

**TAUPŌ DISTRICT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 72 LAKE TERRACE, TAUPŌ
ON MONDAY, 8 MAY 2017 AT 9.30AM AND CONTINUED ON WEDNESDAY, 10 MAY 2017 AND
THURSDAY, 22 JUNE 2017**

PRESENT ON 8 MAY: Mayor David Trewavas (in the Chair), Cr John Boddy, Cr Rosie Harvey, Cr Barry Hickling, Cr Rosanne Jollands, Cr Tangonui Kingi, Cr Anna Park, Cr Christine Rankin, Cr Kirsty Trueman [from 9.52am], Cr John Williamson

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive, Group Manager: Finance & Strategy, Group Manager: Business & Technology, Democracy & Community Engagement Manager, Business Development Manager, Policy Manager, Senior Policy Advisor, Policy Advisor, Senior Communications Advisor, Democratic Services Officer

MEDIA AND PUBLIC: Taupō Times
25 members of the public

1 APOLOGIES

TDC201705/01 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Christine Rankin

Seconded: Cr Tangonui Kingi

That the apologies received from Cr Zane Cozens [for absence] and Cr Kirsty Trueman [for lateness] be accepted.

CARRIED

2 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Cr Tangonui Kingi declared a conflict of interest in relation to submission #97 – Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board.

3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Nil

4 POLICY AND DECISION MAKING

REID'S FARM RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW AND DRAFT FREEDOM CAMPING BYLAW

17 submissions relating to Reid's Farm had been circulated, one of which was late. 135 submissions relating to the draft Freedom Camping Bylaw had been circulated, six of which were late.

The Senior Policy Advisor tabled the following documents:

- (i) Further late submission from Joanna Steele [Volcanic Coffee][A1931475];
- (ii) Brief of Evidence from Mark Reid Davis in support of submission 44 [A1931467]; and
- (iii) Letter from Ministry of Education in support of submission 112 [A1931721]

TDC201705/02 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Rosie Harvey

Seconded: Cr Anna Park

That Council receives the tabled documents [A1931475, A1931467 and A1931721].

CARRIED

The following submitters spoke to their submissions.

46 – NZ Police

Senior Sergeant Tony Jeurissen spoke to the submission on behalf of NZ Police:

In relation to the draft Reid's Farm Reserve Management Plan [RMP]:

- Prevention was at the heart of NZ Police philosophy and strategy. Police were working to reduce the number of victims of crime and to enhance the well-being of people who lived, worked and visited the Taupō district.
- Senior Sergeant Jeurissen had attended all freedom camping and Reid's Farm workshops held last year at the Taupō Events Centre. A lot of what was discussed at those workshops had been taken on board and it was his view that the draft Reid's Farm Reserve Management Plan was a good plan which could be operationalised quickly.
- The draft Reid's Plan RMP contained clear zones which would help keep people away from the river and in turn keep people safe, and respect the cultural significance of the river.
- It was hoped that the Reid's Farm RMP would support the enhancement of visitors and locals experience while visiting Reid's Farm and areas in the vicinity.

In relation to the draft Freedom Camping Bylaw:

- NZ Police were responsible for looking after the community as a whole, including freedom campers.
- Freedom campers should be welcome, but they should not necessarily be permitted to camp in high value, high amenity places, for example the lake front. Potential conflict arises when others were not able to get into areas because of people camping there.
- One exception was Mangakino, where the local community seemed to be encouraging freedom campers.

In answer to questions Senior Sergeant Jeurissen advised that:

- The main high value area to be avoided was the lake front – the proposal for the reserve on Kaimanawa Street for example was pretty good.
- In relation to inter-connectedness, there was an opportunity to enhance the whole area around Spa Park, Huka Falls through to Reid's Farm. This could be done over time, for the benefit of both locals and visitors.

23 – Mr Gary Traveller

- The hysteria around freedom camping was fuelled by small slidey door-type camper vans.
- Mr Traveller was a motor-homer and supported freedom camping. Taupō should be a motor home friendly town.
- The small portion of freedom campers causing most of the problems could be dealt with simply by making the Freedom Camping Bylaw stronger than the standard proposed by the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association.
- Tourism was the jewel in Taupō's crown and motor homes were part of that sector. People travelling in motor homes were generally retired or semi-retired people who wanted the freedom to travel, but not in a group.
- New Zealand's facilities for motor homes were 'third world' compared to Europe's, for example. Mr Traveller had recently been to Germany and was impressed with the low-cost areas set up for motor home users there. Electricity, rubbish collection and water were available on a user-pays basis.
- Mr Traveller offered to support Council to develop an area like this on Waikato Street. Visitors could be charged small amounts for electricity, water and rubbish and, being close to the town centre, this would encourage those visitors to spend money in town.
- High amenity areas were problematic; it was Mr Traveller's view that some high amenity areas could be set aside for motor homers, with facilities available.
- Management of designated freedom camping areas was the key.

Cr Kirsty Trueman entered the meeting at this point [9.52am]

In answer to questions Mr Traveller advised that:

- Non-self-contained vehicles needed to go into areas with facilities provided. Council had a responsibility to provide such areas. The bylaw should also specify approved campgrounds for freedom campers to stay in.
- The Waikato and Rickett Street area was close enough to the CBD for visitors to be able to access supermarkets and shops, but away from the eye of people wanting to enjoy the lake front.
- Parking was an issue in the Taupō CBD for larger motor homes, for example there was no requirement for supermarkets to provide parking for large vehicles. Council should address this via future planning processes.

