

**Copy of verbal representation to HCC Policy and Regulatory Committee Meeting  
3 December 2013**

Representation from Dennis Page on behalf of himself and also in his capacity as President of Hutt Valley Tramping Club Inc. (Leaseholder of a building in Philip Evans Reserve, Waterloo).

**Concerning Agenda Item 4i) Review of Valley Floor Reserves – Area 3: Central Suburbs**

I would like to begin by requesting that this committee reconsiders the chair's recommendation in the agenda for this item 'that the recommendations in the report (POL2013/5/25) be endorsed.' This smacks of a rubber stamping exercise and may demonstrate little thought of the implications and consequences that such an endorsement would trigger. I urge change of this recommendation on the basis of comments made under point 14 of the report that notes: 'council may also wish to consider whether it should first consult the community on this area plan prior to making further decisions.'

This is a more sensible option because:

- i) It is more democratic – it more openly and transparently states council's intention to as wide an audience in the city as possible.
- ii) This review is inextricably linked with the Urban Growth Strategy and the results of increased intensification and high-density housing have huge implications concerning the importance of city reserves, or the lack thereof, and their disposal.
- iii) There are dangers with the current approach and recommendations as they stand because the proposed review will degenerate into a 'step-wise-process' with little democratic input and the city's amenity values will be eroded by stealth, one by one, as each reserve is considered and, most likely, gets whittled off the council's books...

At the very least, report no. POL2013/5/25 should add an eighth acknowledgement point that recognises 'Hutt City Council is the third worst territorial authority in the country when it comes to ratios of reserve space per 1000 heads-of-population, having only 2.71 ha/1000 people versus the national median of 8.05 ha/1000 people. A sub-recommendation should be that HCC actively seeks to redress this situation.

Paragraph nine in the officer's report takes a very cavalier view in stating that 'the city has coped with the current situation of reserve availability for many years without significant community concerns.' This fails to recognise that up until now, there has not been a huge emphasis on growth by intensification and infill housing; as this emphasis increases under the Urban Growth Strategy, reserve availability will become more important as the city becomes more crowded.

This committee needs to be more mindful of paragraphs in the accompanying PAOS report under the heading titled 'Role of Public Open Space' (in the introductory section) that states: 'public open space has a key role in the development of a city's character and in the physical, emotional, spiritual health and well-being of people who live, work and play there.' And, 'provision of open space is widely accepted to be essential when working to revitalise urban life and solving environmental and social problems.'

These paragraphs also acknowledge that it is very difficult to achieve open space in a city once built form is established. Therefore, existing open space is a valuable asset and decisions about its future need to be considered very carefully. This brings me back to point 14 in report POL2013/5/25 which urges you to consider consulting more widely.

## Issues in Report POL2013/5/25 Concerning the Hutt Valley Tramping Club (HVTC)

The HVTC wishes to take issue with paragraph 10 in this report that concerns the fate of Philip Evans Reserve. HVTC comprises 300 members, the majority of which reside in Upper and Lower Hutt Cities or from elsewhere across Greater Wellington. Our club owns a building on the edge of this reserve and leases the land footprint from HCC – the result of a council ballot in the late 1950s that actively sought to promote and encourage sports club formation within the Hutt Valley. In addition, our clubrooms also host six other organisations on a regular basis that do not have premises of their own. They are as follows: The Kaumatua Tramping Club, the Lower Hutt Branch of Forest and Bird, the Hutt Camera Club, the Bonsai Club, the local branch of the NZ Mountain Safety Council and Project K. We also accommodate other more casual users such as various fitness and church groups. In many respects, our clubrooms represent a sporting hub for other organisations in the Hutt Valley long before this idea was mooted in a recent HCC long-term community plan.

We note that report POL2013/5/25 appears already highly skewed in favour of disposal of Philip Evans Reserve for high-density housing, given its noted proximity to Waterloo Interchange, and because the reserve is enclosed and with alleged low profile. On this matter, the HVTC makes the following points:

- i) The narrow laneways for vehicular access to the reserve, both from Oxford Tec and Mahoe Street, are concealed and give poor line-of-sight onto the street frontages. This concealment means that the type and frequency of vehicle movement associated with high-density housing is not a good fit for the land potentially available.
- ii) The reserve is not just a site for our clubrooms (and all of our affiliated users) but also hosts buildings for a ballet school and the amateur radio club. The perception painted in the report that the reserve is under-utilised is probably not as bad as the report makes out.
- iii) If intensification is to occur in Waterloo, then a village green will become more important given the paucity of other reserves in the area and this fact argues for the retention of Philip Evans Reserve. (The map on p 12, S.3.5 in the PAOS report shows that Philip Evans Reserve is in a built area considered to have a major reserve shortfall with only one other reserve present. This other reserve, the Hutt Tennis Club is more exclusive – i.e. defined users for a defined recreation.)
- iv) If the need for high-density housing in the area is so great that Philip Evans Reserve must be sacrificed, then the question needs to be asked, 'why has the vacant Central Fire Station site not been developed? This building, just down the road from Philip Evans Reserve, has been left abandoned for several years in a ruinous state and is a continuous target for vandalism and graffiti. If ever a piece of land was ready for development, this would be a prime case ahead of Philip Evans Reserve.

Any disposal of Philip Evans Reserve is unacceptable to our club's members without full compensation from the council. Our clubrooms have been purpose built with our member's needs in mind – In addition to a meeting hall (that has special beams and bolts for climbing purposes included), it has garaging to house a long-wheel-based vehicle, plus extra rooms available for storage (not just for our copious equipment, but for our renters' equipment as well). We can't just be translocated easily to any other spare suburban hall. Neither are there financial resources available within the club to fund a move. Our funds are tight; the club just having recently finished a major redevelopment of its lodge up at Ruapehu (which is available for use to all Hutt City residents at very reasonable cost). As a result of this exercise, we owe about \$18,000 to members in loans.

The council's obsession with growth and its concomitant reserve rationalisation/disposal process would gravely wound an organisation that just recently celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, if council fails to preserve its sporting and recreational organisations during this process. Our club makes a vital and

positive contribution to the welfare and wellbeing of this city and its citizens. Please do not destroy us by thoughtlessly and needlessly disposing of Philip Evans Reserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

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