

Council

**Wednesday, 15 December 2004
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN
THE CIVIC CENTRE, 6 WAIPAREIRA AVENUE, LINCOLN, WAITAKERE CITY,
ON WEDNESDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2004, COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM.**

PART B - REPORT OF THE MAYOR

THE WAY WE WERE

As many of us know, a week is a long time in politics. A year is even longer, and here we are at the end of 2004 and already 66 days after the election. They say the first 100 days are the most important of any Government or Council because these first 100 days clearly signal to the community what is working. Well, let me tell you, in Waitakere everything is.

This new Council has taken on challenging issues in an enthusiastic way and I am really pleased at the way we are humming. The excellent debate and the working relationships between councillors are very good signals for real delivery to our community over the next three years. I would like to sincerely thank each and every one of you for being so positive with your roles and portfolios.

A Councillor's role is such a challenging one and the expectation that we will get things right is very high. And so it should be. We can never forget that we are the stewards of public money and errors of judgment, either in our decision making or implementation by staff, can and will be severely judged by our communities.

But we can't run scared. To make progress we must be bold and take risks, albeit calculated ones.

In preparing this report, I spent a few hours going through back copies of 2004 Western Leaders. I was looking back at issues and projects I felt would have been resolved or have come to fruition somewhat quicker. I am going to list these later in this report in a bit of an update. At the time it also occurred to me that asking the editor of the paper, Matthew Grey, for his take on how we had gone over the past 12 months might be a useful weather vane for us. I invited him to write a few words for this report, but unfortunately he felt that might compromise his editorial integrity. Fair enough.

So it is over to me.

First off, we should all remember that good ideas, processes and governance are often the difference between a project being up and away or sitting on the shelf.

Some of the high priority projects before the council are of regional concern and Waitakere is now seeing the fulfilment of our dedication to attracting economic investment to our city. It's been a long time coming and if I have any frustration it's because I want progress quicker than most.

I make no secret of the fact that I am fuelled by ideas and when I see a good idea I give it a two year window to become reality. After that I have to admit, both the idea and I run out of steam and I want to move on.

Many of the projects that I have felt are important, indeed vital, to our wellbeing in the future have been dragging their tails. Though none are in the dangerous time zone or running out of gas, I do feel many projects are just too damn slow.

Local government can deliver an enormously productive future for this country, often not in isolation but with the partnerships, so often used in our business, in place.



At a recent meeting with the Auckland Regional Council on Westgate and the future of the sub-regional investment around the area, I realised just how decent, polite and well planned we have been over the past decade. We have been a model Council, respectful of the wishes of our many partners and beholden to our own planning and collective wisdom.

Although I wouldn't go so far as to say we've made a rod for our own back, I would say that when we ask for consideration of Waitakere's desire to grow and be economically viable (particularly in the North West) the response is not always enthusiastic.

If you've been reading the Herald recently, Anne Beston's excellent series of articles clearly identifies the growth of the region and where Waitakere's problems lie. Auckland and Manukau are clearly at an advantage in having space to attract business investment.

It seems to me that despite our good behaviour and our commitment to strategic regional development, as well as the endless hours Councillors have put into transport and roading, the west is not matched by funding or support from the likes of the Auckland Regional Council when we ask for consideration of a minor adjustment to the Metropolitan Urban Limits near Westgate.

That's frustrating but more importantly, the wrong decision by the Auckland Regional Council will have a crippling affect on our economy.

In terms of transport, to date progress has been painfully slow like the trains themselves! We have concentrated on urban intensification around the rail lines from Auckland to Henderson and yet the infrastructure of better passenger services hasn't kept up.

How come, I ask, does North Shore secure a multi million dollar bus way and John Law can crow about his and state-of-the-art tolling system super highway from Albany to Puhou? And Curtis seems to have an endless wish list fulfilled every year. Where is our share of the action? Earlier this year, when a start on double tracking was about to be announced, I was asked for a reaction by the New Zealand Herald. I tried not to sound churlish - honestly I did - but my response was: "I'll believe it when I see the workmen with picks and shovels on the Western line".

Well, they have been picking away but only in Auckland City and they are yet to cross the border.

With those few moans out of the way, there have also been some great successes, and again I look at some of those later in the report.

To ensure that we can keep the ball rolling, I would like us all to gather early in the New Year and bring our ideas and collective wisdom to the table.

I would like to know how my colleagues think about a wide range of issues and just as importantly what your priorities are.

I will ask the Chief Executive to set up a "brainstorming" type workshop with input from senior staff because I think it is vital that they know where we want to head.

As you know, I'm now back on the executive of Local Government New Zealand and it's a window to how other Councils operate and set their goals. I am also going to be Chair of the Metropolitan Sector of Local Government New Zealand for the next three years and so will be able to observe and be part of the larger issues affecting local government including funding. To me, funding is the biggest single issue affecting councils and our future. I will keep you all informed on progress as we move this issue closer to government in election year and to look at new and innovative ways to resource our cities.



