

## AVONHEAD COMMUNITY GROUP SUBMISSIONS ON COUNCIL PLANS

In recognition of the views of the 12,500 ratepayers in the Avonhead suburb, the ACG regularly lobby's the council on your behalf. After the Council released their Annual Plan, The ACG submitted the following notes;

### RATES

The ACG noted that the proposed increase in rates for residential properties was 4.2%. At the time we were encouraged to see that the Council adhered to its pledge in 2016 to keep the increase in residential rates below 5%.

### FUNDING FOR LOCAL PROJECTS

The ACG requested the Council to allocate funding to commence the development of Avonhead Park with a multi-purpose sport facility and community centre.

Avonhead and the surrounding suburbs lack a community centre as a "hub" or focal point for the local community. Avonhead Park is currently under utilised and the open space creates a unique opportunity for a multi-purpose sports facility and community centre.

### WATER CHLORINATION

The ACG strongly opposed the proposal of chlorinating the city water supply. The neglected maintenance of the well-heads by the Council have posed the risk of E. coli contamination in city water. The ACG has urged the Council to ensure the immediate maintenance of all the well-heads on top most priority instead of chlorinating the city water which will downgrade the pristine pure water image of the city for ever.

### FUTURE PRIORITIES

Over the next 12 months, the ACG will continue to advocate for the interests on Avonhead, which will include;

- Provide options for the expansion of the Avonhead Park Memorial Cemetery
- Find a long term solution to the parking issues of Russley Residents affected by the Russley Business Park
- Minimise the risk of any adverse impact on traffic or infrastructure from the Development of the MAIL site on the Corner of Johns Road and Memorial Avenue and the Summerset Retirement Village on Hawthornden Road.
- Provide for the ongoing sustainable development of Avonhead and its surrounding suburbs including pursue the demand for additional allocation of fund in the Waimairi ward for developing Avonhead Park as a multi-purpose sports facility and community centre
- Strive to minimise annual rates increases;
- Participate in the decision-making on the city's water supply; including strongly advocating the end of the programme for chlorination of city water supply.
- And any other issues that is in the interest of the community for a sustainable development

If there are any issues that you would like us to advocate on your behalf, please use the information below to contact us.



There is no power  
for change greater  
than a community  
discovering what  
it cares about



# JULY 2018

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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## IS OUR COUNCIL LISTENING?

### OPINION by Karl Varley

Recent frustrations have been voiced from local residents about the conduct of the council and in the way its officers engages with local communities.

As ratepayers we expect responsible spending, balanced decisions and a chance to be heard when required. Dismay at some of the decisions of the Council over the last few years has left local residents feeling upset at the lack of considered representation. The council spends a significant amount of money every year on public engagement, but the consultation processes have lacked the transparency and focus that has been actively sought after by local residents. Often leaving them feeling that engagement has been a tick box exercise rather than delivering meaningful outcomes.

At the heart of the issues continues to be a council planning division that seems to be disconnected from the reality of the people who are most impacted by unfair decisions. When problems are evident in any organisations it is often down to issues with;

- Having the correct procedural processes and policies
- People following the correct procedural processes and policies.

While inherently people choose to go to work to do a good job this current results can only really be achieved by a lack of sound policies and a lack of competent leadership. Council stance to continually shut down meaningful forums where residents can voice any concerns is achieved by claiming that the impacts of consents will have a "minor or less than minor impact". In reality the impacts are significantly more.

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Most people do not listen with  
the intent to understand – they  
are listening with the intent to  
reply.

Stephen R. Covey

## IS OUR COUNCIL LISTENING?

*continued from over*

Encouraging development to progress the rebuild of a vibrant city has to be balanced with the impact on the lives of the people affected by any decisions. Often the decisions of council fail to balance the priorities of the city with the concerns of affected neighbouring parties.

Recent examples include;

- Council claims that a quarry expansion in Templeton would have a "minor or less than minor impact" on the local residents and nearby property owners.
- A non-notified consent process for a funeral home in a residential area was signalled as having a "minor or less than minor impact"
- The Chlorination of our water supply
- Rates rises of over 50% over the next 10 years

Most recently and more concerning was a recent report from Council granting a resource consent for a 300 house development in a residential area without acknowledging the need for additional information about the impact on an aging and inadequate infrastructure. In their report, the council identified the impact on the area would be "minor or less than minor". In the original findings of the independent Hearing Panel, 80-90 homes were agreed as the evidence supported the limitations of the essential services in the area.

## Retirement village and hospital on Hawthornden Road

In July 2017, Summerset Group purchased 9 ha of land on 100 and 120 Hawthornden Road to develop a retirement village and dementia care unit. The development is to have 300+ residential units.

