Waste of staff time and money – why 2 officers? Greg: Council should be a customer orientated/focused organisation. But still hasn't happened.
- Emergency budget rate increases: What guarantee do we have that if a 3.5% increase is approved that it won't vanish into the Watercare blowout or other blowouts during the year and we still lose our services. No guarantee was able to be given
- Dome valley Landfill: concern voiced over - 300 trucks per day, road safety concerns, site suitability. Govt has given \$100million to clean up the Kaipara Harbour but we are still going ahead with this project. Greg: There will be a march up Queen Street 18 March .

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- Waste incineration options instead of landfill: Why are we objecting to this process. Member has lived with this in many countries – clean burning options available with a by-product of electricity/heating for the city. Greg: There are pros/cons to this project. Air pollution and ash residue. But still being investigated.

A show of hands was taken within the meeting. 3.5% rate rise was the majority in favour.

Next Meeting – Monday 07 September 2020

7.30pm Betty Paxton Room Mahurangi East Community Centre

Guest Speaker: Paul Klinac, Head of Specialist Delivery, Engineering and Technical Services, Infrastructure and Environment, Auckland Council along with some colleagues

A talk about the Snells Beach Coastal system and how it naturally functions including erosion and the seagrasses and our proposal for dune structures at the northern end.

Meeting closed 8.45pm

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