Christchurch City Council

MAYOR’S REPORT

THE MONTH THAT WAS - MARCH 2006

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South of Lichfield Charette
“Future Directions”
Central City South urban planning and design workshop see page 3.

City Mall Redevelopment
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Race Relations Issues
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Cornwall Gardens
These gardens are a good example of a partnership between the Council and community. Cornwall Gardens is a group of townhouses with a community garden. The St Albans Stream runs through the middle of the complex. Barry Gadsby, gardener extraordinaire, and the Gardens corporate body obtained help from the Council’s Greenspace division to restore the community gardens and the banks of the stream. The City Council provided all the plants in addition to specialist help from the nursery, waterways and City Care personnel. This is a wonderful co-operative

WEEK ONE

• Spoke to Linwood High students about citizenship
• Accepted presentation from Firestone to commemorate production of 35millionth tyre
• Dinner with Creating Safe Communities Portfolio Group
• Launchpad Graduation
• CDC 06-09 Planning session
• Treeplanting at Cornwall Gardens
• Classical Sparks

WEEK TWO

• First day of merged organization—Powhiri—welcome
• Local Government Metro Sector meeting—Spoke on LTCCP process
• Interview with Christine Herbert—“Businessman Today”
• Meeting with John Walley, Manufacturers Assn
• Actionworks meeting with Minister David Benson Pope
• Ballet performance “The Wedding”
• Met with Minister Trevor Mallard at CDC
• Lake Isaac facility meeting

Mayor Garry Moore, Mayoress Pam Sharpe and Herman and Norma McKinney at “Its Time to Talk” in Christ Church Cathedral.
WEEK TWO cont

- Meeting with Paul McNoe Redbus
- Press Conference re Meat and Wool major regional initiative announcement by Minister Trevor Mallard
- Hangi for Community Board members

WEEK THREE

- Met with Gordon Davies new CEO Canterbury District Health Board
- Met with John Suckling on Central City
- Courtesy call new Commander 3LFG Dave Gawn
- Function for Irish Consular General
- Safer Christchurch meeting
- China meeting
- Meeting with Labour MPs
- Attended Premier of March of the Penquins
- Spoke and Clubs of NZ Conference
- Dined with Mayors prior to Canterbury Forum

WEEK FOUR

- Design Workshop on Central City
- Lichfield Street charrette
- Its Time to Talk at Christ Church Cathedral
- Orion Site—Simon Savill
- Meet Me In Miami Premiere
- Courtesy call from Commander of French Naval Vessel
- Briefing on waste levy
- Seniornet Canterbury’s 10th Anniversary
- Inaugural Air NZ service to Adelaide
- Joint Land Transport Committee Meeting

THEMES FOR THE MONTH

- Banks Peninsula District Council ceased to exist as a separate body this month and merged with Christchurch City. An historic moment for the province.
- The continuing work on the change project at the Art Gallery to implement the Council decision to promote the gallery and its exhibitions.
- The launch of the Community Gardens at Cornwall Gardens. This is a good example of community and council working together to promote environmental enhancement.
- Preparation for visit to China.

AN HISTORIC MOMENT

Monday
6 March

The first day of the new Council.
SOUTH OF LICHFIELD CHARETTE
NEW DIRECTIONS

A Charette is where a large group gets together and plan over a concentrated period of time (in this case 5 days). The group looked at a defined area and considered how to achieve certain goals and desired outcomes for our society. This Council wanted to know if the area bounded by Colombo, Lichfield and Madras Streets and connected by Moorhouse Avenue could accommodate a greater number of residents and businesses. In other words rather than allow an area to degrade, the Local Authority intervenes and plans what could be possible in an area using techniques which have been perfected around the world and which have led to successful changes.

Planning consultants, DPZ Pacific Ltd led the group of property owners, tenants, professional organisations (architects, landscape architects, planners), and elected representatives, Council staff and interested members of the public through a planning Charette.

Some years ago we decided as a Council that we wanted thousands more people living within the Four Avenues. This will naturally lead to planning changes which will allow for parts of the centre of our city to accommodate more people. Internationally the formula for encouraging the centre of cities to come alive again is well tried. Cities which have rebuilt their centres have basically capitalised on the centre's strengths and allowed modification to existing, or the construction of new, buildings. This means that existing parking requirements will have to be changed and emphasis on slowing down the traffic will have to happen. A whole new type of business starts to move in. In some cases people will run their businesses downstairs and live upstairs.

