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Corporate Plan Output: Subdivision	

The purpose of this report is to provide background and to comment on a report to the Environment Committee from the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board, recommending changes to the current procedures for road and right-of-way naming.

THE BOARD’S PROPOSAL

The Burwood/Pegasus Community Board wishes to choose the names for new roads and rights-of-way on new subdivisions in the Burwood and Pegasus Wards, as this would enable them to choose names with common themes such as sea, Maori names or local identities on subdivisions with several new proposed roads. They believe that names submitted by developers do not take account of local history or identities.

THE CURRENT PROCEDURE

Traditionally, in Christchurch and the majority of local authorities in New Zealand, the land developer constructing the roads selects the names for their new roads and rights-of-way. The reasoning behind this is that the developer pays for the construction costs and, once the road is completed, the control of the road is vested in the Council. (Rights-of-way remain in the ownership of the properties they serve.) Construction costs are expensive. One major Christchurch developer estimates his construction costs to be close to \$25,000/allotment. An average cul-de-sac serving twenty sections costs around \$500,000 to construct. The developer selects the names for his subdivision and forwards them to the Subdivision Officer, who checks the names for confusion with existing names, then prepares a report to the Board who will then approve or decline the names. (Name approvals were delegated to the Community Boards shortly after the formation of the new Christchurch City.) After a subdivision Title Plan has been sealed by the Council, it is lodged with Land Information New Zealand for checking and the issue of new Certificates of Title. They do not accept the Title Plan until the Council has approved the road names. It is important to the developer, who will usually have bridging finance, that the naming procedure does not unduly delay the lodgement of the plan. In most cases there has usually been consultation between the developer and the subdivision officer to arrive at suitable names that comply with the Council’s road naming policy, before the names are submitted to the Community Boards. Many names are rejected before the report is submitted.

DEVELOPERS’ COMMENTS

Some of the larger subdivisions in Christchurch take place in the Burwood Ward, including Queenspark, Northshore, Travis Country, Fairway Park, and the large subdivisions between New Brighton and Travis Roads. Representatives from three of the companies carrying out these subdivisions were canvassed for their opinions on this proposal. All were unhappy with the proposal. They believe that the name of the road is an important factor when marketing their sections. One surveying consultant stated that it was not uncommon to devote two hours weekly to researching possible road names.

THE NEW PROCESS

The Burwood/Pegasus Community Board proposes that they be forwarded a copy of the subdivision plan for which they would then choose the names. These names would then have to be forwarded to the subdivision officer for checking for duplication and confusion with existing names. The suitable names would then be returned to a Board meeting at which the names would be approved. Once approved, the subdivision officer would then notify the developer of the names chosen and approved by the Board for his subdivision. If the developers were not happy with the allocated names, would they have any right of appeal to the Board?

RECENT NAMES APPROVED

Six names have been approved in the Pegasus Ward in the last three years. Five of these were on the Morganwood subdivision. Three of these were Maori names having a connection with the locality, while the other two had historical connections with the area. The Board has approved 62 names in the Burwood Ward since 1994. Ten on the Queenspark subdivision continued the theme of tree and landscape names, ten on the Fairway Park subdivision (situated next to a golf course) had a common theme of American golf courses, and nine names on the Travis Country subdivision used names from Cornwall and Somerset as a common theme. There is a further subdivision off Leaver Terrace and Effingham Street with five names having Australian East Coast names. Names with a 'sea' theme have also been used recently with Driftwood, Cockle, Fisherman's Rest, Neptune and Orca. Admirals and sea birds have been extensively used in the past. The names of two prominent local identities have been used recently, one this year. Four Maori names have also been used.

DIFFICULTY IN CHOOSING NAMES

Several Community Boards are now seeking names that have an historical connection with their area. The difficulty with this policy is that the majority of the early Christchurch settlers have roads named after them already, and with over 3,000 roads and rights-of-ways in Christchurch, most personal names have been used. On a recent naming exercise, land ownership was researched back to 1878 looking for a suitable name and, while there had been numerous owners, all their names were already in use. The use of Maori names also presents difficulties. Only fifteen letters are used in the Maori alphabet, thus increasing the difficulty in selecting names that are distinctive and easily identified from names already in use. On a recent occasion the name Ti Kauka was presented as the name for the cabbage tree. There is, however, an existing street in Christchurch also purporting to be that of the cabbage tree, but called Ti Rakau. (This name was checked before approval with the Maori Studies Department at the University.) A check with two Maori dictionaries revealed three further spellings, being Ti Kouka, Ti Kaauka and Ti Koouka. One developer submitted what he thought was the Maori name for a Pied Stilt for a road in his coastal subdivision. The name he submitted, however, was the Maori name for a pig.

OPTION

At their August meeting, the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board suggested that the residents of their wards be requested to research suitable names with a connection to their area that were available for use in subdivisions when the developer was unable to arrive at suitable names. It was proposed to approach the other Boards with this idea and, if they were agreeable, to then approach the Christchurch Mail to advertise the project. As a large response is likely the project should be carried out by wards over several months.

CONCLUSION

The Board's stated aim by selecting the names themselves will be the ability to choose names with a common theme for subdivisions in their area. In the last five years, 68 names have been approved in the Burwood and Pegasus Wards, with only 14 of these not having a common theme or being names connected with the sea, Maori or local identities. As stated previously, some of Christchurch's larger subdivisions are taking place in the Burwood Ward, with many sections being created at considerable expense to the developer. While the developer's aim is to make a profit from the sales of these sections, the Council also benefits by the expansion of the rating base. It is conceivable that the Board's proposal will create additional steps in the naming process and consequently add to the processing time.

Recommendation: That the Environment Committee consider the above matters while discussing the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board's proposal.

The Environment Committee decided:

- “1. That the Environment Committee reaffirm the present practice of Community Boards exercising their delegated authority to approve or decline road names submitted to the Boards.
2. That Community Boards be invited to contribute a list of suggested road names to the Environmental Services Manager for consideration as road names for future property developments.”

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the Board consider whether it wishes to suggest names for new roads and rights of way in the Hagley/Ferrymead area.