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Deadline Wednesday 5pm

Sports field nonsense

I read with dismay that Council is deferring its plan of management on the North Ocean Shores sports fields.

The intention to seek an alternative venue is incredible because at the time of the negotiations and purchase of this land a thorough search revealed no other land with as much potential.

In those negotiations between Mayor Kingston, Cr Ross Tucker, the landowner Chum Vidgen and myself the express purpose of purchasing the land for much needed sporting fields in the north of the shire was recognised by all.

It should be remembered that North Ocean Shores had 6(a) land in Banool Circuit which was in private ownership. This left Council with a potential obligation to purchase this land from owners at the going market rate.

Council knew this land was no good for sporting fields and has since rezoned it to 2(a) urban residential. In rezoning the Banool Circuit land it had to provide compensating 6(a) land. Shara Boulevard was that compensator.

Mr Vidgen discounted the value of the 1(d) land on the basis it was to be categorised as "community" land and used for sporting activities. Had Council's intention been to categorise the land as "operational" with the intentions of commercial or residential development or give it to the NP&WS as corridor land he would have sought full payment. \$167,500 is not the full commercial value of that 18 acres.

Council sought to rezone this land to 6(a) Public Open Space in 1997. It lumped this land (lot 107) in with environmentally sensitive lands north of Shara Boulevard to the Shire's northern border.

A Commission of Inquiry into that rezoning changed much of what Council's planners had recommended and Council had adopted. The COI did not even investigate this element of the LEP amendment to rezone. It can safely be concluded the commissioner was comfortable with the proposed 6(a) public Open Space zone. The community had not identified its rezoning as contentious.

If Council is now to give this land to NP&WS then it has misused ratepayers money. If NP&WS buys the land Council will be acting ul-

tra vires as "community" land cannot be sold. If the categorisation is to be changed from "community" to "operational" then a public hearing and a rezoning LEP amendment process is necessary. In addition the land will need an LEP amendment to rezone the land from 6(a) to 8(a).

Prior to purchasing the land for sporting fields, Council contacted sporting groups, including the Brunswick Valley Sports Association which acts as a most effective umbrella organisation for many sports which had been lobbying hard for facilities in the north, and they were very supportive.

If the people of Ocean Shores do not get this land as sporting fields they will have missed out badly, been misled and lied to by Council. Council will be ensuring that Ocean Shores is scandalously short of sporting facilities just as Byron Bay is. And the same people will be responsible for both situations.

Max Eastcott

MARGARET RIVER

Council anti-sport

The recommendation of Council's Planning and Policy Committee to defer adopting the plan of management of the North Ocean Shores Sporting Fields is one of the clearest indications of this Council's irregular collective thinking and indecisive nature.

To defer the decision to look for other more suitable land for sporting facilities is the height of cynicism.

Councillors who believe there might be better land should ask themselves why Council bought the land, why it rezoned it from Investigation Zone to Public Open Space and why it ever produced a draft Plan of Management for sporting activities on the land if they thought there was better land?

I was at the 11 March 1997 Council meeting when the Strategic Planning Manager's report to Council on rezoning of land in North Ocean Shores was debated. Councillors should now revisit that business paper.

Mr Kanaley's report says the land, owned by Council was purchased to provide open space requirements in North Ocean Shores.

It also says "The lands are cleared with a scattering of trees. Importantly, regeneration does not appear to be occurring and areas may require environmental repair and revegetation."

Councillors unanimously adopted Mr Kanaley's recommendation that this land be rezoned 6(a) Public Open Space. This proposed rezoning had been on public display for 45 days from 18 December 1996 to 31 January 1997. Councillors considered the public submissions and rezoned the land.

Since rezoning Council has provided some ground maintenance in the form of slashing the grass areas.

Lot 107 will make excellent sports fields with excellent traffic access. To suggest as the Planning and Policy Committee report does, that the plan of Management should be delayed because of the realignment of the highway upgrade is arrant

nonsense.

This Council was close to rejecting the tennis courts in Mullumbimby until the Mayor called a break in proceedings and they returned having seen the light; this council tried to take on the Mullumbimby Rugby League Football Club over their regeneration of the river behind their grounds (land which they own); this council tried to take on the Byron Bay Rugby League Club over a matter on land which they own; this council voted down the renaming of the Petria Thomas Pool until public pressure made them reverse their thinking; this council voted not to give sporting fields in Bangalow any priority; this council is in the process of taking on the Byron Bay Surf Club and we all know that this is a rehash of the previous green council's attempt to get their grubby hands on the club facility and now this council is going to take the Ocean Shores sports fields from the residents, land which they have purchased for the sole purpose of providing sports fields and claim that it is a habitat corridor.

But don't dare suggest that they are anti-sport! Good God no! What on earth would make us think such a thing?

This Council would reject Sydney's Olympic venue at Homebush Bay and seek to make it a habitat corridor or give it to NP&WS.

Get on with it councillors.

Veronica Guy
MULLUMBIMBY

Candidate says thanks

Thank You are such useless words when it comes to expressing gratitude to a multitude of people. As the ALP candidate for the State election in the Ballina electorate, I was one of the lucky ones to see, meet and experience an incomparable number of people, feelings, desires and lobbying.

I did not gain the opportunity to be the member for the region, sure; but I did gain a solid understanding - emotionally, physically and fortuitously of this electorate from all the wonderful people I was lucky enough to meet! I am lucky; lucky to be considered worthy and honest.

Sure, there were those who tipped me over, shook me upside down to see if I would fall apart, but I needed that experience too.

There were even some who "Hisssed" at volunteers handing out my "How to Votes" at booths on the big day. (We can see etiquette needs to be brought back into education!)

But what about all those people who helped me, voted for me, gave me press coverage; and then rang after the event (and continue to do so!)? It is an incredible and humbling feeling which reveals a unique and worthy aspect of human nature, that gives rise to incentive and the feeling it is worthy to continue.

This feeling is not experienced by many that find their situations in life hard to deal with at the time. I am a very lucky person and want to transfer that luck to all those who may just need that little lift in life!

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