58 – Taupō Primary School Board of Trustees

Ms Vanessa Donald and Mr Tom Dickie spoke to the submission on behalf of the Taupō Primary School Board of Trustees:

- Taupō Primary School's 'back field' was on Horomatangi Street and the Board of Trustees believed that allowing freedom camping there would compromise the safety of the children who attended the school.
- Use of the back field was important for the school's 500 students. Approximately ¼ of the students crossed the field each day and if freedom campers were camping on Horomatangi Street, there was no guarantee the area would be kept safe. Urine, dogs, rubbish etc would all pose a danger to the children.
- The back field was also used by the community for other purposes too, for example a market.
- Taupō Primary School was at the heart of the community. Many people came to town to visit the school and if the school does not flourish, the whole community would be impacted. Freedom camping alongside the school grounds could also compromise delivery of the curriculum.

In answer to questions the representatives advised that:

- The land was originally Māori land which had been gifted to the Crown for education purposes – i.e. it was now Ministry of Education land.
- The Board of Trustees had not discussed the issue with the Ministry of Education, although the representatives were aware the Ministry was monitoring the progress of freedom camping discussions closely.
- Having only self-contained vehicles for restricted hours was preferable to unlimited freedom camping, however concerns about safety and hygiene would remain.
- The Board had not been made aware of any issues with dogs on school property in the past five years.

30 – Mr Steve Boyd

- It was totally inappropriate to have freedom camping in Roberts Street. Freedom camping would severely affect the value of Mr Boyd's property and his ability to sell in future.
- The visual and noise pollution caused by freedom camping would affect Mr Boyd's quality of life.
- The four camp grounds in Taupō [businesses who employ people and pay rates] were negatively affected by freedom camping.

In answer to questions Mr Boyd advised that:

- He had owned 110 Roberts Street since 1999.
- Neighbours he had talked to had one of two reactions saying either 'don't worry it won't happen' or 'they can't believe it's going to happen'.

74 – Taupō Residents Group [TRG]

Dr Tony Ludbrook and Mr Timothy Plummer spoke to the submission on behalf of the Taupō Residents Group:

- This issue had generated a lot of feedback from TRG members and the public generally.
- The issue was serious – freedom camping was long overdue for some rules.
- Taupō was dependent on visitors, many of whom were freedom campers or independent travellers.
- Overall the TRG supported the bylaw and hoped it would benefit visitors, residents and business owners.
- Recognition of certified self contained motor homes was supported, as was the provision of separate designated areas for such vehicles.

- The removal of overnight camping in the immediate area of the lake front, including Ferry Road, was supported. This should also apply to trucks.
- The hours for parking on Kaimanawa and Roberts streets should be the same as Horomatangi and the AC Baths area.
- Could Riverside Park be made available to self-contained vehicles?
- Could a designated freedom camping area be established in the southern area of Taupō, for example near the airport roundabout or the old quarry?
- Effluent dumps needed to be provided in sufficient numbers, in appropriate areas, and be well-policed.
- The bylaw should make the rules relating to different areas very clear (eg Council property, Department of Conservation, private property).
- Five Mile Bay should be closed overnight to all freedom campers and the area should be policed to ensure the pristine lake front is not used by visitors for toileting purposes.
- The cost of compliance was not addressed in the bylaw. The cost should not be borne solely by ratepayers – instant fines should be issued for breaches of the bylaw; infringements should be referred to vehicle rental companies via licence plates; and enforcement officers should have the ability to wheel-clamp.
- Council should submit a request to central government for funding to offset costs.
- Freedom campers should be required to purchase a screen sticker for \$5 or \$10 via phone apps or I-sites. This point of sale could be used to inform campers of their responsibilities and had already proven successful in Gisborne.

In answer to questions the representatives advised that:

- The current proposal would not cope with demand, hence the suggestion to add more sites.
- Revenue from purchase of stickers should go towards managing and enforcing the freedom camping bylaw.
- All material produced promoting Taupō should include reference to the existing camp grounds, as well as freedom camping areas.
- Riverside Park could be used for freedom camping when not being used by the community. A freedom camping area, including an effluent dump station, could be developed at the southern end.

The meeting adjourned at this point [10.34am] and reconvened at 10.54am.

129 – Towncentre Taupō

Mr Chris Johnston [Board Chairman] and Ms Julie McLeod [General Manager] spoke to the submission on behalf of Towncentre Taupō:

- If not enough sites were provided for freedom campers, vans would overflow into residential space which would cause compliance problems.
- Freedom campers spent money in our town.
- The lake front was a special place and it was not a good look having camper vans parked there.
- The McDonald's/Burger King car park should be a key primary site for freedom camping and could be easily regulated.
- More spaces for freedom camping were required in town.

In answer to questions the representatives advised that:

- Freedom camping in the residential areas of Roberts, Kaimanawa and Horomatangi Streets was not ideal. Freedom campers had naturally gravitated to Horomatangi Street already. Some of those sites could be removed if additional bigger areas were added.
- The total number of proposed freedom camping sites in the draft bylaw was less than what was recommended by the working group. The McDonald's/Burger King car park should be added to increase capacity for self-contained vehicles but during evenings only.
- There would be no issue with parking after 7am as there was all-day parking available in the CBD currently.

106 – Destination Great Lake Taupō

Mr Damian Coutts [DGLT General Manager] spoke to the submission on behalf of Destination Great Lake Taupō. He passed on the apologies of DGLT Board Chairman Mr Ray Salter.

- The DGLT Board had found it difficult to form a position on freedom camping. Views were split and varied within the tourism industry.
- Council needed to find a way to actively manage freedom camping.
- All forecasts predicted an increase in numbers of freedom campers, both domestic and international, therefore council needed to plan for adequate sites and capacity to cater to those volumes in future.
- It was better to provide somewhere for freedom campers to go, otherwise there would be displacement into areas where they were not wanted, for example residential areas.
- Taupō district would get the best value out of freedom campers by providing a decent number of sites close to the CBD.
- People travelling in self-contained vehicles still wanted to use facilities so it was important to make available sites which already had facilities, or where facilities could be installed.
- Vans were increasingly large in size. It was important to take this into account when considering availability of parks – there were not many large car parks in the CBD at present.

