

7. REDCLIFFS/SUMNER COMMUNITY CRÈCHE RELOCATION

Officer responsible Property Manager	Author Kevin Mara, DDI 941 6401
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The purpose of this report is to update the Property and Major Projects Committee on the status of the project, in particular issues over the siting of the crèche and to obtain from the Committee a recommendation on the way forward.

BACKGROUND

The crèche is currently in a temporary location with a lease that expired in August 2000. Temporary arrangements are in place to allow the crèche to remain until a solution is found to its accommodation needs. The shared arrangement with the other hall users is unsatisfactory for normal crèche operations. It does not meet the standards of the Ministry of Education for crèches, and compliance with some Occupational Safety and Health needs is questionable. Council staff have been endeavouring to assist with relocating the crèche from its unsatisfactory location since 1990.

The original needs analysis carried out in 2001 identified three options for acquiring or leasing land for the crèche.

- Option 1 – Church Site (existing)
This option investigated issues around buying/leasing the Church land where the crèche is currently sited
- Option 2 – Purchase another site in the Redcliffs area
This option was looked at but the cost to purchase a piece of land large enough would exhaust the available funding
- Option 3 – Use of Existing Council Land
This option visited Council's land holdings in the Redcliffs

The shortfall in funding has dictated the need for the crèche to be located on Council owned land.

The Council resolved on 12 December 2001 to approve in principle the use of part of Barnett Park as the preferred site for the new building to house the crèche, subject to an appropriate consultation process. A Crèche Working Party was formed to determine an appropriate site upon the park and to see the project develop to fruition. Seven sites had been considered. Six of the sites were discounted on the basis of effects on the 'appeal' of the park, disruption to neighbours, overflow flooding effects from the stormwater drain adjoining the Scout Hall and protection of park trees. The site that was selected was located at the front of Barnett Park (North West corner) fronting onto Main Road.

The proposed crèche would be a Council funded building, the Council having allocated \$300,000 towards the project over the 2001/02 and 2002/03 financial years. The Community Trust has approved a \$50,000 grant towards the relocation of the crèche. The crèche has raised another \$69,000. The June report to this Committee identifies the budget. This budget is still applicable.

RECLASSIFICATION PROCESS

Barnett Park is classified Recreation Reserve. A change of classification to Local Purpose (Community Buildings) Reserve is required in order that a crèche building and associated car parking and outdoor play area can be located on Barnett Park.

The Reserves Act 1977 required the Council to publicly notify its intention to change the classification to the Minister of Conservation, and a period of one month is given for interested parties to formally object.

The reclassification process requires that a Reserves Hearings Panel in front of a Commissioner is held. The Commissioner will make a recommendation to the Council. If the Commissioner recommends reclassification the Council will forward the decision to the Department of Conservation for their approval.

Status of Reclassification Process

The process in relation the north/west front portion of the Barnett Park commenced with public notification on 21 May 2003.

Seventy-eight submissions were received, of which 58 were in support (13 of which were from outside the area), and 20 that were opposed (2 from outside the area) to the reclassification.

An initial hearing date of 9 September 2003 was set. Following the submission period a pre-hearing meeting was held with those who had submitted objections. The purpose of this meeting was to see if there was any way to mitigate some of the objections received.

The main issues identified by the objecting submitters are:

- (a) That the proposal is contrary to the goals and policies set out in the Management Plan for Barnett Park.
- (b) Requests that the toilets at the front of Barnett Park be retained.
- (c) Concern that the site is too close to the busy Main Road, and this will cause traffic and parking issues if parents park on the road or too close to the entrance.
- (d) That if the park is to be used then the un-used Scout Hall is more appropriate.
- (e) Concern that the change in classification will set a precedent which could affect the use of other parks in the city.
- (f) The process to date did not allow for community involvement.

Following the pre-hearing meeting, the Working Party reviewed the status of the project and decided that the hearing scheduled for 9 September 2003 be deferred until November 2003. The decision to defer the hearing was based on the following:

- (a) The Council appreciates the community concerns and sees a need to assess them before proceeding.
- (b) The Council wants to work with all parties interested in this project before proceeding.
- (c) The process needs to be robust and transparent.

CURRENT REVIEW

A small working group consisting of community representatives, Community Advocate, Parks and Waterways staff and the Project Manager was formed. The representatives of the community were objectors to the re-classification process for the front of Barnett park.

The working party identified the following sites as possible alternatives:

- Redcliffs Park
- McCormacks Bay (North of Pumping Station)
- McCormacks Bay (West of Kindergarten)
- Barnett Park (Scout Hall site)

See Appendix A (attached) for site map.

The various site options have been reviewed by a group of specialists, made up of a Landscape Architect, Traffic Engineer, Architect, Policy & Leasing Administrator (Parks & Waterways Unit), Parks & Waterways Planner the Community Advocate and the Project Manager. The following information has been produced by the specialists:

Option 1 – Redcliffs Park

Zoning – Open Space 2 and Living 1

Legal description – Lot 3 DP 47479 & Lot 2 DP 47479

Area – 1075m²

Advantages:

- Fee simple Council land
- Existing toilets can be retained
- Visually separate from the bulk of the existing park
- Visual impact would be minimal with existing landscaping being retained
- Sealed car park on site
- Building could turn its back to the Main Road to reduce traffic noise

Disadvantages:

- Redcliffs Table Tennis Club is currently located in the Council owned building on the site and has a 10 year lease (signed last year)
- The Table Tennis Club building will need to be relocated to another site
- Bus stop will need to be shifted
- Traffic flow/safety issues on Main Road
- Noise from traffic on Main Road
- Distant from Kindergarten
- Ministry of Education application for funding does not apply to this site
- The site has a sewer main laid across it

