



NOT HAPPY, JAN! Ocean Shores residents (from left) Lisa and Mark Russell, Tina Petroff, David Hall, Denise Stanners and Stan Petroff protest the sale of Lot 107 at yesterday's council meeting.

Picture: CATHY ADAMS

Council votes to sell off Lot 107

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Decision sparks furious outbursts

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RAGE-FUELLED accusations and insults were flying as the Byron Shire Council finally voted to sell Lot 107 Shara Boulevard at Ocean Shores.

The Ocean Shores community has been embroiled in a decade-long battle with the council to convert the land into sportsfields, but the majority of councillors yesterday voted to sell the land to the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA).

The RTA plans to preserve the site as a wildlife corridor because it needed compensatory habitat for land destroyed by upgrading the Pacific Highway.

Ocean Shores Community Association acting president Tina Petroff said the fight would continue in court.

"We wanted to work this out through mediation, but now the council has left us no choice," she said.

"We'll be seeking an injunction to protect the site from being sold while this goes through court."

A rescission motion lodged by Cr Ross Tucker to prevent the sale failed, but was supported by councillors Ray Kestle, Diane Woods and Jan Mangleson.

Mayor Jan Barham and councillors John Lazarus, Richard Staples, Tom Tabart and Peter Westheimer voted to sell Lot 107, while Cr Bob Tardif was absent.

The issue was supposed to be debated in a confidential session of the extraordinary meeting, but all councillors except John Laza-

rus and Richard Staples voted to open the discussion to the public and media, as long as the sale price was not revealed.

A dozen residents opposing the sale filled the small public gallery of the council's Mullumbimby conference room carrying signs with slogans including 'Not happy Jan' and 'Lot 107 belongs to the community — not Greens councillors'.

Ocean Shores Community Association treasurer David Hall was threatened with eviction from the conference room several times for yelling in the middle of councillors' speeches.

"We just wanted the Greens councillors to answer our questions, like what animals are not using Lot 107 as a wildlife corridor now," he said.

"But they wouldn't answer."

However, Cr Barham said Ocean Shores residents had been making threats of their own.

She did not give specific examples, but said those opposed to the sale had embarked on a campaign of 'rudeness, ridicule, intimidation and threats'.

Cr Tucker said if that was true, the Greens were simply getting their own back.

"Once it's directed back at the Greens and their supporters it's suddenly very, very wrong," he said.

"Grow up and go with it — they're the tools used in politics in Australia."

■ What do you think?

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Claims of secret deal

OCEAN Shores Community Association spokesman Jim Mangleson claims secret meetings that took place in 1997 and 1999 sealed the fate of Lot 107, Shara Boulevard, Ocean Shores.

Mr Mangleson said the Roads and Traffic Authority and seven environmental groups met secretly at the Byron Bay Community Centre to help choose the Brunswick Heads to Yelgun Pacific Highway upgrade route.

He said that decision meant Lot 107 would eventually have to be sold to the RTA as compensatory habitat.

An RTA spokesman has denied the route was chosen at those meetings.

He said the community consultation process to decide on a route was exhaustive and included the Ocean Shores Community Association.