In answer to a question Mr Coutts advised that user-pays facilities should be considered. Low-cost, decent facilities should be provided for freedom campers, however these facilities should not be in competition with commercial providers.

87 – Mrs Chris and Mr Jim Mitchell

- Mrs Mitchell had been a member of the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association [NZMCA] for 12 years and had done a lot of freedom camping.
- Campers should go from the lake front.
- Mrs Mitchell agreed in general with the proposed designated freedom camping areas in town.
- The time limit 7pm to 7am was not enforceable or user friendly. It also did not make Taupō district a 'motor home friendly' place.
- Other areas had two night maximum stay for a limited number of vehicles [eg three vehicles]. This worked well, as long as it was policed.
- People travelling in the Jucy type vans just wanted to know where they could park safely near 24/7 toilet and water facilities. Riverside Park, with user pays facilities, would be a good option for these types of travellers who would come no matter what. If we do not provide facilities for them, they will go elsewhere and make a mess.
- 95% of people travelling in motor homes wanted designated areas to go and they would obey the rules. Freedom camping was getting bad press because of a small minority making a mess.

In answer to questions Mrs Mitchell advised that:

- Freedom campers enjoyed coming to Taupō, for example Five Mile Bay and the area by the yacht club. Clear signage and lots of information about freedom camping was needed.
- A lot of vans with blue stickers were not actually self-contained. It was possible to buy blue stickers on the 'black market'.
- Mr and Mrs Mitchell used the facilities on their own self-contained motor home as much as possible, as they were cleaner than public facilities.
- Taupō needed another effluent dump station.
- Freedom campers go online to get information about where to camp – from the app "campermate" for example. It was important to communicate the rules to travellers also.
- Ricket Street was a good site for freedom camping and AC Baths was too far as freedom campers often wanted to park and walk to town.

105 – Taupō Cricket

Mr Paul Dawson spoke to the submission on behalf of Taupō Cricket.

- A correction was made to the submission: the current player base across all ages is in excess of 350, not 250 registered players.
- The Kaimanawa cricket facility was used throughout the cricket season October to March/April each year.
- Taupō Cricket members were concerned that freedom camping was not going to work on Roberts and Kaimanawa Streets and would encroach onto the area used for cricket. How was Council going to develop the area for freedom camping?
- Another concern was parking. Kiwi Experience buses already parked alongside the reserve – where were freedom campers going to park?
- Kaimanawa Reserve was not a big ground and cricket would be negatively affected by freedom campers.

73 – Forest & Bird

Ms Pam James spoke to the submission on behalf of Forest & Bird, highlighting key points.

97 – Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board

Mr George Asher spoke to the submission on behalf of Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board. He tabled submission notes [A1938414] and an A3 map [A1938418]. Mr Asher read through the submission notes and answered questions.

- Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board was aware of suggestions to improve the Ricket Street area to support freedom camping, but the best solution would be not to have freedom camping there in the first place. There were limitations on what was physically possible at the site. More consultation would be required before owners could be satisfied that freedom camping would not impact negatively on current activities in the area.
- The Board's initial view during the pre-consultation period was that Horomatangi and Kaimanawa Streets were inappropriate for freedom camping. Since then the focus had been on Reid's Farm and Ricket Street and the Board had not developed its thinking in relation to the other areas.
- In relation to Reid's Farm, the Board supported establishment of a collaborative process involving the hapu to ensure any adverse effects of freedom camping would be mitigated.

77- Bronwyn Donaldson

- It was important to differentiate between self contained vehicles and the Jucy-type vehicles.
- Freedom campers did not need to be next to a toilet. The freedom campers who did their dishes in public toilet sinks did not bring a lot to the district, or spend a lot.
- If Council decided that freedom campers could park within 450m of the town centre, Northcroft Street should be used. Kaimanawa and Roberts Streets should not be used.
- Riverside Park could be a freedom camping area as it already had a dump station, was close to town and away from educational facilities.
- How would the 7pm to 7am time limitation be monitored?

The meeting adjourned again at this point [12.02pm] and reconvened again at 9.30am on Wednesday 10 May 2017.

PRESENT ON 10 MAY: Mayor David Trewavas [in the Chair], Cr John Boddy, Cr Rosie Harvey [from 11.51am], Cr Barry Hickling, Cr Tangonui Kingi, Cr Anna Park, Cr Christine Rankin, Cr Kirsty Trueman [from 9.52am], Cr John Williamson

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive, Group Manager: Finance & Strategy, Group Manager: Business & Technology, Democracy & Community Engagement Manager, Communications Manager, Policy Manager, Senior Policy Advisor, Policy Advisor and Democratic Services Officer

MEDIA AND PUBLIC: Taupō Times
17 members of the public

TDC201705/03 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Barry Hickling
Seconded: Cr Christine Rankin

That the apologies received from Crs Zane Cozens and Rosanne Jollands [for absence] and Crs Rosie Harvey and Kirsty Trueman [for lateness] be accepted.

CARRIED

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No further conflicts of interest were declared.

102 – Mr Grant Donaldson

- Freedom camping in residential areas and school / education zones should be a non-starter.
- Disagreed with Kaimanawa Reserve being a freedom camping zone.
- Member of NZMCA and used freedom camping spots around New Zealand – would never expect to park in front of anyone's house.
- Concentrate freedom camping in easy to manage areas. Suggested the following areas:
 - Reid's Farm
 - The harbour end of Riverside Park [close to town and already has amenities]
 - Ferry Road if managed well and only vehicles with facilities on board are permitted to park there
 - Small number of parks in the public car park near McDonald's and Burger King
- Questioned the need for freedom camping within 450m of town, and also the need for areas to be close to toilets.
- All vehicles should be self-contained.
- Council could give free lease to provide a low cost parking area for freedom campers. Not a camp ground, but user-pays parking monitored by security company, who could also gather fees.
- Taupō was a world-renowned high value location, so do not pander to low value clients.
- Have regard for residents and ratepayers.

