

7. STYX MILL CONSERVATION CONSULTATION PROCESS

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The purpose of this report relates to concerns raised by a Councillor regarding the lack of approval given by the Committee for the public consultation document released recently in Styx Mill Conservation Reserve.

CONTEXT

As at 1 July 2002 delegations to the Committees and Community Boards changed with greater authority given to the Community Boards in terms of purchase of land for reserves and waterways, proposed developments or activities on parks, reserves and waterways and removal of trees.

The Standing Committee is more concerned with strategic issues and approval and consideration of reserve management plans.

Under the terms of the Reserves Act 1977, a management plan is a plan developed under the Act and to guidelines within the Act.

The development plan for Styx Mill Conservation Reserve is a five page publication of text with a proposed draft park development plan that scoped a vision for the park principally for public comment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Committee has the authority to decide in May 2003 whether they are in favour of the draft vision for Styx Conservation Reserve and development plan, or want to eliminate/improve certain aspects. Vision feed back forms (separately circulated) are fairly basic in terms of commenting on the proposal mainly asking questions relating to features and aspects that could be improved. Suggestions can be written on the reverse side of the return form.

Normally a vision of this type although not a Management Plan under the Reserves Act 1977, would be first brought to the Community Board then the Standing Committee for a regional park such as Styx Mill Conservation Reserve prior to release for comment by the community. Circumstances such as the development of a subdivision on the park boundary and certain requirements to meet the City Plan conditions of a predator proof fence installation did speed up the process. The vision was presented to the Community Board on 22 January 2003 as part of the Belfast Area Development Plan Workshop.

It was considered that in 2002 a seminar meeting would be the best type of meeting to consider all the issues that were to be circulated to the community for comment. This meeting was cancelled following a directorate to staff that no seminar meetings in January or February 2003 would be held. Under the vision for the Styx which does have council approval (July 2001) the park is under the umbrella of this strategy.

RELEVANT CURRENT POLICY

For larger regional type parks such as Styx Mill Conservation Reserve it would be normal practice to report the vision for the park to both the Community Board in the area and the Standing Committee. However the reserve now forms part of the overall planning for the whole Styx River Catchment which is a 40 year plan. This was part of the already approved Vision "5" of the Vision for the Styx in partnership with the community, (July 2001).

The original concept development plan for the Styx Mill Conservation Reserve was produced in 1993. Both these plans are **not** however management plans.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

As part of the City Plan land use consent for Northwood Subdivision, developers are required to install a predator proof fence at the base of the terrace with the Styx Mill Conservation Reserve along the common boundary with the Northwood Subdivision. Planting a five (5) metre wider buffer is also required.

The City Plan Hearing decision stated; 2.188 *“It was decided that a densely planted buffer on the terrace face and a predator fence at the bottom of the face be established at the developers expense within the reserve and adjacent to this boundary with the Styx Mill development. In addition it was agreed that a 5m wide buffer of dense planting be established on the Applefields side of the boundary”.*

As the developers are working to a very tight time frame and insisting the City Council make decisions under their subdivision Resource Consent process, a longer term vision for the Reserve had to be developed quickly which would address the boundary issues.

CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH ELECTED MEMBERS AND INTERESTED PARTIES

The consultation process for this vision involves a series of steps. They are as follows: -

- 11 Dec 02 Styx Seminar – Fendalton Service Centre
Shirley/Papanui, Fendalton/Waimairi, Burwood-Pegasus Community Boards, Styx Living Laboratory members, Parks, Waterways & Gardens Council Committee. This date was set approximately six (6) weeks prior to the event in consultation with committee secretaries.
- 22 Jan 03 Belfast Area Development Plan Workshop for Shirley/Papanui Community Board.
- 26 Jan 03 Celebration in the Styx – public launch
This is a Summertime event with the date being set approximately six (6) months prior. Roger McGibbon of Xcluder Fences, the consultant who undertook the feasibility report into the predator proof fence was also present. They are based in Cambridge.
- 27 Jan 03 Seminar to Parks, Gardens and Waterways Council Committee. This was cancelled as the Committee had decided not to have any seminars during January, February 2003.
- 27 Jan 03 A presentation to interested council staff and politicians about predator proof fences by Roger McGibbon was held instead.

Distribution of consultation leaflet.
- 7 Mar 03 Submissions close.
- Mar 03 Hearings if required. A Hearings sub-committee consisting of members from the Shirley/Papanui Community Board and the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee may be set up.
- 16 Apr 03 Shirley/Papanui Community Board Seminar with an invitation to the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Council Committee to discuss the submissions and the report to be presented to the Board and Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee.
- May 03 Reports to Shirley Papanui Community Board, Parks, Gardens and Waterways Council Committee and Council.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

It was always intended to release a draft vision at the celebration of the Styx Reserve on 26 January 2003.

Originally a proposal to have a joint seminar with the Shirley/Papanui Board and Standing Committee on the following day was cancelled due to the Committee not having seminar meetings in January and February 2003. An “Interested parties” second seminar on the predator fence with Roger McGibbon on 27 January 2003 was held. A full report following consultation will be brought to the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee.

Staff

Recommendation: That the process of consultation for Styx Conservation Reserve be noted and the committee consider how the public submissions on the development plan should be handled.

Chairman’s

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.