

Community News

MAY / JUNE 2000 EDITOR: JOSEPHINE HALL WRRA PRESIDENT: GERRY DAVIS PH 814-8833

WRRA Threatened with Defamation Suit

The following letter was received from Ewan Price, Barrister and Solicitor, acting on behalf of 'Go Waitakere"

Ist FLOOR, 354 GREAT NORTH ROAD, HENDERSON.

erprice@ihug.co.nz

PHONE: 836 1079, AUCKLAND, FAX: 837 2667 P.O. BOX 21-463, HENDERSON, DX DP 92509

17 April 2000

The Editor
Waiatarua Ratepayers and Residents Association Community News
C/- G Davis
17 Rimu Road
WAIATARUA

Dear Madam

RE: MARCH 2000 COMMUNITY NEWS

We are instructed by Go Waitakere Inc. and its elected Councillors in relation to your <u>February</u> edition of "Community News". The publication contains a number of gross inaccuracies for which retraction and apology are necessary.

We refer specifically to the following allegations in the publication.

- That Council's plan to sell the WOF Testing Station exchanged a "regular annual income" of \$750,000 for a cash input, to subsidise the rates" something which was said to be a "Go Waitakere Plan".
- Go Waitakere's alleged attempt "to allow the Waitakeres to be subdivided into 1/8' acre plots".
- 3. That the Go Waitakere Councillors had "resolved to remove subdivision controls in the Ranges".
- 4. That the local community faced a "crisis' because of the "hostile council"

Each of these allegations is false and defamatory of Go Waitakere Inc. and its Councillors. In particular :

- 1. Current income from the Warrant of Fitness Testing Station is not at the level indicated. Nor could income at that level be described as "regular annual income". The decision to explore sale of the Testing Station was one promoted by concerns, that income levels attained in previous years, could not be sustained with increased, and likely government moves to annualise warrants of fitness, and that the consequential erosion in the value of Council's assets ought not to be entertained by it. it was these concerns, and not a desire to "subsidise the rates", which has resulted in exploration of a possible sale of the Testing Station.
- 2. It is not, nor has it ever been, the policy of Go Waitakere to either "remove subdivision controls in the Ranges" or to "allow the Waitakeres to subdivide into 1/8 acre plots". In this regard your publication so grossly misrepresents the position that it can only have been actuated by malice towards Go Waitakere Inc. and its councillors. As you will be aware the Council's August Resolution (supported by all Go Waitakere councillors) was in terms

"That in the view of,

1. Current storm and waste water disposal systems.

- The advantage of landowners providing pest & weed control, and regeneration, at no cost to council.
- The absence of section 32 justification for the 4h limitation on subdivision.
- The desirability of promoting native forest regeneration rather than heavy handed regulations and rules.
- The probability that disaffected owners will claim compensation from Council if the existing rules are enforced.
- The upgrade of the existing transport infrastructure to handle more traffic.

Council resolves

- 1. A 4h site limitation is not sacrosanct, the overall effect of subdivision on the environment is paramount.
- Both in consent orders on appeals, and by plan variation, Council promote objective policies and rules that recognise a flexible approach to subdivision that
 - (i) Does not impose rigid area limitation
 - (ii) Rewards covenants, conditions and provisions which deal with waste water, storm water and bush regeneration within a subdivision.
 - (iii) Requires minimum of monitoring and intervention by Council.
 - (iv) Rewards landowners who promote the regeneration of native vegetation.
 - (v) Recognise that Council has conducted exhaustive reviews of this issue, and does not consider that the implementation of the above require further consultation.
 - (vi) To relieve pressure on planning staff that an independent planning consultant (Mr Harry Bhana, Mr Craig Bond, Mr Max Dunn) be appointed to implement Council position."

Any responsible publication would have drawn the full text of the resolution to the attention of its readers or at a minimum made the following points.

- That the entire raison d'etre, for the Resource Management Act, was to eliminate the rigid controls which characterised the previous statutory regime, and to provide for an outcome based approach focusing on "effects on the environment".
- 2. That is precisely what the intended resolution provides.
- Nowhere in the resolution is it suggested that subdivision controls be "removed" or that subdivision down to 1/8th of an acre be permitted.
- 4. The resolution gives primacy to bush regeneration and other desirable environmental outcomes.
- There must inevitably exist circumstances where subdivision below 4 hectares coupled with conditions of consent relating to regenerative planting substantially improves environmental outcomes from the status quo.
- 3. There is no "hostility" on the part of Go Waitakere Inc., or its Councillors, to the environmental objectives of those who profess a commitment to the preservation and enhancement of the Ranges indeed such objectives are openly embraced.