In answer to questions Mr Donaldson advised that:

- Riverside Park would be a good spot for 'sliding-door' vehicles without facilities on board. Those travellers did not add value to town except for money spent in bars. A place for non-certified vehicles was required, hence the suggestion for a cheap lease to someone who would charge less than camp grounds.
- Many freedom campers had bicycles and could drive or bike into town, if they were staying on the outskirts. Do not concentrate freedom camping vehicles in our beautiful town.

70 – Omori Kuratau Ratepayers Association

Messrs Mike Bowie [Chairman] and Russell Shaw spoke in support of the submission and tabled correspondence between Mr Shaw, the Department of Conservation and the Minister of Conservation along with information that highlighted problems associated with Omori Stream Reserves freedom campers. [A1938451].

Mr Mike Bowie noted that:

- The current Freedom Camping Bylaw was outdated. The intent was honourable and it was great that visitor numbers were high however better controls and management was required.
- Taupō District Council's approach was unique and appreciated.
- The Omori Kuratau Ratepayers Association fully supported the proposed bylaw and were opposed to any freedom camping in the Omori and Kuratau areas.
- Requested that adequate signage was appropriate notifying the public that fees would be imposed for illegal parking be installed; regular patrols and enforcement or prosecution action be taken to ensure people did not abuse the rules [suggested that local contacts could assist Council staff by talking to

campers and encouraging them to move on] and, an invitation be sent out to those people directly impacted by freedom camping to attend the next bylaw review following the summer 2017.

Mr Russell Shaw noted that:

- A resident of Omori for 23 years, Omori was one of the most beautiful parts of the world.
- Generally, he would pick up at least one bag of rubbish per day, however noticed an increase as freedom camping became more popular.
- Council doggy-doo bins were a great idea for that purpose, however freedom campers often dumped their rubbish next to these bins. Removal of the bins resulted in the problem being transferred elsewhere.
- If the bylaw was passed, the problem with Department of Conservation [DOC] land at Omori Stream would remain. This would be a small area for self-contained vehicles only.
- If freedom camping was prohibited on Council land, campers would probably make a beeline for Omori Reserve. Therefore they encouraged good communication and cooperation between DOC and Council to mitigate any resulting issues.

In answer to questions, the representatives advised that:

- It was impossible to identify whether pollution was being caused by people driving the slidey-door type vehicles, or self-contained vehicles. The general trend was increased visitor numbers resulted in more rubbish.
- The pristine areas of Omori and Kuratau should be retained for people to enjoy during the day time.
- Locals and visitors alike could not use the Omori Stream area for normal summer day activities when the area was at full capacity [approximately 30 vehicles] with freedom campers.
- There were concerns around enforcement such as which vehicles were permitted and for how long. Also, would the necessary enforcement resources be available?
- Locals that asked freedom campers to move on were usually met with the response that there was no signs prohibiting freedom camping.

122 – Marilyn Collins-Dawson

- Large numbers of buses and trucks regularly parked in the area between Northcroft and Kaimanawa Streets. If freedom camping was permitted there, buses/trucks would be forced to park further afield in Roberts Street which as a designated residential area, would be inappropriate.
- Poor street lighting in the area impeded visibility of parked vehicles at night.
- Had observed as many as 15 trucks in one evening.
- Kaimanawa Reserve was popular on weekends with people playing with balls, kites, games etc.

109 - Matt Jensen

Mr Jensen read aloud his submission. In answer to questions he advised that:

- The ablution block was across the road from his place of business.
- Most vehicles that parked overnight were not self-contained.
- Non-compliant vehicles further added to pollution.
- Against freedom camping in high density areas – CBD and residential.
- Freedom camping should be discouraged as freedom campers did not treat areas the same as property owners/tenants.

79 – Max and Fiona Skerratt

Mr Mike Keys and Ms Fiona Skerratt tabled a document entitled "For Councillors to Consider" [A1940216] and jointly presented the submission. Ms Skerratt read the submission out and Mr Keys continued noting that:

- Challenged the view that freedom camping should be provided in the CBD.
- Under the bylaw, 250 sites could potentially be approved for freedom camping. Having never seen a public statement to that effect before, felt the public consultation process was lacking.

- Rickit Street was unsuitable given its close proximity to schools, early childhood centres, funeral home and Taupō Public Cemetery.
- Freedom camping did not contribute much to the local economy and was at the lower end of the market.
- Robust and regular monitoring and enforcement needed to be undertaken otherwise problems could easily escalate.
- The idea of campers in Horomatangi Street - the middle of town - did not make sense.
- Freedom camping was a highly important issue that required careful consideration. Urged Council to not allow in town but if necessary, provide smaller sites with required facilities on the outskirts of town.

The meeting adjourned at this point [10.33am] and reconvened again at 10.46am.

Councillor John Williamson re-entered the meeting at 10.47am.

53 – Barry and Lorna Swallow

Mr and Mrs Swallow spoke to their submission noting that it was their personal viewpoint only. They tabled a document from the Department of Internal Affairs entitled “Managing Freedom Camping in Public Places” [A1938434].

- Self-contained should be certified vehicles only.
- Suggested DOC method of collecting revenue from campers which was not overly costly but had huge benefits.
- Council’s current policy did not make any reference to overnight parking.
- Council’s policy on overnight parking in the CBD was unclear.
- Why was Council reviewing its bylaw now, when Central Government was reconsidering the Freedom Camping Act? It was pleasing to hear that Taupō District Council has a representative on the working group.
- Everything Mr and Mrs Swallow would like to see was contained in the Department of Internal Affairs document produced in November 2016 [refer tabled extracts].
- Would hate Taupō to become known as a town suffering from ‘Not In My Front Yard’.

