

Council

**Wednesday, 26 May 2010
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER AT WAITAKERE CENTRAL, 6 HENDERSON VALLEY ROAD,
HENDERSON, WAITAKERE, ON WEDNESDAY, 26 MAY 2010,
COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM**

6 REPORT OF THE MAYOR

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council resolve to:

Receive the Report of the Mayor.

Gordonia

The West has never been wilder than in this beautifully crafted documentary. Council nemesis, freedom fighter and social revolutionary; Graham Gordon is one of the unique characters of the Waitakere Ranges. Gordonia is the story of his kingdom of junk and used cars, populated by the homeless, disenfranchised and discarded. It is also a breathtaking and heartfelt account of humanity at its raw and confronting best.

This fascinating and revealing tale is the work of Waitakere filmmaker Tom Reilly. He has travelled a varying path through animation, drama and documentary since winning New Zealand Filmmaker of the Year in 2003. Much of his career has been spent in advertising. He has completed live-action campaigns for Griffins and CAANZ through Saatchi and Saatchi. But film making is still a passion. His portrayal of Graham Gordon was three years in the making. It is a career-defining work and deserves a wide audience. I loved it and I think you will too.

The 90 minute film follows Gordon's trials and tribulations. It makes for enthralling viewing. He is a very complex and difficult man. His eccentricities attract an astounding array of misfits to his 100 acre block at the head of the Oratia Valley. The band of recovering drug addicts, mental illness outpatients and social outcasts are united only in their need to live in a world with no rules or social expectations, to conduct their transient lives without being judged or shunned. Gordon gives them that freedom. On his property they can hide away from society and, in some cases, each other - squatting in caravans, makeshift shacks and abandoned cars. It is a squalid place. Junk fills every available space. Sanitation and safety is forgotten. The property is criss-crossed with roads lined with broken machines, cars and tractors - some of huge size. They will never start again.

Enter Waitakere City Council. It turns out this anarchic kingdom breaks just about every Health and Safety Regulation in the book. A clash of cultures is inevitable as battle lines are drawn between a local folk hero and the authorities who want to make him live another way. Gordon is just too close to expensive real estate and anxious homeowners. There is immense pressure on him to clean up his act.

But like the broken machines cluttering his property, Gordon is frozen in time. He is like King Lear wandering in the wilderness, blaming everyone for his misfortune, unable to see why he is being persecuted in a maze of council bureaucracy. The council staff behave in true typical character. Frustrating, but not unkind. The police bewilderment at the scale of the problem is also a joy to see. I found myself laughing out loud at the antics of the subjects of Gordonia. This is not a film without a sense of irony or humour.



What amazes you in this documentary is that when push comes to shove they can clean up their act. The residents of Gordonia reveal an intelligence and willingness to fight the Council in a court of law. Seeing Gordon shaved and dressed in a tie and a white shirt before an Auckland courtroom is poignant when set against his life in the Waitakere Hills. Only his electric shock hair remains untamed, a hint of the wild hill man behind the mask of respectability. There is a pathos to seeing this rugged outcast defending the indefensible and explaining the unexplainable.

Gordonia is not simply an account of a battle between order and anarchy. It is a story of misfits trying to make their way in a society that can't accept or understand them. There is a generosity of spirit and kindness in Gordon's mad philosophy of life. Clearly he is a 15th Century man, born in the wrong time and place, unable to translate his philosophy into the laws of the city and expectations of its people. There is a beauty to his decomposing kingdom.

Milestones

One of our biggest new businesses was opened on Brick Street, Henderson by the Deputy Prime Minister Bill English on 13 May.

What a pleasure it was to be part of the public unveiling of this colossal D&H Steel Fabrication Plant in Henderson. The machinery there towers 20m above the factory floor. Gantries soar above the work areas. Giant girders move slowly through the welding line. Steel is stacked metres high, ready to be welded and clipped to the Kohu Bridge. It is an awe inspiring sight.

The team at D&H have spent their lives working in metal, most in the New Zealand steel fabrication industry. I joined with the Deputy Prime Minister in applauding their courage. Here is a company brave enough to compete with China for steel business in New Zealand. It is investing millions of dollars into our economy in a time of recession. And it is giving new hope to many of our struggling families.