The mix of housing types has to span from affordable housing to plush apartments. Both the private and the public sectors are in partnership to ensure that the new community which forms in the middle is inclusive. The formula is well known. It is fundamental that we do not see ourselves as outside the loop. We will be playing a major part right in the middle.

Suggested outcomes of the workshop included:

• A network of pedestrian lanes
• Bringing the tram into the area
• Bringing transport back to the train station
• Better linking this area to the CPIT, Catholic Cathedral, and Jade Stadium
• Removing the one-way system

Over the years we have supported a number of projects which have been very successful. High Street rejuvenation is one example. There needs to be many others if the Central City is to be revived. We have to get 20,000 plus people to live within the Four Avenues before our dream come true.

The Charette showed that changes are possible. It would lead to a completely different configuration of lanes and buildings. The City Plan would have to be modified to allow some of the proposals and Council staff have been given a large responsibility to come back to those who attended with some concrete proposals for further consideration. I would expect some progress on this within the next two months.
CHARRETTE CONT...

The beauty of having an intense process like this was that it gave us an opportunity to "work" a plan with an interesting mix of vested interests from the early stage. More importantly, it awakened passion and interest in the area and allowed stakeholders to see the potential of the areas in a new light.

Normally a plan is developed by planners who spend years behind closed doors before we all get to see the ideas. The Resource Management Act then has a series of flaming hoops for those who are either for, or against, the proposed changes. I hope by using the Charette process we can shorten the planning process and get renewal of our Central City more quickly than would be the norm.

CASHEL STREET MALL

The Christchurch City Council have just appointed The Isthmus Group to design a new concept for the City Mall. They bring expertise to this area from their extensive experience of rebuilding Malls in both New Zealand and Australia.

It is more than 20 years since the City Mall was first developed and an upgrade is timely. During the next six months, the Isthmus Group, in conjunction with the Christchurch City Council, will work through a consultation process to determine desires and aspirations for the area.

Renewal of the City Mall is an essential part of the bigger picture for the Central City and a major Central City Revitalisation project. This area has been having problems for some time. The Council should have renewed this area at least 10 years ago. It has become tired and is now in urgent need of change.

The project is about more than creating an attractive area. The consultation process will run parallel with the design process and a programme to get the businesses working together in the areas.

The planners, and the Council team all then worked with property owners and retailers in the Cashel Mall area. Throughout the week there was intensive exchanges between all those present. The design ideas (of which there will be several) were then progressed using one on one sessions with affected parties like property owners and retailers. The Council staff also presented the "public realm" side of the equation. It is easy to just see this as a process which assists those who own, trade from or live in the properties on the Mall. This is far from the truth. There is public space between the buildings. Just think about the Buskers Festival and the number of buskers that perform in this public space. The public/private funding mix is a debate still in front of us. How we pay for the proposed changes is up for consideration during the LTCCP process. My personal view is that the 100% special rate is not correct, it does not allow for the public space.

I would expect reports on both the South of Lichfield Charette and the Cashel Mall to be presented to Council within 2 months. I hope the City Mall will be a catalyst for renewed energy and vitality in the Central City and the impact will be positive for the city as a whole.
One label which the media gives this Council constantly is "New Zealand's most racist city". I have never denied that racism exists in our city. Every city, every person, has the seeds of racism close to their heart. The key challenge is to accept that it is there and to address it.

This month we brought from our Sister City, Seattle, two amazing Americans, Herman and Norma McKinney. Herman leads a unit in the Seattle Chamber of Commerce which has as one of its programmes a programme called "Its time to talk". Basically what happens is that a famous speaker is asked to address a group of citizens. As they come into the room people are given a number and this allocates them to a table. At this table are 9-10 people. One is a volunteer facilitator. At the end of the address the speaker asks a question. The group addresses this question for 20-30 minutes and then they say "and now its time to talk". They then invite people to have a pot luck meal at one of their places and for them to continue the conversation. Over the 7 years the programme has been running there have been 37,000 people involved in the sessions.

We brought Herman and Norma here to teach us how to run the programme. We held it on Tuesday, 21 March 2006, at the Anglican Cathedral in the Square. We had 180 people there. The evening was a huge success. We will soon hold the next session.

I believe that this sort of positive race relations programme is the way of the future. We need to stop talking past each other and sit and listen and share our lives with each other. When it comes to the basic things in life we all desire the best for our children and our families and our community. Starting by talking is a very good point for us all to be.

I would like to thank all those volunteers who made this a very successful occasion.