103 – Karen McGrath

- The proposed bylaw met some of the needs of stakeholders.
- Council needed to take responsibility for monitoring, controlling and managing freedom camping.
- Infrastructure and operational costs associated with freedom campers should be borne by users of the facilities and not ratepayers.
- Suggested \$10 per night fee which was a nominal amount and should not affect people visiting Taupō.
- Referenced Anzac Cove whereby NZMCA charge its members \$3 per person per night to stay.
- DOC camp site charges have increased which presented an opportunity for Council to make user pays more sustainable.
- The bylaw does not clarify the mechanism of ongoing monitoring and enforcement – “people would only respect what is regularly inspected”.
- More education was needed as many people were not aware of the rules. A fine of \$200 should be imposed for any breaches however legislation needed to be in place to be able to collect revenue.
- Non self-contained vehicles should not be able to stay overnight in the CBD or residential areas. Some councils had banned non self-contained vehicles – except within commercial camp grounds - and were already issuing fines for breaches.
- Did not believe provision of extra facilities was the answer.
- Reid’s Farm should be available all year round.

In answer to questions, Ms McGrath advised that:

- Average cost to stay overnight at a commercial camp site was \$40.
- Partnership with Council and NZMCA was developing well. Council was proactive at providing a motor-home friendly town eg provided 90+ parking spaces at the summer concert which many vans took advantage of.

- There should be a dump station at the southern entrance to Taupō. Also, the proposed bylaw did not provide space for larger rigs – 5m-15m vehicles and 7-8m category exceeded regular parking space provisions.
- Local government needed Central Government support to provide a consistent approach to the standards.
- Designated camping areas needed to be well advertised. Websites needed to be up-to-date and contain information on camping etiquette, accessibility, etc.
- It was a privilege to be able to freedom camp in New Zealand however many had an attitude of entitlement which needed to change.
- The DOC managed area near the gliding club was too far out of town.

114 – New Zealand Motor Caravan Association Inc [NZMCA]

Mr James Imlach spoke to the submission on behalf of NZMCA.

- NZMCA were opposed to the proposed bylaw and had lost faith and trust in Council. Believed Council was taking advantage of the relationship however were trying to find medium ground position that would be acceptable for both members and the community alike.
- Commended staff for their facilitation of workshops held in 2016.
- The Freedom Camping Act [FCA] required that Council engage a new approach. Council needed to look at the bylaw in terms of the FCA and move away from its historical approach.
- NZMCA had worked alongside Council and provided advice in a partnership capacity. Following those discussions, they felt confident that Council would develop a bylaw that was consistent with the Act, and move away from a designated sites approach, which NZMCA supported. Therefore it was unexpected and disappointing to see that the draft bylaw contradicted what NZMCA thought had been agreed through their joint engagement/consultation/working group process.
- A judicial review would be sought if the proposed draft bylaw was adopted. NZMCA believed the draft did not align with the legislative intent, and went beyond what was necessary.
- Of the 72,000 NZMCA members, approximately 1,000 reside in Taupō.
- A number of councils had tried the prohibition approach to freedom camping in the past, unsuccessfully.
- Suggested re-starting the bylaw review process to create a compliant bylaw that met the expectations of the community.
- Develop a strategy that directed people to preferred sites.

In answer to questions, Mr Imlach advised that:

- From 2009, it was a requirement that all new NZMCA members had certified self contained vehicles. The 20% of NZMCA members who did not have fully certified self contained vehicles were members before that ruling came into effect however the majority would meet that standard by making adjustments to vehicles. There was a strategy in place to help bring those 20% up to standard.
- Clause 10 of the draft bylaw states that freedom camping is prohibited everywhere other than the designated areas. Striking out clauses 10 and 11 would fundamentally change the premise of the bylaw which would require re-consultation.
- The Freedom Camping bylaw should take precedence over the Reserves & Public Places bylaw.

95 – Lorraine Waru [by teleconference]

- Born and raised in Turangi therefore only concerned about the proposed bylaw in relation to Turangi.
- Believed the bylaw did not adequately manage freedom camping in Turangi and was not in favour of providing free parking and free use of ablution facilities for freedom campers. The purpose of the FCA was to encourage visitors and tourists to the district to contribute to and boost the local economy, not provide everything for free or else there would be no benefit to Turangi.
- In Turangi, there were four low cost accommodation options within 100 metres of each other: Tongariro Junction and Turangi Holiday Park (with camp site facilities) and two backpacker lodges along with one other backpackers on the southern side of town. Tokaanu and Motuoapa had similar grounds. With so many accommodation providers available, there was no need to provide freebies.

- The proposed carpark was in front of Hydro Café and other businesses. It was not a good look to have campervans parked right in front of them.
- Another downside was the degradation of the environment and foul behaviour of campers. Workers had observed faeces amongst willows nearby where campers had been parked overnight and laundry hanging in trees.
- Paying visitors/tourists had been visiting for many years and would continue to come regardless of whether free facilities were provided or not.

65 - Richard Karn

A resident of Napier and time-share owner of Ika-nui Lodge, Mr Karn visited Taupō twice a year. He noted that campers were not restricted to self-contained vehicles and came in a multitude of private and rental vehicle types, shapes and sizes. He wondered how converted vans and the like had managed to obtain a blue compliance sticker which demonstrated that the standard was clearly being flouted and somewhat of a joke.

He also noted that Napier had undertaken consultation three times and still had not got it right as campers continued to park wherever they liked even though there was a list of prohibited areas.

91 – Alan Sciascia – Hospitality NZ [Waikato/BOP Branches]

Read aloud tabled document [A1940220].

- Tauranga City Council [TCC] has had a freedom camping bylaw for the last four years and have had numerous problems since. Council should liaise with TCC to avoid encountering problems.

Note: Councillor Harvey entered the meeting at this point [11.51am].

