

IN THE MATTER OF the Reserves Act 1977, Section
41(8) Review of Management
Plans

A N D

IN THE MATTER OF Submissions from members of the
public on the draft Management
Plan for Stanley Park Reserve

DECISION OF THE HEARINGS PANEL

DATE OF HEARING: At Akaroa in the Cruising Clubrooms, on Wednesday,
1 May 2013 at 10.30am before the Hearings Panel.

PANEL MEMBERS: Councillor Claudia Reid (Chairperson)
Councillor Yani Johanson
Bryan Morgan (Community Board Member)

SUBMITTERS: Rod Naish (Chairman of the Stanley Park Reserve
Management Committee); Patricia Dart (Banks Peninsula
Conservation Trust); Robyn Grigg; Victoria Andrews
(Akaroa Civic Trust); Kitt Grigg; Lynda Wallace.

STAFF: Delia Walker (Recreation Planner) Trevor Partridge
(Botanist) and Janet Anderson (Committee Adviser).

INTRODUCTION

The hearing was held to consider and determine submissions received regarding the draft Management Plan for Stanley Park Reserve referred to the Hearings Panel in accordance with Section 41(6)(d).

BACKGROUND

At the Akaroa Wairewa Community Board meeting of 11 August 2010, the Board approved the release of the draft Stanley Park Reserve Management Plan for public consultation. The draft Management Plan was publicly notified and open for submissions from 6 October 2010 to 13 December 2010 for a period of not less than two calendar months as specified by Section 41(6)(a). A total of nineteen submissions were received with eight submitters indicating they wished to be heard. The hearing of submissions was set down for 1 May 2013 with the delay between the time submissions closed and the hearing date due to the Canterbury Earthquakes.

Key items raised in the written submissions were: the extent and purpose of fencing with most submitters wishing to preserve the open nature of the reserve, the level of intervention desirable to improve accessibility and signage; vegetation management, the desire for exotics as well as native species in particular to attract birds, enhancement to the entrance way off Beach Road and publicising the reserve. Concerns were also expressed about the unfinished developments that border the reserve.

THE HEARING

Hearing of Submissions

Rod Naish as Chairman spoke to the submission from the Stanley Park Reserve Management Committee.

- Introduced the credentials and role of the Management Committee.
- Reserve is a *rural landscape* in close proximity to the township which provides a walking link to other parts of Akaroa. Important to preserve its rural qualities.
- Fencing should be kept to a minimum with sufficient to enable sheep to be kept on the reserve – sheep reduce need for mowing while not restricting pathways through the mature kanuka.
- Support the removal of small sprouting kanuka.
- Concern about the unfinished developments by Ngai Tahu which border the reserve.
- Plant more flowering gums.
- Access from Beach Road is currently dangerous, messy and confusing, but keep all entrance ways as natural as possible consistent with safety.

In response to questions from the panel Mr Naish advised the following: usually no issues with dogs and sheep grazing; larger kanuka do not impede views as the site is steeply sloping; Ngai Tahu development is on hold and landscaping the boundaries has not been undertaken yet. There are safety issues where visitors wander into the area. Savings can be made by reducing fencing in the plan. He considered fencing shown as yellow dotted lines could be eliminated except for the area marked “D”.

Patsy Dart

- Lives next to the Reserve beside Section “D”. Walks her dog in the Reserve, is a member of the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust and is involved in transporting tuis back to Banks Peninsula.
- Do not fence the kanuka – need to walk through them to watch out for weeds, which are the main problem. More difficult to control if more fencing. (She enumerated the main weeds which are a problem.
- Plant trees which provide food for birds are referred to in a brochure (tabled) which also listed suitable trees to attract tuis.
- Fencing can be used to selectively protect trees until they are established and won't be eaten by sheep.
- Overall prefer the reserve to stay as it is with better access – priority is the Beach Road access.

Robyn Grigg

- Area B, which adjoins the Ngai Tahu development is a mass of weeds, rough and unsafe.
- The gum trees were removed at the request of Ngai Tahu who were supposed to regenerate the soil and plant natives. This was not done and the area is a mess with 23 wasp nests.

- Plant the area next to Julius Place with trees that supply bird food – exotics as well as natives. The area could showcase varieties that do not require watering and which attract birds.
- Upgrade paths to make safe and provide steps.
- Signage to show the way but not to be obtrusive.
- Do not destroy the open rural character – kanuka thrive on light grazing and the current vegetation management system is working well.
- Enhance the area with more exotics – oaks, gums.
- Land adjacent to Julius Place has now been cleared and small summer flowering gums would not encroach on the neighbours.
- Referred to problems with large tour buses hitting the branches of trees on the Beach Road frontage – pruning necessary.
- Minimal intervention wanted, do not urbanise with fencing, eating etc.
- Interim management plan for the Julius Place boundary is needed as residents cannot wait for Ngai Tahu to proceed with its development.

