

19. THOMSON PARK - REMOVAL OF CONIFERS AND REPLACEMENT PLANTING

RR 7922

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Corporate Plan Output: Park woodlot replacement. Parks Plans & Policy Statements Community Relations page 6.1.2	

The purpose of this report is to update members on recent developments on this topic and request Board endorsement for further consultation.

Members will recall a report going to their 6 July 1998 meeting at which the Council's Arboriculturist and Parks Planner reported on a proposal to remove pine and macrocarpa trees from the perimeter of Thomson Park, to allow for the implementation of the proposed landscape plan. The Board decided to recommend to the Parks and Recreation Committee:

1. That the pines and macrocarpas along the northern and eastern boundaries of Thomson Park be removed early in the 1998/99 financial year, once public comment has been sought.
2. That replacement planting occurs soon after the conifers are removed according to the landscape plan.
3. That a copy of the plan be sent to the North New Brighton and New Brighton Residents' Associations for perusal at their respective monthly meetings.

As this was considered to be a significant proposal and worthy of reasonable consideration by the community, a plan of the development was displayed at the main entrance to the playground (where it remains some nine months later) and discussions were held over seven months with the local newspapers and residents' groups regarding publicity.

Publicity consisted of:

The New Brighton Residents' Group have a monthly newsletter, and the trees featured in at least four of these. Their circulation is 1,100 households.

Prior to the public meeting on 17 March, articles appeared in:

The Star	19 February 5 March 17 March	Circulation is 191,000
The Pegasus Post	22 February	Circulation is 33,000
The Midweek Mail	6 July	Circulation is 125,800

The Public Information Leaflet went out in February to approximately 1,400 households in the area. The two residents who made the deputations both received a copy of this. This consisted of a leaflet and an A3 copy of the landscape plan (*the leaflet is attached, page 93*). As a result, two letters of support, two phone calls of support and an email against were received. North New Brighton Residents' Association had no feedback from residents, New Brighton Residents' Group had approximately 12 phone calls, six for and six against.

The minutes of the public meeting held on 17 March are also attached (*see page 95*).

Following the public meeting, the only responses received were five phone calls in favour of the proposal, and the deputations to the Board and the Parks and Recreation Committee against.

The deputation by Sarah Beaven was to outline the concerns of a number of New Brighton residents over the consultation measures undertaken by the council. She understood the need to remove trees for safety reasons, however felt that the community was generally not in favour of the blanket removal of all the trees. She also felt that many people did not know of the public meeting, nor had even heard of the Community Board, and were generally nervous about approaching the Local Government system. The Board therefore decided to recommend to the Parks and Recreation Committee:

1. That the removal of trees in Thomson Park be delayed until further consultation has taken place.
2. That the Community Advocate report to the Board on its community profile.

A new report, based on the July 1998 report to the Board, went to the Parks and Recreation Committee on 7 April 1999 which resolved (taking into account the Board's recommendations):

1. That the removal of the trees in Thomson Park be delayed.
2. That the report and landscape plan be referred back to the Community Board for further public consultation.
3. That consideration be given to staging the implementation of the landscape plan.

Following the Committee meeting, contact was made with Sarah Beavan and ideas for further consultation were discussed. The Parks Unit wishes to present the following process for Board endorsement:

1. Parks Unit to identify the imminently dangerous trees and identify any groups or blocks of trees which could remain for the time being.
2. Consult with the wider 'Save Our Trees' group through Sarah Beavan to discuss the results of (1) above. This consultation would include further discussion on the detail in the landscape plan and to physically show the group the problems and opportunities with the trees and future landscaping.

3. Once the above has been obtained, consult with the two residents' groups involved.
4. The Parks Unit redraft a public information leaflet which will outline a compromise if able to be obtained, or the options as put forward by the four groups: Parks, Save Our Trees and the two residents' associations.

To overcome criticism regarding the circulation area, the groups will be consulted and the 'Save Our Trees' members' offer to distribute the leaflets accepted.

5. The feedback from the leaflets will be assessed and reported to the Community Board for a recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Recommendation: That the above public consultation process be endorsed.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the Board asks the Parks Unit to undertake this consultation, and inform it of the consultation programme.