- Council needed to work out a cost/benefit analysis.
- How would Council maintain and resource effective and appropriate compliance eg checking vehicles were certified and parked appropriately and within the permitted time, inspectors, security checks, etc.
- The recovery rate for those councils that infringed was only 50%.
- The public would ultimately be the eyes and ears for Council. TCC found that public calls to officers and councillors were excessive and a nuisance.
- Some rental companies worked alongside councils and others did not.
- Suggested considering signage if implementing restrictions.
- The draft bylaw would allow freedom campers to park close to campgrounds for example the Spa Road Top 10, in direct competition with such businesses.
- Self-contained vehicles did not need to be near public conveniences. Encouraging non-certified vehicles to occupy spaces for self-contained vehicles would create problems.

In answer to questions, Mr Sciascia advised that:

- Slidey-door type vans and non self-contained vehicles were the main problem as most did not have \$53 for a powered site. A cost benefit analysis to ascertain whether these types of campers should be permitted (or not) needed to be done. Also would that market be viable or would their presence drive away those you would want to stay.
- Taupō was a premium destination that should not cater for slidey-door vans and non-compliant vehicles.

The meeting adjourned again at this point [12.06pm] and reconvened again at 12.40pm.

9 - Mr Chris Sarney – Reid's Farm

- Very emotional issue for him. Felt he was speaking for every New Zealand freedom camper who had stayed at Reid's Farm.

- Wellington Anniversary weekend part of the farm was fenced off, which was a great idea but would have been better had it been set aside for families only. His family was literally the only 'family' that had camped there this year [*shared life-long memories of camping at Reid's Farm*].
- Would like to have an area of the camping ground designated for New Zealanders only. This idea was not borne out of racism but rather so that New Zealand campers could actually get in.
- Mr Sarney showed various photographs of past family gatherings at Reid's Farm.
- Purchased things locally and tried to support local industry as much as they could. They were not wealthy people but entire family loved camping. To take that away and give it to couples/people not from here was taking away [his] time with his family. Wellington Anniversary and Queen's Birthday weekends were two weekends they aimed to be at Reid's Farm. On Wellington Anniversary his family only just managed to get in; his daughter and friend could not get in at all at Christmas.

In answer to questions, Mr Sarney advised that:

- This year there were 250 campers, next year it would be a thousand. Campers were a nationwide problem. Where was he going to be with his family?
- Regarding camping away from the river, his kids were brought up around it. He never swam in the river when he was a kid, but now people do. The river and vehicles were the only dangers, however they kept a close eye on the kids.
- There were family only designated areas overseas. Immense love and passion for Reid's Farm hence the reason he visited. The last two years, families had disappeared.
- If an area was fenced off for families it would not need to be policed or enforced as most people are obedient and respectful. People understood that they were there at their own will, to have an enjoyable time. Tourists did not want to get arrested. The majority of people were well behaved. He just wanted some space specifically for families only.

110 - Christine McElwee

- Ten years as a tourism/marketing consultant therefore had a great interest in the industry. Background not entirely lay. No vested interests. Acknowledged the importance and economic value in growing the motor-home industry in the Taupō district.
- Thanked Council for recognising parking can be better managed. Strongly supported the direction to get camper vans off the lake front or out of parking areas overlooking the lake as it was important that lake shores and reserves were open to the public. Certain sectors should not be privileged so endorsed Council's intention. Also proposed that the same be done right around the lake.
- Acknowledged and endorsed His Worship's comments in public relations material regarding 'Having your say' and 'We want to ensure the community is comfortable'. Important to balance the issue between residents and visitors. New Zealand was a host district. If you could not keep residents and ratepayers happy, you have problems.
- Parking areas near the lake were not monitored. Provide adequate day time public parking / lake access for locals and visitors – and monitor. Compliance was not up to the standard it used to be. Fully consider the implications, consequence and costs of the bylaw.
- Very concerned about the proposed potentially free overnight motor-home/campervan camping sites for supposed self-contained vehicles on the outskirts of the CBD. Free-of-charge undermined established accommodation businesses, and propped up other business. Needed to consider those perspectives and support, expand, and encourage existing and new businesses. Could not do that by offering free accommodation – totally unfair. That had already been happening and was not good enough.
- Suggesting that campers buy a permit from Council. Cost should be equal or similar to other commercial businesses that could accommodate them, eg camping grounds. Overnight charges would also need to cover all infrastructure, set up/administrative costs, and ongoing maintenance and compliance.
- User-pay system was fair and far preferable to unfairly using rates. While the visitor industry had benefits to ratepayers, it would be difficult to prove benefits from motorhomes and vans visiting the district.
- Provide suitable land to lease to entrepreneurs for camper van parks. Campgrounds were inclined to charge excessively.
- Did not agree with ongoing heavy lobbying from NZMCA to be able to park overnight close to the town centre. Thousands of locals and visitors managed to shop, eat, and drink safely therefore why did

motorhome and van users get the privilege of overnight parking close to town centre? Think about what was being offered to a sector.

- Why would Council want to be involved in a time consuming and costly running of a campground on the fringes of the CBD, which was a private enterprise role? EGLT had called for expressions of interest to lease council land for the purpose of setting up a motorhome/campervan grounds.
- Self-contained was not actually self-contained – joke of the year. Currently, TDC ratepayers picked up most of the rubbish and effluent dumping costs which was not fair.
- Pleased to see provision for charging though charges should reflect true costs.
- Setting fair overnight parking fees would also show that Council was not selective, undermining, or price competing with other businesses.
- Read out questions in the submission.
- If proceeding with bylaw – keep concentrated. Riverside Park was far too valuable – would be a retrograde step. Remove the effluent station from there as the market and food operators were far too close.
- Trial an area first as consequences would not be known until you have tested it.
- There was a perception by locals that motorhomes parked close together created visual and noise pollution. Trucks legally parked on the lakefront also had the same effect and obstructed mountain views. With Kaimanawa Street being a residential, recreational and accommodation environment, people would probably also consider campers parking there to create the same visual and noise pollution.
- Freedom camping was a misnomer. Most vehicles could not go off sealed roads.
- Other cities in the developed world did not have streets with vans lined up. The numbers here were not great. Those cities management of the same issue was much smarter.
- Motorhome/van sector was a very important one, however endorsed getting them off the lake front.