We require that you publish the full text of this letter in your next edition of the Community News together with the retraction and apology previously requested. In the interim Go Waitakere Inc and its Councillors reserve all rights in defamation which they have against the Waiatarua Ratepayers and Residents Association and the editor, publishers and distributors of Community News.

Yours faithfully Ewan Price

The Waiatarua Residents and Ratepayers Association retracts and apologises, for any inaccuracies included in the February/March 2000, Community News.

This Month at WRRA

by Deidre Ward.

The meeting was extremely interesting and long.

- John Sumich, our guest speaker, spoke about "The Ark in the Park" project. This being an eco-restoration project in the Waitakere Ranges Centennial Park. It would involve the removal of introduced predators, pests and weeds, and will allow the re-introduction of birds, and other species, once present in the ranges. The "Ark in the Park" being a collaborative project between the Waitakere Branch of Forest & Bird, Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, The Friends of Arataki and the ARC.
- The WRRA are looking at further ways of making the Community Hall into a more pleasant environment. We discussed quotes to improve interior lighting, improving the ceiling and updating the curtains. In this regard, if anyone with interior design skill would like to give us some input, please contact me on 814-9577.
- On the social side: there was further planning of the up coming Quiz Evening, and a Champagne/Pancake Breakfast as a midwinter get together, was mooted.
- We spent much time discussing and responding to a letter from Ewan Price – Barrister and Solicitor for "Go Waitakere"

The next meeting for the Waiatarua Residents and Ratepayers Association will be held on Monday 5th June at the Waiatarua Hall, 911 West Coast Rd. All are welcome to attend.

Submissions to Waitakere City Council on 2000/2001 Annual Plan, from the Waiatarua Residents and Ratepayers Association.

- 1 Safe Roads: The roads in and around Waiatarua are very unsafe for vehicle and non-vehicle users alike. We have asked that Council commit adequate funding in this year's Budget, and also in it's Long Term Financial Plan, for the improvement of our roads and walkways.
- 2 Sealing of Lone Kauri Road Karekare: Funds are available from Council and Transit New Zealand to complete this project and we support Karekare residents in their submission. Funding, for sealing of metal roads, has been removed from the 2000/2001 Council budget.
- 3 Septic Systems Pump Outs and Inspections: We have again requested that an inspection of each system take place when the pump out is conducted. The householder must also be given a copy of the inspection checklist. Each householder must also receive an educational brochure on how systems work, and also what can cause their failure.
- 4 Vehicle Testing Station: Council has proposed the sale of this business and may apply the proceeds to keep rates artificially low, as opposed to reducing debt, which is a Legal Requirement of Council. We also believe that the Testing Station Business supplies a community, and social, service.
- 5 Draft Detailed Budget Transparency: We have asked Council to make this document more user friendly for the non financial lay person. A couple of extra columns in their spreadsheets, showing % variances, would be very helpful. A similar submission was made last year but obviously fell on deaf ears.
- 6 Unit Support Costs: These costs are rising disproportionately with the actual costs of the services provided, e.g. Water, Waste Water etc., etc.
- 7 Staffing Issues: Council has a wealth of knowledge and expertise amongst it's permanent staff. However, this is slowly being eroded by the employment of expensive Consultants and Temporary Staff.
- 8 Timetable for Submissions to Draft Annual Plan: The timetable for the submission process is too tight. Approximately only four weeks are available from when Council documents are received and the deadline for submissions closes. We request that this timetable be extended.
- 9 Special Council-Hearing Times and Dates: The times and dates made available by Council for verbal submissions are too restrictive. We have requested that further times and dates be made available.



Fire Brigade News:

Restricted Fire Season ends:

From 1st May until November you don't need a fire permit. But you still need to ensure your fire is safe, and it must be out by sunset. And please don't forget to consider your neighbour's washing! Contact the Council for more details.