From what I've seen so far this council is far ahead in the way we think, in the quality of advice we receive from officers and staff and in the way we approach our roles and responsibilities. This last election has not done New Zealand Local Government any favours. It has given many Councils inexperienced leadership and lack of direction.

Waitakere is very fortunate to have a group of Councillors experienced and mindful of the enormity of the job we have. We also have new, fresh and invigorating ideas from our most recently elected colleagues. It's a great mix. Our work plan and our projects are exciting and if we can deliver even half of them, Waitakere is assured of a great future and us of a legacy.

So let's now look at where we've been and where things are at now.

Whenuapai

The Government announced its intention to close Whenuapai in December 2002. Over the past two years there has been a whole series of consultations, studies and reports. We initiated discussions with Infratil in 2002 and in 2003 met with officials from the Ministry of Economic Development and Defence who said "no problem, we want out, no other Government Department wants it, we should be able to sort out terms".

In the words of Tim Brown of Infratil someone then must have told Defence to look wider after that. "They looked, stirring up a hornet's nest of local opposition along the way and found that the only practical options were for Waitakere / Infratil to progress development of civil aviation or for the airport to be closed, the facilities to be removed and the land sold back to the original owners as life-style blocks," says Tim.

"Government felt this was insufficiently strategic or 'whole of Government' so got the Departments of Defence, Transport, Environment, Economic Development and Treasury to do another review. They reported in September and for the past couple of months ministers have been working with Ministries to clarify issues.

"Two years after Whenuapai's closure as a military base was announced, we may be about to get some direction from Government."

One of our greatest champions over the past couple of years has been John Tamihere. This member was threatening to "die in the ditch" to make this project happen.

With the support of other local MPs Cunliffe and Pillay, and through a powerful and effective lobbying strategy, during the year the climate changed from cold to warm to hot and most Councils in the region, and a number of independent opinion polls, support the idea.

The locals, with due respect, have still been somewhat unhappy with the base becoming an airport but Government jungle drums would say that a consideration of a joint airbase and commercial partnership was more than a passing thought.

M1-M6 The Herald did us proud with an excellent double page article bringing all the issues together and laying out the real guts of the matter, as attached at pages M1 to M6.

At the time of writing this report, a decision from Cabinet was imminent - here's hoping we are all reading this now with the right decision having been made.

Whatever the result no-one could say we didn't give this project a decent crack.



Waitakere Ranges

M7-M9

The Waitakere Ranges issue has been our longest and most fraught. We have deliberated for more than a decade but now, to quote Anne Beston from the New Zealand Herald, the final battle appears to have begun. How we manage development in this area has the potential to be a model for this country. More importantly, if we get it wrong, the green heart of this City will disappear within 15-20 years. As I alluded to earlier, this project is also linked with plans for the North West. Quite simply, if we are not allowed to open up employment zones around Westgate and Hobsonville, the foothills are under real threat. The Herald article is attached at pages M7 to M9.

Hobsonville Marine Cluster

This project has been dragging on for nearly five years now. It has real potential, but a muddle of legalities around disposing of the former Airbase land has seen it grind to a virtual stop. So, we rang the Marine Industry Association of New Zealand to get some feedback and were pleased to hear Peter Busfield say that once the pricing of land issue is resolved - hopefully in February - the green light will be on for putting a development plan into action for the creation of the marine industrial park at Hobsonville. The bulldozers should be on site before the end of next year.

The Trusts Stadium

All year we waited with bated breath to see what the final offering would be like. Well, definitely better than we could have anticipated. Since its opening we've seen The National Dog Show, The Commonwealth Judo Championships, Breakers games, Trash to Fashion, the All Blacks and Warriors training there, and much more. Management tell us bookings are coming in thick and fast for the year ahead and that the stadium has already hosted well over 100,000 people.

This is truly a world class facility. And just as important as the events, is the community use. Most afternoons - at around 3.30 pm - hoardes of youngsters descend on the place, mainly for basketball. I understand the Waitakere Basketball Association headed by the redoubtable Ivan Yukich has doubled its playing numbers. That's a direct result of giving the community a facility they deserve.

The track is a real asset too. Dozens of local schools have held their annual athletics days there and most evenings there is a string of locals walking or jogging.

This is, I believe, one of the finest achievements over the past decade.

Sport Waitakere

Going hand in hand with the stadium is the delivery arm, Sport Waitakere. In the past six months Sport Waitakere has transformed from an organisation fighting for its survival to having optimism for its future. There is no value in regurgitating history as to why the organisation reached the brink of disintegration. Suffice to say it lost sight of its reason for being but now, under the chairmanship of Nick Schouten, everything is going very well.