In this City, we have lost many factories in the last decade. It has been a crushing blow. This new plant goes a long way towards redressing those losses. About 150 people will be employed there. Millions of dollars will be funnelled back into the West. Lost jobs will be regained.

That's cause to celebrate. I want to join this Council in warmly welcoming D&H Steel to Waitakere.

A vote of thanks

The leaky homes disaster has condemned many Waitakere residents to a life of hell. They have had to live with smelly, crumbling houses and the prospect of an uphill legal battle to ever see them fixed.

The funding proposal recently announced by Government may help to change that terrible situation. I want to send a note of thanks and congratulations to Mayor Kerry Prendergrast and Mayor John Banks for their persistence and tenacity in tackling this crisis on behalf all New Zealanders. There are still many questions to answer and many concerns to address, but the deal announced last week offers thousands of people some hope. For that, I am truly thankful.



A world without nukes

My recent visit to the United Nations in New York convinced me that the world could be on the brink of one of its great moments – or one of its greatest failures. I was there for the review of the Anti-Nuclear Proliferation Treaty. It was a lesson in political theatre.

The amazing week began with a near escape. Returning from the Riverside Church on Saturday May 1, my bus came to a grinding halt near Times Square. Police cars raced up and down the road. Curious as always, I got off the bus and walked towards where the crowds were gathering. In the distance I could see a car surrounded by men in large padded suits. It reminded me of a scene from *The Hurt Locker*. I had stumbled into the centre of one of the biggest attempted terror attacks on US soil since 2001.

This one failed miserably. The bomb was quickly defused after a local shop keeper noticed smoke coming from a car. Authorities moved in, the area was closed off and no harm was done. Surprisingly, the next day the Taliban attempted to claim responsibility for the incompetent attempt. I thought denial would have been a better response.

The next day I was in the bustling corridors of the United Nations. Back to back meetings filled every corner of the massive complex. Confused delegates rushed from hall to hall. The main United Nations building was being renovated and temporary buildings were scattered throughout the area. Meetings were held in distant corners of the vast complex. There was still a sense of despondency among the delegates over the collapse of the Copenhagen talks in December 2009. Many lamented the state of our environment and the capitulation of governments.

I was there with the Mayors for Peace delegation, led by the Mayor of Hiroshima, Japan. Our organisation is now at 4000 member cities and aiming towards 5000 by the end of the year. That would give us influence over a billion people. Our four days at the United Nations were spent lobbying for an end to nuclear weapons on the planet by 2020. That is the year Japan will bid for the Olympic Games. If they win, they will hold the games in Hiroshima – the birthplace of global nuclear terror. It will be a celebration of an end to the nuclear age.

Thanks to a global resurgence of anti-nuclear sentiment led by President Obama, there is hope that it can happen. His fingerprints were on this month-long conference and in the objectives of the multi-national delegates attending it.

One of the most contentious moments of the week came when Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad delivered his speech on nuclear proliferation. He berated the United States on their past war crimes, prompting the United States delegation to walk out. On the instructions of Murray McCully, the New Zealand delegations also left. The mayors felt that debate and negotiation is a far more valid than simply leaving the room. Countries need to talk to one another to make progress on this vital and pressing issue, no matter how hard it is and how distant their views.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton followed with what I thought was a dull but diplomatic response. She condemned much of what President Ahmadinejad said without acknowledging any flawed foreign policy on the part of the United States Government.

Her rhetoric was a contrast to that of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon. He attended many of our meetings. I found him to be a kind and calming presence in a whirlwind of the absurd. It takes a man of great wisdom to negotiate the troubled waters of international diplomacy. He will need all of that wisdom, intelligence and relentless work ethic to address the challenges of the coming years.



I left New York with both a sense of optimism and a renewed caution about the way the world is heading. We are now walking on a knife edge in history. Our decisions will profoundly impact the future of the planet. Nuclear weapons and climate change have become the defining issues of our age. It is not just a matter of addressing them for the sake of our grandchildren. We are already in their shoes. The catchphrase of the event was "No time for a break, time for a breakthrough." One can't happen soon enough.

