

Kumeu-Huapai Residents and Ratepayers Association

15th June 2020

Chairman's Report:

The Association's last AGM was on Wednesday 17th April 2019 at Soljans Estate. We dealt with housekeeping matters, which included the election of officers and the Committee, our guest speaker was Chris Penk MP for Helensville.

At that AGM, I took the role of Chairperson, a role that I committed to do for one year. The previous Chair, Pete Sinton, had given notice of his intention to resign from the Chair after ten years of devoted service to the Association and our Community.

The Kumeu / Huapai area was and is suffering badly in terms of planning and infrastructure to meet growth within the community, in particular by way of new housing developments and countryside living that is placing enormous pressure on existing roads and infrastructure.

Our initial focus therefore was to concentrate our efforts in trying to get answers from the Auckland Council and in particular NZTA in respect of an alternative travel route to circumvent the Kumeu / Huapai main road.

On the 15th May 2019, the new Committee arranged a significant public meeting in conjunction with our MP, Chris Penk and our Counsellor for the Rodney Ward, Greg Sayers. That meeting was also attended by representatives from the Auckland Council and the NZTA. Of particular interest at that meeting was an undertaking by the Transport Agency, that a proposed Kumeu bypass would be announced by August 2019. The Auckland Council at the same meeting gave details of the proposed Kumeu gyratory at the intersection of State Highway 16 and Station Road.

At the conclusion of that meeting, there was a definite sense of hope from all attendees, that finally progress was being made and with the "soon to be made future announcement" in respect of the bypass, it may be possible within a very short period of time, to start looking at some sort of a framework plan that would paint a picture of what our beloved community might look like in years to come.

Alas, that short burst of hope was soon dashed, as the Transport Agency went very quiet on the proposed bypass and it was announced that the Station Road intersection would no longer proceed in its planned form.

The challenge that Kumeu faces, is forward planning. Without the benefit of a framework / structure plan, growth in our area will be sporadic and reactionary, it won't meet the needs of a community such as ours that is growing at a rapid rate. In spite of the efforts and representation of both our members of Parliament and Ward Councillor, the greater powers seem to ignore any desire to work with the community in a robust manner that will lead to a well-designed future north west Auckland. Of all the challenges facing the Association, it is my opinion that gaining traction on this matter outweighs all other issues.

To add to the confusion, there are significant rumours that land in Taupaki has been earmarked for a future inland port to coincide with the proposal to shift the Port of Auckland operations to Whangarei. If this is the case and with our pending economic climate created by COVID 19, I speculate that a cohesive future plan for our area could be further away than anybody would imagine.

I realise that what I am saying is all somewhat negative, but it reinforces the absolute need for a proactive and determined Ratepayers Association that will pursue the decision makers and hopefully force them into working with the community to design and build an area that we can be proud of and people choose to live and raise their families.

Early into the Committee's term of office, a document was put together called "The Community Voice". It set to outline the purpose and possible goals that the Association would seek to embrace and follow during the 2019 / 2020 Term. Some of the content in the document is for obvious reasons superseded but in general, it is a good document outlining the reasons the community needs to support the Ratepayers Association, copies of The Community Voice are available as this meeting.

The Association through the course of this term has looked at the idea of dynamic laning from Kumeu to the Taupaki roundabout, this is parallel to the model being used at the start of Whangaparoa Road. Dynamic laning would give an extra lane in the morning and in the evening to assist the heavier traffic flows.

Further items that the Committee has been dealing with was lending support to the progression of the Kumeu Centre plan and also to the idea of a possible plan change that could fast track more commercial land in Kumeu.

The Committee has always been in support of any increased and better public transport and has always pushed for the idea of a passenger rail service for the North West of Auckland.

I am proud and pleased to say that the Committee has worked well and in liaison with Chris Penk our local MP, Greg Sayers our Local Councillor and the elected Council Local Board Members.

A very special thanks to all Committee Members that have stayed the course and for their invaluable contribution to the Ratepayers Association and the community, in particular I would like to offer a special vote of thanks to Mark Hall for his extra special contribution to the Association by way of being the Associations Secretary. Mark is not seeking re election on the Association for the forthcoming year, as he wishes to pursue other interests that he feels may clash with his role on the Association.

It is not my intention to seek re-election for the forthcoming year, Mr Guy Wishart has offered his name forward as a potential Chair of the Association and he has my full support in pursuit of that role.

I wish the incoming Committee and the Association membership as a whole, the very best for the Associations immediate future and the year ahead, there is a lot of work to be done that will involve some hard slog.

To the Community, please stay focused and in support of your Ratepayers Association, a strong and coherent Association is needed now more than ever.

Yours sincerely

Craig Walker
CHAIRPERSON
Kumeu Huapai Ratepayers Association (2019 / 2020 Term)