We rang Nick for an update and while he says there's still work to be done all the signs are very positive. We also contacted SPARC's Chief Executive Nicholas Hill for some comment and he told me he had been impressed with the revitalisation of Sport Waitakere over the last few months.

"Under the chairmanship of Nick Schouten and the management of Sarah Dunning and Lynette Adams, the trust has upgraded its systems and re-engaged the local sports community.

"These changes have required real leadership and energy. It is very satisfying to see the improvement which augurs well for the future".



Westgate

You will recall earlier this year that IMF Westland had big plans for Westgate.

A week or so back I was asked to do a photo shoot for three new banks at Westgate. A few days later I was back for a movie preview - and the good news is that even during the day you have to look hard for a car park space. This amazingly successful development continues to grow and gain respect as a major retail player in the west. It was successful from the day it opened and will grow in the years ahead as one of the key shopping destinations and the core of a sub-regional centre at Massey.

When we rang Mark Gunton, the man who has steered this project, he couldn't have been more delighted and enthusiastic about the advancement to date. "The progress we have made has been fantastic and we've had a true partnership with the council," Mr Gunton said. "We are now looking forward to bringing it all to fruition".

Double Tracking

The history of the west comes from rail. The rail towns of New Lynn, Glen Eden and Henderson opened up the vast wilderness. In this, the 21st century, the double tracking of rail has the potential to again give the region a massive boost.

It's been slow coming. We decided to check on progress with Roger Mace from ARTA whose preliminary advice assures us everything is on track, if you'll excuse the pun.

Stage 1: Mt Eden to Morningside is expected to be finished in February which will enable a new service from Britomart to New Lynn of four trains per hour in the peak periods.

Stage 2: The concept design report for Stage 2 - New Lynn to Henderson - is being finalised right now and assuming funding approval is given, construction is expected to start mid-next year and be complete around mid -006. Just in time for the opening of our new Civic Centre. Once complete this will allow four trains per hour peak service from Britomart to Henderson.

Stage 3: This is from Avondale to New Lynn and consultants will be engaged shortly to provide concept designs for double tracking which will include options for lowering / raising the rail line through New Lynn and lowering the rail line at Avondale to accommodate the proposed SH20 extension.

Stage 4: A concept design report for Stage 4, Henderson to Swanson, will be produced next year.

Waitakere Central

You've seen the bulldozers and the ball and chain knocking down the Carter Holt site and you are now getting a look at the progress towards our new Henderson Hub. The site is larger than even I imagined, and its scope can now easily be seen. It's not just a plan on a bit of paper. The potential for more development complementing the city centre is clear. It will be great success.

Its passage has not been easy. It was probably the most constantly criticised decision throughout the year but we did get there in the end and when we rang City Services Director, John Dragicevich, he said the piling was almost complete and everything was on track for completion by June, 2006. By January 2005 'out of the ground' construction will be more visible and the Project's Special Committee will conduct site visits during the year. Any Councillors interested in visiting should contact John because he is happy to escort you. I sincerely hope you will take up this opportunity because Waitakere Central is an important project and it's happening.



MILESTONES

I would like to say a fond farewell to Jo Brosnahan, former Auckland Regional Council Chief Executive. Jo has been a great friend of Waitakere City and her recent farewell was a sad day indeed for Auckland. I wish Jo all the best for the future and I am sure her new business venture in strategic leadership will be a great success.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion and on reflection, there have been some tough times and some dramas but we can definitely pat ourselves on the back thanks to some successes.

And remember! We've all attended some pretty heated Council meetings but when the inevitable happens and over the next three years you start to feel the blood boil, thank your lucky stars we're not as bad as this.

Egyptian Council Leader Dies After Microphone Attack

26.11.2004 8.22 am

CAIRO - The head of a local council in Egypt died after a fellow Councillor beat him unconscious with the base of a microphone stand during a meeting on Thursday, Egypt's state-run Middle East News Agency (MENA) reported.

It is not known what provoked the attack but added Police were searching for the attacker, who left the Council hall after the incident.

I also want to share everything you need to know about life which can be learned from Noah's Ark - my new 10 Commandments:

1. Don't miss the boat.
2. Remember that we are all in the same boat.
3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
4. Stay fit. When you're 600 years old someone may ask you to do something really big.
5. Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
6. Build your future on high ground.
7. For safety's sake travel in pairs.
8. Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
9. When you're stressed, float a while.
10. Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the officers, staff and each and every one of you and our Community Board friends and colleagues.

I wish you and your families every good wish for the festive season and I look forward to working with you all again, productively and progressively, in the year ahead.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Report of the Mayor be received.

RA Harvey, QSO, JP
MAYOR OF WAITAKERE CITY