In answer to questions, Ms McElwee advised that:

- Establish specialised motorhome parks where operators would have to comply with council requirements. Why provide accommodation on streets when there were businesses able to provide that service. Non self-contained should also be catered for but not by providing a camping ground on the streets of Taupō.
- Different areas could be provided for self-contained vehicles and Jucy van-type vehicles.
- Council was going in the right direction with Reid's Farm.

63 - Les Pepper

- As a resident of Rangatira Park, knew the area well. Here for seven years, loved the place and was strongly protective of his environment. Lived 200–300m on the opposite side along from the reserve. Direct neighbours that overlooked the river, which was a lovely asset that he was extremely proud of. Observed a lot of things in the reserves and raised concerns if necessary. Regarding freedom campers there – younger tourists did not understand the river environment. Concerns included swimmer safety, noise, anti-social behaviour, use of banks as toilets, and scrub fires.
- Having a camping facility so close to control gates was a real concern; Mercury would also have issues. The nature of people would be to jump in and swim. There was a very steep side, with no proper access points. The steepness was a deterrent to some, but not all. If people wanted to get into the river, many jumped off the cliff without understanding the close proximity to the control gates and, that the river level could rise quickly. The other side was also risky, however a bit quieter. Would Council really want to take on that significant risk? Mercury had already had a number of drownings and issues with swimmers, even with the warning signs and sirens being activated.
- Noise, antisocial behaviour, litter, and campers using the bank as a toilet opposite a relatively quiet residential area, was not desirable. There had also been a number of scrub fires in the area. Rickits Street was a long stretch of land and camping would be right beside the bush – the potential for harm was high and needed to be carefully considered. Very picturesque popular part of town that needed tidying up – unique part of New Zealand and Taupō that was not the right place to put freedom campers. Near the lake or an appropriate location on the edge of town is where most would want to be anyway. The location was also too close to the public cemetery.
- As a camping family themselves, would only camp where appropriate.

In answer to questions, Mr Pepper advised that:

- The river bank was sheer and very steep, approximately 40-50 metres up and level with the other side, which was where campers would be. Could see through to buildings, lagoon area, and past water treatment plant.
- The river flow on the new subdivision side was not as strong as the opposite side. Had not observed swimmers in difficulty in that particular location. Swimmers should not access the river within 500 metres of the control gates.
- Would have some degree of confidence if the area was developed nicely, for self-contained vehicles only, and had better security, however restated that the location was not ideal for freedom camping.

88 - Chris Wilson

Read aloud tabled document [A1940224].

- As an accommodation provider, water rates doubled two years ago. Not possible to increase rates at his business due to competition.
- Cafés on the waterfront did get walk-in business from freedom campers, but usually this was limited to a coffee so they can use the wifi.
- Visitors staying in the accommodation provided by Mr Wilson and his wife were provided with a lot of local information, compared to freedom campers who did their own thing. No opportunity to up-sell the region to those travellers.

In answer to questions, Mr Wilson advised that:

- Campgrounds could possibly offer subsidised rates to people travelling in non-self-contained vehicles. Those people currently use facilities anyway.
- The problem was that Council was providing public space for free, picking up rubbish, cleaning toilets, providing water etc – facilities that businesses have to pay for. Things had been getting worse since the Rugby World Cup.

The meeting adjourned again at this point [1.58pm] and reconvened again at 10.00am on Thursday 22 June 2017.

PRESENT ON 22 JUNE: Mayor David Trewavas [in the Chair], Cr John Boddy, Cr Zane Cozens, Cr Rosie Harvey, Cr Barry Hickling, Cr Rosanne Jollands, Cr Tangonui Kingi, Cr Anna Park, Cr Christine Rankin, Cr Kirsty Trueman [from 10.01am], Cr John Williamson

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive, Group Manager: Finance & Strategy, Group Manager: Business & Technology, Democracy & Community Engagement Manager, Strategic Development Manager, Communications Manager, Senior Communications Advisor, Corporate Solicitor, Consents & Regulatory Manager, Strategic Relationships Manager, Policy Manager, Senior Policy Advisor, Policy Advisor and Democratic Services Officer

MEDIA AND PUBLIC: Taupō Times
Taupō Weekender
29 members of the public

Cr Tangonui Kingi opened the meeting with a karakia.

TDC201705/04 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Tangonui Kingi
Seconded: Cr Barry Hickling

That the apology received from Cr Kirsty Trueman [for lateness] be accepted.

CARRIED

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No further conflicts of interest were declared.

Cr Kirsty Trueman entered the meeting at this point [10.01am].

TDC201705/05 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Christine Rankin

Seconded: Cr Barry Hickling

That Council receives the submissions and late submissions on the draft Freedom Camping Bylaw and thanks the submitters.

CARRIED

His Worship the Mayor advised that there was a need for members to receive confidential legal advice.

TDC201705/06 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Barry Hickling

Seconded: Cr Anna Park

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

I move that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting.

The general subject matter of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
<p>Agenda Item No: 5.1 Freedom Camping Legal Advice</p>	<p>Section 7(2)(g) - the withholding of the information is necessary to maintain legal professional privilege</p>	<p>Section 48(1)(a)(i)- the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 7</p>

CARRIED

Members of the public left the meeting.

[CONFIDENTIAL]

Members of the public, press and staff re-entered the meeting.

An updated draft Freedom Camping Bylaw was tabled [A1726302, version 15].