Victoria Andrews (Akaroa Civic Trust)

- Maintain the existing rural amenity having regard to the heritage and historic context.
- Entrances are important and should fit with the historic aspect of the rest of the street.
- An historic gum (planted in the 1940's) was cut down to make way for the huge tour buses.
- Re-instate the fire bell tower now lying derelict.
- Photos of the entrance to Stanley Park taken by Peter Beavan were held in the museum.
- The Ngai Tahu development is not in keeping with the area, it is a shiny metal gated community, and Stanley Park is important to provide counterbalance.
- No emergency access to the hospital.

Kit Grigg (for Barry Brunton who was unable to be present)

- Encourage adjoining owners to be active participants in maintenance of the reserve.
- Vegetation along the boundaries has increased and needs management.
- Ngaiois are regenerating so there will be replacements for kanuka dying off.

Lynda Wallace

- Speaking in her capacity as a resident involved in a lot of civic areas and living adjacent to the top of the Reserve. She noted for the panel that she was also a Council Employee as Director of the Akaroa Museum.
- The Reserve is a habitat for abundant bird life.
- She frequently walks in the Reserve and forages for blackberries and elderberries.
- The fragility and subtlety of Akaroa is specific to this place and she made a plea for dispensation from the normal rules, for example bright lighting.
- Keep signage low key and seating in a robust, simple rural style.
- Heritage values not expressed in the plan and the idea of dry stone walls is a waste of money.

- Preserve the entrance as is – possibly a more accessible pathway can be established beside it.
- Disabled access (Universal access) is available to the Garden of Tane and Stanley Park can be kept as posing more of a challenge. Penlington Place provides easy access.
- The Reserve is in a registered historic area and contributes to the village as such. She referred to the Akaroa Streetscapes Report prepared in 2005/6.
- Introduce dual names for streams – English and Maori.
- Any fences should be basic farm-style.

The panel established that the walk through the Reserve was approximately 20 minutes from the bottom to the top and discussed with the submitters what sort of information needed to be available to tourists about the parks and reserves in Akaroa. One possibility would be a map at the War Memorial showing varying grades of walks.

Consideration of Heard Submissions

The Panel identified a common theme: the wish to keep the reserve the same. In addition there was a desire to protect and encourage the native area to regenerate and recognition of a tension between fencing and keeping accessways open, between the open character of the reserve and the forest. Submitters generally wanted nectar plants to attract birds. Accessibility was an issue, with the existing entrance from Beach Road slippery and unsafe. Another issue was communicating to the public information about the park without making signage too obtrusive.

Consideration of Submission from Mahaanui Kurataio Ltd

The submission generally supported the review and requested a change be made to Objective 3.3 by inserting the words “including regenerating indigenous forest”. As this did not rule out planting exotics where appropriate, the *panel were in agreement with the requested change*.

Staff Comments and Responses to Questions from the Panel

Trevor Partridge, Council Botanist explained the process of plants regenerating in the open spaces that had been cleared for pasture. Kanuka require open space and light, so if they are in a forest they will not regenerate, but require a period where there is no forest. They will in the meantime create an environment for broad leafed and shade loving species, a process referred to as vegetation succession.

Area B is already fenced and regenerating well. The only area of concern is the Julius Place boundary where all the weeds are coming from the Ngai Tahu Development. He agreed with planting exotics round the lower edges in Beach Road to attract birds. The birds would be seen and heard from passers-by. He approved the list of exotics to attract tuis with the exception of garden fuchsia. In Area A there were tall kanuka with stock access and open areas where children can play. It would be appropriate not to fence this area to ensure the open forest habitat is maintained, but this should be reviewed regularly every five years. He did not consider kanuka trees would grow

particularly tall. Vantage points would be preserved but not necessarily continuously. Any tree which grew too tall could be pruned or cut down.

Area C is patchy, very steep with a convoluted outline. He suggested no fencing and allowing regenerating native shrubs. Area D he suggested reducing the area to be fenced “by lopping off the lobe”.

The panel asked about how the existing grazing regime is working and were advised that the farmer refuses to sign a lease. It was also noted that if a paddock is too big the sheep will tend to congregate in one corner which defeats the purpose somewhat. Access could be provided to the paddock via a stock gate or stile – in keeping with the concept of a “farm park”.

The adjacent property at Julius Place needs interim measures as weeds and long grass pose a fire risk. With increasing bird numbers in the reserve the weeds will be dispersed more widely.