Waitakere has a role to play. The growing family of world Mayors for Peace respect New Zealand's anti-nuclear stance and are impressed by our long standing as a Peace City. That identity is about combating nuclear weapons and also about stopping violence, family abuse and rising gang problems. It's about growing peaceful communities that will contribute towards a peaceful world.

I would hope that the new Council takes on board the mantle left for it by Waitakere. Auckland needs to take its place on the world stage as a city that stands for peace. We would be joining Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and thousands of other voices from around the world. The peace flag has flown each day from our Council's flagpole. Long may it continue.

New Zealand's gift to the world

This speech was delivered on March 6 to the Review Conference on the Anti-Nuclear Proliferation Treaty in Conference Room 4, UN Headquarters.

Good afternoon to you all. My name is Bob Harvey and I am the Mayor of Waitakere City in New Zealand - one of the first Peace Cities in the South Pacific.

I come from a long line of peace activists and have been campaigning against nuclear weapons since 1946, when I marched with my grandparents against the bombing of Hiroshima. Ours has been a long journey.

Twenty years after that march the sky over my City turned orange because of French nuclear testing in the Pacific. It was an ominous signal of the terrifying threat of nuclear weapons. At that time there was a book out called 'On the Beach'. It foretold the end of the world. When we saw that sky we felt the world was ending.

That was in my mind in 1984, when I worked with our Prime Minister David Lange as part of a team advising him that New Zealand must become nuclear free. David made that a reality for New Zealand. It still is today.

The Lange government earned the longstanding wrath of the USA for his stance. Our trade with that mighty world power was always in jeopardy, hanging on by a thin thread. Thankfully, congress never acted out the punishment that many Presidents wanted and expected.

This year our Prime Minister John Key met with President Obama. He was warmly congratulated on our country's long anti-nuclear stand. I am proud that we held our ground. New Zealand has been an example to the world of how one country can be united against nuclear weapons. It takes guts to chase peace, but believe me, it is worth it.

Now cities around the world are echoing New Zealand in rejecting the right of any nation to threaten and bully us. Last year Waitakere made the five peace torches that went around the world on the World March for Peace and Non-Violence. Yesterday we carried them proudly from Times Square to this building at the head of 10,000 people, all committed to peace.



M1-M4 It was a sign of how far we have come. Mayors for Peace is now a dynamic and powerful international network. Today I stand for all of the major cities in New Zealand in bringing you greetings and aroha (attached at pages M1 to M4). This organisation has grown from a few cities in 2003 to 4000 in 2010. When our membership tops 5000 we will represent a billion people. That number cannot be ignored.

M5-M9 There is much we Mayors can do. At this conference we have heard from the Hibushka (attached at pages M5 to M9), those that survived the nuclear holocaust of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But I would urge you today to consider also the indigenous people of the Pacific who have lived on islands near French nuclear testing for two decades.

These indigenous people are suffering as much as anyone. Their culture and their very society are still being taken away as companies mine their land for the components of nuclear weapons. They seem to be forgotten and they must not be.

We must remember to work for peace among our own people. More than fifty percent of the world now lives in cities. They have become almost as important as countries. Our job is to change one lounge, one neighbourhood, one community at a time. Change that starts small can make a big difference.

Just look at New Zealand. Our entire population is less than many of the cities represented here. But our decision to become nuclear-free has made a difference to the world. Imagine the impact you can make with ten million or more people behind you. I urge you to take a stand for peace. I have taken that stand for 18 years. And it has made a difference to the people of Waitakere.

Next to my council building stands a peace bell given to us by our sister city Kakogawa. This bell tolls every Armistice Day, but it is also rung at days of celebration and festivals in our city. Its deep rich tone is the sound of hope in this troubled world. It rings for President Obama. It rings for every child in Waitakere City and New Zealand. And it rings for you.

The Mayors for Peace have pledged to devote our lives to seeing the end of nuclear weapons by 2020. I believe the fate of the world rests on us achieving that goal. We can attain it. We can make that deadline. We can make it happen.

Kia Ora Tatou.