Progress: If you drive past the Fire Station regularly, I'm sure you'll be impressed with the rate of progress on the new building. Underneath the bit you can see are 80 cubic metres of concrete and over 40 driven piles, so it should stay there for a while. We hope to have partial use of the new building by late June, with the project completed around the end of July.

Congratulations to Richard Seccombe for successfully completing a 4-day Brigade Driver's Course, and Helen Longley and Ian Ford for surviving the Rotorua Marathon.

Calls For Last Month: The Brigade attended 5 calls in April, making 20 for the year.

Sat 1st, 22:45 - Car fire, Scenic Drive.
Sun 9th, 12:56 - False alarm, West Coast Rd.
Sat 15th, 08:50 - Diesel spill, Bush Rd.
Wed 19th, 17:40 - Rubbish fire, Rimu Rd.

Sun 30th, 23:06 - Car and bush fire, Kauri Loop Rd.

Contacts - Ian Ford Ph 814 8851 or Richard Seccombe 814 8860

Walkers Wanted

Are you interested in improving your fitness, getting out of the house and appreciating the environment, whilst walking with others on a regular basis? Suggested time: early Saturday mornings? Meeting place: Oratia Church? If this sounds like you, Phone Jo, on 814-9945 to voice your interest, or ideas.

Waiatarua Library News

Are you able to spare one hour a month to supervise the library? We need a volunteer to attend from 11-12 noon, on the third Saturday of every month. Full training given. If you can help, please phone Bev 837-4420 or Anne 8148874.

New Books:

Non Fiction: Up the Blue, by Roger Smith (an Anzac story)
Island Harvest, by Nick Nairn
The Naked Chef, by Jamie Oliver
The Great and the God, by Alistair Cooke

Fiction: Marrying the Mistress, by Joanna Trollope
The Forest, by Edward Rutherfurd
Where you Belong, by Barbara Taylor Bradford
The Wastings, by Don Donovan (NZ Herald Columnist)

... and many more...

Playcentre

Term 2 has started with lots of old and new faces, ready to enjoy another fun, creative and energetic term.

With 16 areas of play available to the children, on all sessions, there will be no time to get bored over the cold winter months approaching. If you are interested in visiting us, we are located at 911 West Coast Road Ph 814-8835 or after hours Ph Elke on 814-8803.

Our sessions are Mon/Wed/Fri 9.15am - 12.15pm.

Playcentre is in need of a vacuum cleaner, and a small couch for the reading corner. If anyone in the community can help out with either of these, please phone Jo on 814-9945.





Our next get together is a visit to Eden Gardens, where the Sasanqua Camellias will be in full bloom, along with Azaleas and Daphne. The date is 7th June and we will meet at the entrance at 1pm, finishing with afternoon tea at the gardens. \$3 admission. For further information, or carpooling, please ring Eileen on 814-9298.

Letters to the Editor

The following letter expresses some strong opinions, and does not necessarily express the views of WRRA or the editor.

Dear Madam,

MY PERSONAL VIEW OF GO WAITAKERE''S ACTIONS

The Go Waitakere Folk never cease to amaze! Their threatening letter, (printed in this edition), seems nothing more than a bully's tactic to push their own agenda (tactics that seem compatible with the Mugabe School of Diplomacy).

Specifically they have complained about Terry Chapman's article and a couple of minor inaccuracies. The WRRA committee agreed to print their letter with an apology, for those errors, but I do not feel it is appropriate to accept this without response.

Terry, in his article, may have overstated the Testing Station's income, or it's regularity, but it is still an income and still an asset. Selling a moneymaking asset to artificially reduce rates, (a one off), is scary at best, and possibly illegal, as the funds should be put towards debt reduction. Fact : Go Waitakere has a policy to hold down rates. Fact: Go Waitakere Councillors voted for the sale of the Testing Station. Fact: Go Waitakere is not proposing directing the proceeds of the sale to reduce Council's debt, but toward a one off rate reduction. There's an old saying, "If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and sounds like a duck, it probably is a duck."

Terry overstated 'Go Waitakere's 1/8th acre subdivision plans, or did he understate it? Go Waitakere is pushing for a system that removes restrictions in terms of size of subdivision. This had been wrapped up in flowery words such as: "rewarding landowners who promote the regeneration of native vegetation", of which a possible translation could be "Right mate, plant a couple of flaxes and you can cut it up for townhouses". And what democratic check and balance system would they have in place to alleviate our fears? Independent consultants. That's right, they appoint them. (Would they appoint someone who doesn't share their views?) No consultation, no hearings, no accountability, no democracy.