HEARINGS PANEL CONSIDERATION

Signage

Some submitters had suggested a sign post on Beach Road showing grades of access to the reserve. *It was agreed any signage should be looked at by the Akaroa Design and Appearance Advisory Committee.* It was noted there may be tensions between the Council Signage Policy and respecting the French Heritage aspect.

Costings

Treatment of the entrance way – is it too much and too expensive?

Fencing -Review costings for the reduced fencing.

Review overall costings.

Planting

Consider whether this has been over-designed. *Prepare revised planting plan showing what has been taken out as the result of the submissions and why.*

Watson Street entrance

Needs further work.

Objectives and Policies Section of the Plan

- *Amend Objective 3.1 to read* – “To maintain and enhance the regenerating indigenous forest and open rural landscape character of Stanley Park, *whilst maintaining selected corridors to ensure views of the township and harbour*”.
- *Amend relevant objectives, policies and sections in plan regarding changes to reduced fencing and change in vegetation management.*
- *Accept change to Objective 3.3 proposed by MKT. Amend Objective 3.3 to read* - “To manage and enhance the existing vegetation, *including regenerating indigenous forest* in Stanley Park to enhance the Park’s rural landscape character, while providing a usable and safe environment for Park users”.

Stanley Park Reserve Management Committee

Add section to the introduction (suggest in 1.5) acknowledging what the Committee does.

In addition there were a number of issues raised by submitters that were not part of the draft management plan but where the panel requested staff to take various actions:

Stone walls

Submitters suggested these were out of place, but the panel considered it was an extension of what was already there. However it was agreed that the Concept Plans developed by John Marsh should be circulated to the Akaroa Design and Appearance Advisory Committee.

Fire Belltower

Staff were asked to clarify who owned the Belltower, but were also cautioned that the proposed renovation was a separate issue to the Management Plan.

Promotion of Reserve for Tourism

Review what is available at the Information Centre and consider how we can promote a 20 minute walk to a view apart from signage.

Ngai Tahu Development

Obtain information for the panel on the conditions attached to the Resource Consent, date when consent expires, proposed road realignment. It was noted that the property owners also have responsibilities for pest control.

Emergency Access Road

It was noted that there is a vehicle way across private land which would be available in the event of an emergency and which has been used in the past.

Walnut Stream

This stream is not in the Reserve and falls outside the scope of the Review.

The Panel requested that a tracked changes version incorporating changes as discussed be prepared with a staff report for consideration. It was **agreed** that the Panel should make a site visit then deliberate.

The Hearings Panel reconvened on 9 August 2013 in Committee Room 1, Civic Offices Christchurch at 3.35pm

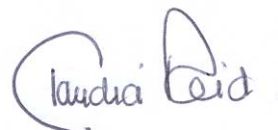
HEARINGS PANEL DELIBERATION

The Panel accepted the tracked changes which had been made to the draft Management Plan following the hearing of submissions and consideration of both heard and not heard submissions and instructed that a number of further amendments be made.

The Panel **resolved**, acting under delegated authority of the Christchurch City Council, to:

1. Receive all submissions on the draft Management Plan for the Stanley Park Reserve, both written and verbal.
2. Determine that the submitters' objections and comments are allowed or accepted or disallowed or not accepted, taking into account Council officer recommendations as shown in the tracked changes version of the Draft Management Plan.
3. Approve the final version of the Stanley Park Management Plan August 2013 as the operative plan, incorporating the following revisions:
 - a) **Signage and Interpretation** - Amend policy 3.8.5 to read "all signage and interpretation should be designed in a manner that reflects the informal rural landscape character of Stanley Park, in accordance with the Christchurch City Council Signage Policy (currently in development) *and after referral to the Akaroa Design and Appearance Advisory Committee for comment.*"
 - b) **Introduction** – Correct spelling of picnicking to "picnicing".
 - c) **Heritage Values** – Amend paragraph 3.11.5 to read "Wherever unearthing of materials is likely to occur, liaise with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust before commencing any earthworks. Such earthworks shall include fencing, landscaping, road or walkway formation and liaison is to determine whether or not an archaeological authority is required under the Historic Places Act."
 - d) **Forest and Vegetation Management** – Amend paragraph 3.3.13 to insert the word "approved" after the words "native and" and before "exotics" so that the first line reads "New Plantings (native and approved exotics) are to be made in the designated area".
 - e) **Acknowledgements** - Include a list of the Christchurch City Council Project Team and the members of the hearings panel in the acknowledgements section.
 - f) **Indicative Development Plan** – Add indicative costs and dates in accordance with the Three Year Plan.

DATED AT CHRISTCHURCH THIS 29TH DAY OF AUGUST 2013



**COUNCILLOR CLAUDIA REID
CHAIR**