Option 2 – McCormacks Bay (North of Pumping Station)

Zoning – Open Space 2

Legal description – PT R 4324

Area – 28.1.25.9 acres

Advantages:

- Recreation reserve vested in the Council, but not classified as such
- The area is free of underground services
- Existing car park could be used for a drop-off area
- Vehicle access would be from McCormack's Bay Road

Disadvantages:

- Full community consultation will be required as the reserve has a Management Plan which was created in consultation with the residents in the area
- High level of noise from traffic
- Reclassification will be required (Local Purpose (Community Buildings) Reserve)
- Possible visual impact for neighbours across the road
- Opposition from local residents likely
- Area largely constructed on fill material
- Existing playground will need to be relocated
- Ministry of Education application for funding does not apply to this site

Option 3 – McCormacks Bay (West of Kindergarten)

Zoning – Open Space 2

Legal description – PT R 4324

Area – 28.1.25.9 acres

Advantages:

- Classified Local Purpose (Community Buildings) Reserve
- Building would be clustered with other community buildings already on the park
- Visual impact on neighbouring residents very minor
- Vehicle access would be from McCormack's Bay Road

Disadvantages:

- Site is prone to being 'wet' in winter
- Opposition from local residents likely
- Full community consultation will be required. When the Management Plan was created in consultation with the residents in the area, the specific use of the area for a crèche was not foreseen.
- Visual impact for neighbours
- New car park would be required
- Reduces green open space at confluence of Main and McCormacks Bay Roads
- High level of noise from traffic
- Ministry of Education application for funding does not apply to this site

Option 4 – Barnett Park (Scout Hall Site)

Zoning – Living 1

Legal description – RS 38630

Area – 1396m²

Advantages:

- Fee simple Council land
- Sufficient off street car parking
- Minimal impact on park amenity
- Uses vacant area of park with currently disused building
- Community Trust funding secure for this site as long as building work commences in the near future
- Quiet location
- Ministry of Education application for funding applies to Barnett Park site
- Replacement of the old Scout Hall with a new building will provide a much better view from neighbouring properties

Disadvantages:

- Too small to provide both the building and the outdoor play space required
- The outdoor area will need to extend into the park (Recreation Reserve)
- Classification change may be required to locate the playground on the reserve
- Outlooks compromised for some neighbouring residents
- Cost to remove or purchase the existing Scout building
- Located in the Rifle Drain flood overflow path
- Opposition from neighbours very likely

Option 5 – Barnett Park (North West Corner)

Zoning – Open Space 2

Legal description – RES 4979

Area – 1555m² (part of 7.2813ha)

Advantages:

- Ministry of Education application for funding applies to Barnett Park site
- The area is free of underground services
- Area of Barnett Park situated away from flood flow path
- Close to shops, library and the kindergarten
- No loss of existing car parks
- Will not conflict with present playground or sports field use
- Community Trust funding secure for this site as long as building work commences in the near future

Disadvantages:

- Reclassification of part of Barnett Park will be required
- Concern from residents about loss of park and outlook
- Traffic flow/safety issues on Main Road
- Removal of public toilets required

PREFERRED OPTION

The small working party have assessed the information prepared by the various experts and have produced a table with the key elements common to all sites (see Appendix B attached). The reason for this is to allow the working party to make a recommendation for a preferred site based on a sound process.

CONCLUSION

Consideration of the above has led to the following conclusion in terms of a preferred site:

The Scout Hall site on Barnett Park is assessed as the site with the least issues requiring consideration, however some still exist in relation to this site. There will be a need to work closely with affected residents to determine whether their concerns can be mitigated in order to avoid objections at a resource consent hearing.

Two of the significant issues associated with this site have been addressed as follows:

- The building is located on a flood plain. This has been discussed with Council experts, and provided the building is built utilising piles, this issue can be mitigated.
- The playground would extend into Barnett Park (classified as recreation reserve). A legal opinion has been sought regarding whether a reclassification process would be required for the playground area. The advice received is that the activity (playground) is in line with the overall intent of the park and hence reclassification is not required

The current process relating to the reclassification of the front part of Barnett Park (Option 5 above) should be stopped.

As the design around the Scout Hall site is progressed, staff should continue to work with the community in the development of the design.

SUMMARY

This project has been a long time in the making. Numerous sites have been considered for locating the crèche. The Council has resolved that the crèche is to be located on Council owned land.

In assessing the various sites the project team has given consideration to a range of factors that will affect the operation of the crèche and also issues around the practicality of building on a site (i.e. the costs that might result from any site).

Each site that has been considered has pros and cons. There is no one site which stands out as having no cons associated with it. As a result of this the project team has applied a standard approach to each site when considering the various effects. This has allowed the project team to come up with a recommendation which has been through a robust and transparent process.

One of the key reasons in deciding to delay the re-classification hearing from 11 September is the need to have worked through a robust and transparent process with community involvement. Staff considered the previous process to not have been as transparent as it might have been. We are now in a situation where staff have worked with the community in coming up with an option to pursue. This option is a compromise for both the community and the Council. There will still be objections to this option. Staff believe that it is possible to provide a significant amount of mitigation to the objections.

The Property and Major Projects Committee needs to give consideration to:

- the previous work done in identifying a site for the crèche
- the response from the community
- the current work that has been undertaken in reviewing potential sites for the crèche

As a result of this consideration, the Committee then needs to make a final decision on which site should be pursued.

Staff

Recommendation:

That the Property and Major Projects Committee:

1. Approve in principle the use of the Scout Hall site on Barnett Park for the purpose of locating the Sumner/Redcliffs Community Crèche.
2. Request staff to develop the design for a crèche on the Scout Hall site and involve the community through the design process.

Chairman's

Recommendation:

That the above recommendation be adopted.