Mr Price suggests that our wee, simple minds don't understand the complexities of the RMA. Well, maybe Go Waitakere only read the parts they wanted to. The RMA also states tat affected parties should be consulted. May be we should all just go to sleep because Go Waitakere has all the answers and really has our best interests nestled in their warm hearts. Consider the first act of this bold new political force, who had a mandate from the people to cut Council costs ... they gave themselves a raise. This is the same group who wants us to believe that the totally subjective criteria in their 'resolution' should ease our concerns. Something comes to mind about hiring foxes to mind the chickens.

Go Waitakere complains that it has not passed any resolution that specifically "removes subdivision controls in the ranges". OK let's use their words in their resolution: "Does not impose rigid area limitations". Big difference? Go figure!

Their last gripe, is about being called a hostile council. A number of conservation groups are at odds, (or in court), with this Council. Many of the residents I know in the Waitakere's have a conservation ethic and don't buy Go Waitakere's pitch; there must be a reason. These guys are threatening to sue the WRRA, in part, over a political opinion in a community newsletter which clearly states "Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Waiatarua Residents and Ratepayers Association" It sure feels that somebody here is hostile.(the duck test applies)

There have been opportunities where the Go Waitakere Councillors could have come forward to debate these issues. Instead this political group seems to prefer remaining isolated from our community and formulating policy with scant consultation. Legal threats seem to me to be desperate measures for avoiding healthy, open debate.

The Go Waitakere group should do some serious soul searching. Do you really want to sue one of your City's ratepayer groups? What do you intend to gain? Maybe you should consider spending your war chest on P.R. instead of a barrister.

Wade Cornell - Waiatarua

Speed Kills

As we left May's Ratepayers' Meeting in the early hours of Tuesday morning - legal matters had kept us up after bedtime - a car came down the hill, doing about 100 kph.

"Speed Kills!" said my companion.

"That's it!" I said. "That's what I am going to call my new political party!"

"Oh", she said, "Is this party going to campaign for lower speed limits?"

"No", I said, "the current system is far to rigid and bureaucratic. What we need is more driver responsibility, and less interference from police and local councils." "Mmm," she said, "what did you have in mind?"

I explained: "I want to remove rigid speed limits, because I am an excellent driver, with a fast car and good brakes, where as you are a bit absent minded and drive a clapped-out old banger. What might be a sensible speed limit in your case might not be a sensible speed limit to impose

"Huh!", she said, "So what you are saying is that you will be driving down the hill at 140 kph!"

I looked at her sternly, "You be very careful what you are saying young lady! I meant nothing of the sort, I want to remove rigid speed restrictions - that might mean I go faster than the current speed limits, or it might mean I have to go slower. I want to encourage good driving for the benefit of the Waitakere region, going past school buses at 20 kph, stopping for old ladies, picking up bottles lying in the kerb - that sort of thing. I think people will vote for this, particularly since I am going to be strongly against council spending. Do you know those fools almost gave the council staff a 1% pay rise this year! That's my money they are spending! And I don't give a hoot about painting out graffiti or keeping kids occupied in the holidays!" My companion looked at me, a bit frostily, I thought.

"You seem to be going to a lot of effort if you just want to drive slower. Who's going to decide how fast you will be allowed to drive? - You?" she asked.

"No, no, no!", I said, "This will be done by a commissioner, an independent 'Speed Consultant'.'

"And what about me she?" she said, "Do I get a say?"

"Not really", I admitted, "you will have to rely on his integrity."

"I'm not sure I want to rely on his integrity!" she said, "I want to be involved!"

"Look", I said, "It won't be a public process I'm afraid, but I have every confidence in the 'Speed Consultant', why, I've known him since we were at school together!"

"Huh!" she said, "that's fine for you and your sort, but I have a young child, what happens if one of your fast motorists knocks her down and kills her?'

"This is very unlikely!" I said, "trust me."

"Terry, " she said, "sometimes you talk like a duck."

