



HDC NEWS



Information Centre Offer

Council has received an offer from the Waihi Gold Mining Company of one of the houses that are to be removed from the Kenny Street area adjacent to the December subsidence. The offer is for the house at 123 Kenny St, Waihi to be shifted on to a Council site and used as an Information Centre. The offer is for the house on a removal truck. Council would be responsible for the moving and establishment costs.

The Waihi Ward Committee recommended that Council accept the offer, that staff put together a firm proposal for the alterations and establishment of the house on the site, and that the current information centre committee be consulted with as soon as possible regarding the proposal.

The tentative proposal includes renovating the toilet area of the fourteen-year-old house to make it suitable for more public use and extending the verandah around the building. The house would be situated on the eastern end of the council's site at the top end of Seddon St and a car park fully formed and sealed in front. Council had just decided to go ahead with an information centre on the site and has \$100,000 in the budget for this year for the project. It is estimated that the resiting, renovations, car park and fences for this proposal will cost around \$82,000. It is hoped to have the Centre up and running by Labour Weekend.

Council resolved at its Special Meeting on the 9th of August to accept the offer from Waihi Gold of a house to be transported to the council's site at the top of Seddon St and to be used as an information centre. Some concern was expressed by councillors that this was going against the council's expressed policy to establish a Visitor Centre in Waihi. Other councillors felt that this was a sensible interim measure and that the time for a Visitor Centre would be at the close of the open pit when rehabilitation of the site could well mean that there was a more suitable location for a full-scale Visitor Centre. It was considered that the current offer was a good one and that it would be highly suitable to tide the town over the next five to ten years until a Visitor Centre could be established. Consultation with the Waihi Information Centre Committee had taken place with that committee showing favour for the proposal.

Road Safety Issues

The Good News

Fewer people have died on New Zealand roads in the first six months of 2002 than in any half-year since monthly totals started to be kept in 1965. Thirty-four deaths in June took the half yearly total to 214, down 31 from the same time last year. This is an excellent result considering the increase in speed and numbers of vehicles using the roads since 1965.

The Bad News

Seatbelts:

An average of 35 people every year who died in crashes would have survived had they been wearing seatbelts. Of these it is estimated that six are children under fifteen. Those people who do not wear seatbelts are more likely to be men and more likely to be younger. A frightening 38% of children riding in cars are still not restrained. In the last twelve months more than half the occupants killed with a drink driver were not restrained. 25% of those killed on the open road were not wearing seatbelts and 35% of those killed in urban crashes. So do not be complacent about seatbelt use in urban areas.

Helmets:

Nationally, the rate of cycle helmet use has dropped below 90% since the wearing of helmets was made compulsory. The drop in usage is most noticeable among secondary school students. Three quarters of all cycling deaths are the result of head injuries. The fine for not wearing a helmet is \$55.00.

Drink Driving:

Fifty-five of the drivers killed on our roads in 2001 had a blood alcohol level above the legal limit. This represents 20% of drivers killed, which is a big reduction from the 40% of drivers killed in the late 80s. 83% of the drivers killed in alcohol related crashes were male and the worst ages were between 20 and 35 with a peak in the 25-29 age group. Some evidence suggests that this peak age is rising, so perhaps the message is getting through to our younger people, which may contribute to improving statistics in the years to come.

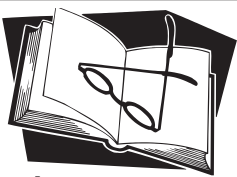
P.S. Paeroa By-Election:

Don't forget to get your voting paper back to the Council Office by 12.00pm Saturday 31 August 2002.

Section Sales

Council's Planning and Finance Committee has recommended to Council that Richardson Real Estate Agency be given sole agency of Council's subdivision sections in Ngatea. This is to allow Council to establish a separation between itself and the purchaser. It is hoped that this will make it clearer to the purchaser that, even though the land is owned by Council, the buyer is still responsible for getting a LIM report.

Elected Members' Diary



Week of 26th August to 1st September 2002.

Thursday 29th August: full council meeting - all elected members.

Co-operating with DoC

Elected members carried out one of the more pleasant tasks they are likely to be asked to do recently. The Department of Conservation had invited all elected members to walk the Crown track from Karangahake to Dickey's Flat with them. Five councillors and the Mayor took up the invitation on a beautiful day. Another councillor met the party at the other end for a discussion with DoC officers on the future of the Dickey's Flat camping area. This area has a conglomerate of ownership including DoC and the Council. There is only one composting toilet and the bottom end of Dickey's Flat Rd is not suitable for the large numbers of tourists that are expected to use the area when the track improvements are completed.