Consistent with the submissions made to the Independent Hearing Panel in 2012, the ACG supports residential development in the area as long as it is in keeping with the residential amenity and does not have adverse impact on the local traffic, parking, infrastructure, environment and amenity.

The ACG has had discussions with Summerset about the impact of the development and considers that the retirement village has the potential to be a positive

The Avonhead Community Group lobbied extensively with the Mayor, local councillor and the consenting officers to seek additional information. Ignoring the request, the council approved the consent application on the developers submission that two landowners who had substantially benefited financially from the original purchase of the land, had no issues with the proposal. Despite our considerable efforts the council refused to acknowledge additional parties that were impacted and seek submissions from them. As with many examples in

***"As in this case along with so many others, the council promises fall well short of the actions"***

the past the council approved the consent on a non-notified basis, ignoring the obvious impacts of the local services and denying the neighbouring property owners a legal right to make a submission.

After the Independent Hearing Panel decision on the site the Council agreed that it would consult with the local community on any proposed developments. As in this case along with so many others, the promises fall well short of the actions. Their continued lack of respect for meaningful community consultation continues in a council devoid of integrity.

Communities on the front line are giving the council answers to some of our cities biggest issues - but is our council listening?

*Karl Varley has a degree in Business Transformation and Change and works as a Business Improvement Consultant. He is active in sport and in his local community adding value as a member and treasurer of the Avonhead Community Group.*

addition to our community.

However, the executive of the Avonhead Community Group have been disappointed in the Council's decision to grant resource consent for the development without notifying residents who live right next-door to Summerset. It is unfortunate that the Council today continues to act like the Council in 2012 and exclude the local community when making decisions that affect them.

The ACG's priority over the coming weeks is to establish ongoing dialogue with Summerset about its role as a neighbour.

We would welcome your thoughts and input on this matter so that we can pass these on to Summerset.

## Dad jokes

### So bad they are actually good

- What time did the man go to the dentist
  - Tooth hurt-y
- Did you hear about the man that made lifesavers
  - They say he made a mint
- How do you make a tissue dance
  - Put a little Boogie in it
- I had a dream last night I was a car muffler
  - I woke up exhausted
- What is Forrest Gump's password for his computer
  - "1forrest1"
- The Avonhead Cemetery is extremely overcrowded
  - People are dying to get in there

## Finding a solution for Russley Residents

Residents around Russley Business Park are fed up about the unmanageable on-street parking situation.

In 2011, the Council granted resource consent for Russley Business Park without ensuring that there was enough on-site parking. As a result, staff are leaving their cars parked in front of residents' homes throughout the day, leading to serious congestion and poor corner visibility.

Neither one-hour parking limits nor full-time parking wardens has improved the situation for residents. Many residents have had to move out of the area.

We are now fighting for residents-only parking on these streets as a last resort.

If you have noticed similar problems in other areas or would like to share your thoughts on possible solutions,

## INDUSTRY THWARTED IN RESIDENTIAL AVONHEAD

As many of you will remember, in 2012, the Council had earmarked 35 hectares of rural land between Russley Road and Hawthornden Road for industry (**NWRA3**). The decision to introduce industry had taken place with barely any consultation with the wider community.

Our community was overwhelmingly against industry in or near residential areas as it has a significant impact on traffic and parking, increased heavy vehicle movement, the lack of sewage capacity and the side-effects on the environment and amenity.

On average, 350-400 people turned up to oppose industry at each of the three public meetings that we coordinated in 2013. We also got the support of the time the Minister for CERA.

In 2015, the Avonhead Community Group (ACG) spent countless hours submitting the concerns of the local residents as well as the impacts of the infrastructure at the Independent Hearings Panel. The ACG outlined a compelling case against the rezoning of the NWRA3 land into Industrial. During the submission hearing the case against the rezoning was also supported by CERA and the Airport. In 2016, after careful consideration of all the facts and balancing the needs of the city with those of the local residents, the Independent Hearings Panel ruled that NWRA3 should remain rural.



The decision was appealed at the High Court by some of the landowners of the NWRA3 site, still wishing to rezone the land as industrial. However, in line with the ruling of the Independent Hearing Panels decision, the appeal was declined. The case was then elevated to the Court of Appeal which refused to hear the case as the application did not satisfy the legal requirements to be heard.

Through the ACG's determination for the residents concerns to be heard the NWRA3 remains rural land. The community support through the 6 year battle was greatly appreciated and this victory represents a significant example of the power of a unified community.