"That's unfair!" I said, "I'll get on that council with the support of those who want lower rates and those who want to drive, without rigid restrictions and unnecessary council interference. Come the next election I will rely on the voters to work out if they've been 'ducked' or not." "I'm not convinced", she said. "Let's change the subject: I really like the new flood lights outside the Community Hall, I think that was a good idea of yours."

I looked at her pensively, "You know I think I would really have preferred to have put up spot lights, just to show up the nice things around the hall. These flood lights show up a little to much of the unpleasant side of things for my liking."

By Terry Chapman - Waiatarua

Dear Madam,

Thank you for the articles on the presentation by Mr Taylor, (March/ April Newsletter), and the possible extreme scenario painted, to provoke

We have lived in "the bush" for nearly twenty years, originally at Laingholm, and now here. I suspect that we are much like other residents who have a strong sympathy for nature, and wish to see the environment pro-

The last local election, however, reflected not so much a lessening of such desire, but rather a rejection of the excesses it appeared to be leading to at Council and officer level.

- The dictatorial attitude over what colour many houses could be painted - because a badly coloured crayon touched the section on a plan.
- The announcement that Roads should not be maintained as someone had signed up an International agreement to reduce the use of cars.
- The latest list of politically incorrect plants to grow.
- The continual 'tightening' of Council controls over all sorts of items (just read any part of any rules/schemes in comparison to the previous

The intent of most of these things is worthwhile, but there are less objectionable ways of achieving the ends.

Also, before dismissing the "pushed out" scenario, remember the actions taken at Cornwallis Beach, and currently on Rangitoto, - irrespective of the actual rights and wrongs of each situation - they are indicative of what can happen to property owners, when there is a crusading enthusiasm to 'restore' a place to it's 'original' state.

In conclusion, I would strongly support the message to monitor what all politicians are up to - remember they are only human.

G. R. Gibbons - Waiatarua

ADVERTISING

This is free to financial members for 2000, January to December.

A list of financial members is available at the library, and any queries about membership can be answered by phoning the Treasurer - Eileen Powell on 814-9298

> Repeat commercial advertisements of members will only be printed as space allows.

JP - Mary Kelly. For personalised weddings, re-affirmation of wedding vows, ceremonies of commitment, naming ceremonies, MC, Chair for public meetings etc, Phone/Fax 814 9857.

LAWYER AND NOTARY PUBLIC: John Hendrikse, also available after hours and at weekends. Fee when buying a house: All up \$800; when selling: All up \$508, with a free will. Familiar with Afrikaans. 914 West Coast Road Ph/Fax 814-9991

LEARN TO SPEAK ITALIAN - with an experienced native teacher.

Private or groups, all levels - conversation, grammar, business. Phone Alessandra, 814-8993.

WINDOW CLEANING / WATERBLASTING, Chemical & House Washing. Excellent rates, free quotes. Phone Glenn 814-9480.

AUCKLAND SUN CLUB INC. The family club for clothes-free recreation invites you to visit. For further information please call 814-9973.

Neighbourhood Watch

The names of our current co-ordinators are listed below. If you haven't been approached yet and would like to belong to one of these groups, give the co-ordinator a call.

NAME	ADDRESS	PH/FAX	E-MAIL
Mary Kelly, JP	3 Atarua Gardens	814-9857+Fax	turtle@xtra.co.nz
Denis Graham	Back up - Atarva Gdns	814-9706	
Ross & Kath Mullins	330 Forest Hill Rd	814-9402 + Fax	
Јеплу МсGее	886 West Coast Rd	814-9954	
Chris/Liz Field	799 West Coast Rd	814-9876	crislizf@voyager.co.nz
Ngaire Mason	21 Tui Crescent	814-9036+Fax	
Adith Stoneman	8 Kauri Loop Rd	814-9822	
Margaret/Paddy Marshall	19 Raroa Tce	814-9859	
Gaelene/Tony Goodrich	17 Cascade Ave	814-9788	

Road Safety in Waiatarua

by Ken Stacey, Bush Reporter

Whilst driving home one afternoon, as an honest law abiding ratepayer, I was negotiating my way through a particularly narrow and windy stretch of Waiatarua road, when suddenly I was forced to take avoiding action to prevent a collision between my humble ute and a white hatchback. (Which was taking up more than its fair share of the road, I can tell you!) In doing so, I narrowly avoided the adjacent clay bank, the left front wheel plummeting down the ditch and denting the hub. The dog flew over the bonnet, only to come to a sudden stop in mid-air, as his lead took up the slack. As my trusty ute limped towards the Oratia Service Station, (dog regaining consciousness on the bonnet) the hubcap fell off and was lost in the bush beside the road.