Councillors enjoyed the walk, which is largely flat and passes through what could be described as some of the most spectacular scenery in the country. (No, I am not exaggerating.) The area cuts across the boundary of two DoC areas of responsibility - Hauraki and Bay of Plenty. The Hauraki end of the track is largely fully upgraded with bridges and wooden support rails but the Bay of Plenty end is not quite finished and at present is a little muddy. Two more small bridges are due to be put in to ease the crossing of a couple of minor gullies but river crossings at the Dickey's Flat end are on magnificent new swing bridges. Improvements are expected to be completed by the summer months.

Councillors were wary of the idea of ratepayer input to toilet facilities at the Dickey's Flat camping site but the position of the road on the sealing list will be looked at. If a higher usage could be proven it may move up the list. The first part of Dickey's Flat Rd was sealed and widened a couple of years ago but the bottom bit is narrow and winding and would be expensive to upgrade. Elected members are conscious of other roads to tourist and recreational areas in similar condition and have to be careful of priorities. It is possible that some improvements may be able to be done without going to the extent of sealing.

The matter will be eventually brought up at Committee meetings for all elected members to consider and a further presentation at Council by DoC officers is expected in a month or two.

Using the Surplus Pavers

The paving stones that were taken up from Waihi footpaths when the streetscape was done have mostly gone to form a walkway around Gilmour Lake. The Ward Committee had received several requests for the pavers from community groups before deciding to use them around the lake. Another request from the Waihi Community Marae for the remaining 350 paving stones was considered at the last ward meeting. While the committee was sympathetic to the Marae committee it would have been difficult to decide between them and the other prior requests for stones from the scouts and the drama society. On the other hand the success of the path around the lake has prompted the committee to decide that the balance of the pavers could well be used to start a path towards the groves of native trees at the lake. It was therefore decided to decline the request from the Marae as the projects at the lake have not yet been completed which may need the stones.

That STV Vote

Council has had its Special Meeting on STV with the main impression being that while the system may provide more proportionality in respect to those elected, as is purported by the supporters of STV, it is difficult to understand and could well be confusing to the public.

No decision has yet been made, with councillors going away to think about it. A decision must be made before September 12th and is planned to be made at the next Council Meeting at the end of the month. Whichever way Council decides, the public has until December 18th to demand a poll. If 5% of the electorate asks for a poll Council is obliged to take that option.

In making the initial decision points to be considered are:

- * Whether the system chosen gives fair and effective representation.
- * Public understanding of and confidence in the electoral process - the feeling was that the public would find the system difficult to understand.
- * The timeliness of the final results - no results, not even preliminaries, could be expected with STV for about 4 to 5 days after the election.
- * Cost - the additional cost for STV is expected to be about \$15,000 on top of the \$40,000 it costs now to hold a first past the post election.

And in case you were wondering, the mock election of breakfast foods elected bacon, eggs and toast in the FPP election and bacon, eggs and cereal under STV. Oatmeal came last in both systems. There was some evidence that some of the electors, which included council staff, elected representatives and the media, were confused by the system.

How STV Works

Voters consecutively rank candidates in order of preference - 1,2,3...etc but they do not have to rank all candidates. A formula is used to decide how many votes a candidate needs to be elected according to the number of votes cast. This is why it takes so long to determine the result, as no counting can occur until all the special votes are checked for validity so that the total number of votes cast is known.

The first preference votes are then counted and if any candidate has reached the quota that he (or she) requires to be elected any surplus votes are redistributed to the other candidates according to the percentages of second preference votes.

The candidate with the least number of first preference votes is dropped and their votes are likewise distributed according to the second preferences on the papers. This process continues until the correct number of candidates gains their quota of votes to be elected.

In this way, someone who may do quite well in the first preference still may not be elected, as they may not get many second or third preference votes and others may come through on second, third or fourth preferences.

Although the result is said to be a fairer representation of voters' preferences there is some concern as to whether the public will entirely understand the more complex counting process of the special computer calculator programme. The results will not give any indication of the number of votes gained by a particular candidate, as in FPP, but will simply declare the required number of candidates elected in the order of their attaining the quota.