The Solution

I have nothing but praise for the boys at Kenlock Motors. A new wheel, the hubcap found, the dog consoled and returned to his place on the back of the ute, and we were back on the road again.

The Issues:

Do you know anyone who owns a white hatchback?

If a grader and tar seal-making truck followed my ute around the place, we would ensure our roads were wide enough everywhere in

We needs signs and lots of them, saying things like: "Keep on your own side", and, "Slow down you white hatchback ??!*!" and, "Watch out for low flying dogs"

Most of us have trees outside our houses to hang these signs onto. Let's get out there and make our area safe.

WOODEN FARM GATES. Tanalised timber with galvanised bolts. 10' - \$61.00 12' - \$68.00 or made to order. Phone 814-9700.

ELECTRICIAN – Phone Jim your local man Phone 814-9344.

WEST COAST VET CLINIC - Offering full veterinary service for your pets . . . 24 hour service Phone 814-9419

DRIVEWAYS, Garage floors, Pool and Patio Areas, Timber Decking, environmentally friendly chemical cleaning, waterblasting and sealing (to minimise future maintenance). Free Quotes.

Phone Ian on 814-8902 or 021-433-009.

MASSAGE for Relaxation, treat yourself (or a friend).

Vouchers available. Ph Irene 814-9311.

HORSE MANURE - \$1.00 per large bag. Available from the gate at 253 Forrest Hill Road. Phone 814-9771.

KENDRICK PAINTING AND DECORATING: for quality and service Phone Graham on 837-1612.

PHONE "HERE FOR HAIR" MOBILE CUTS.

Phone Lesley 814-9242 or 025-203-9276.

VISIT "EARTH SEED" 100% ORGANIC SHOP

for a great selection of organic and GE-free foods.

547-549 West Coast Road. Open 7 days Phone/Fax 818-6411.

WANTED: Cot, changing table, high chair, etc. all in good condition. Phone Rachel 83-53740

WANTED: 3 – 4 bedroom house required to rent, with fire, and garden area for two young children, in the Waiatarua/Oratia area. Phone Angela or Kenneth on 817-8121

ORATIA KEAS GROUP: Keas is a scout group for boys and girls aged 5 ½ - 7 ½. We meet on Mondays at the Oratia Settlers Hall 4.30-5.30pm. Join us for fun and friendship. For further information phone Debbie Brown 814-9187 or Tina Ripley 813-6151.

FIREWOOD FOR SALE: dry, split, hardwoods \$60 per cubic meter Phone 814-9724

RELIABLE AND RESPONSIBLE BABYSITTER required

Ph. Christine on 814-9505

SOLICITOR - Are you buying and/or selling your business/house? Are you interested in setting up a Family Trust? Phone Geoff Wood for your legal needs at 623-7541 DDI or 836-8630 a/hrs weekdays. Home visits by arrangement.

Waiatarua Community Hall Hire

Remember to hire this excellent facility for your meetings, parties, dances, birthdays (children's and adults) etc.

Lovely wooden floor for dancing.

Friday and Saturday evenings, (including chairs & tables) \$100.

Hourly rate, (max 3 hours) \$10 per hour Sunday to Thursday evenings

\$65, hourly rate \$7 per hour, (max 3 hrs)

Daily rates Monday - Friday, Full day \$25, hourly rate \$5

Saturdays & Sundays, Full day \$35, hourly \$7 Crockery hire \$25, Bond up to \$250.

Discount for regular users. Community Barbecue hire \$20

Phone the Custodian Pauline Isaachsen on 814-9847

JUNE / JULY **NEWSLETTER**

Copy needs to be in the hands of The Editor,

757b West Coast Road Road, Waiatarua. Phone 814 9945 EMAIL: forwardthinking1@xtra.co.nz by WENESDAY 7th JUNE, 2000

Thanks to the Longley Family for printing this Newsletter.

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Waiatarua Ratepayers and Residents Association.