Attachments

1. Draft Freedom Camping Bylaw tabled on 22 June 2017

The Policy Manager explained that the updated draft bylaw had been 'turned on its head' to be more in line with the intent of the Freedom Camping Act 2011, so that freedom camping would be permitted everywhere in the Taupō district, except for certain specified locations. This was in response to submitters who had suggested the bylaw was too restrictive, and also the legal threat from submitter 114, the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association Inc [NZMCA].

Members asked questions and staff provided answers as follows:

- There was a standard definition of "self-contained vehicle" and this would apply to the Taupō District Freedom Camping Bylaw. The definition was currently being reviewed and was likely to be 'strengthened'.
- Council could put much more information on its website than in the text of the bylaw itself. For example, Council could put information on its website to support people travelling in non self-contained vehicles [encouraging them towards camping grounds]; or providing up-to-date information on the campermate app or on interactive digital maps.
- Once the bylaw was in place, better signage could be erected throughout the district in key areas.
- Other councils had been working with particular campervan hire companies to recover infringement fees. It was difficult to recover the entire infringement fee, however some companies were willing to work with councils to obtain 50% of the fee.
- The reference to "Nui-A-Tia" was consistent with the Taupō District Plan.
- Once in place, it was possible to review the bylaw within five years, if issues arise and need to be addressed.
- Evidence of issues would build up over time, through service requests; monitoring/compliance staff; letters and so on.
- Service requests were one type of evidence. The current process of public consultation had provided Council with information about pressure points, for example at the landing reserve; at Reid's Farm; and identified environmental impacts on Lake Taupō had resulted in the suggestion to have a buffer zone prohibiting freedom camping on the immediate lake front.

In answer to a question the Chief Executive confirmed that the NZMCA had acknowledged that the community does not want freedom camping on the lake front.

- Non self-contained vehicles would be restricted to freedom camp in the areas outlined in Schedule 1 of the bylaw.
- It was tempting to jump to the conclusion that freedom campers were creating havoc in residential or lake front areas. The reality was that people could camp in those areas now, and the areas were not overrun. If problems arise in the future, Council could amend the bylaw to address those problems.
- If freedom campers are no longer permitted to stay on Ferry Road, they will disperse to other areas. If they accumulate in a particular place and cause issues, the bylaw could be amended as previously mentioned.
- Most complaints from the public did not relate to Ferry Road in particular, but rather people camping on the landing reserve or near water.
- Evidence comes in different forms, it was elected members' role to filter out perceptions from reality. Impacts need to be demonstrated, for example environmental damage or the potential for environmental damage.
- It was desirable to have any time limits consistent between the Reid's Farm Reserve Management Plan and the Freedom Camping Bylaw.
- Non self-contained vehicles are restricted to campgrounds and the areas outlined in Schedule 1 including Reid's Farm.
- The Turangi/Tongariro Community Board had suggested an alternative car park for freedom camping in Turangi.

A member asked staff to discuss the latest proposals for freedom camping in Turangi with the Turangi/Tongariro Community Board, so that any further feedback from the Community Board could be taken into account before adoption of the final bylaw.

- The current Reserves & Public Places Bylaw was clear that no camping was permitted on reserve land, unless the specific Reserves Management Plan allowed it. There was no need to duplicate this in the Freedom Camping Bylaw.
- Compliance staff were already warning people who were parking/camping illegally and issuing infringements where appropriate. Recovering infringement monies had not been an issue to date.
- Vehicle clamping would put staff at risk. Simply asking people to move on and infringing if they do not works 95% of the time.
- Freedom camping monitoring will be captured in the Council's latest security contract and after hours contractors would enforce the bylaw in accordance with the bylaw and contractual arrangements.
- Following adoption of the bylaw, staff would prepare signage to ensure members of the public were aware of the rules around freedom camping. Plans for this signage would be shared with elected members.
- The New Zealand Standard Self Containment of Motor Caravans and Caravans was currently under review. There was no need to change the wording of the draft bylaw in relation to the Standard.
- NZMCA would give Council access to a database of vehicles to enable compliance staff to check if there was doubt about the authenticity of a self-containment warrant.

Members supported the draft proposal to remove Ferry Road as a freedom camping area and made the following amendments to the draft bylaw:

- Amend the draft freedom camping bylaw to be more aligned with the permissive intent of the Freedom Camping Act 2011.
- Amend clause 7 by deleting 50m and inserting 100m so that it reads: "A person must not freedom camp within 100m of Lake Taupō as measured by the Nui-A-Tia boundary".

In relation to whether or not Council should re-consult with the community on the updated draft bylaw, the Policy Manager suggested that members needed to decide whether or not they had enough information around the views and preferences of the community in light of changes made, to adopt the bylaw, or not. The lowest risk option for Council was to re-consult. In answer to a question the Senior Policy Advisor confirmed that re-consulting the community would take one month.

The Chief Executive suggested that the general feeling of the community was known. Staff would update the Turangi/Tongariro Community Board; the NZMCA; the Department of Conservation; and the Department of Internal Affairs on proposed changes following these deliberations.

Members considered the length of stay and decided upon three nights. It was noted that this aligns with the proposed Reid's Farm Reserve Management Plan.

The meeting adjourned again at this point [11.34am] and reconvened at [11.40am].

Students of Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Whakarewa I Te Reo Ki Tūwharetoa performed a haka. His Worship the Mayor thanked the students for their attendance.

Reid's Farm Reserve Management Plan

Mr Rowan Sapsford from Perception Planning Ltd tabled a report entitled "Submission Report – Addendum – Consideration of a name change for Reid's Farm" [A1983013].

Mr Sapsford spoke to the report and answered questions. The following points were noted:

- All appropriate people had been consulted about the proposed name change to Hipapatua. The new name reflected both the history and current use of the site.
- Reid's Farm would continue to be used in transitional material (for example story boards) for a period of time, until the new name was widely known.
- The proposed three night, four day limit (within 14 days) on campers was to address the issue of people staying for months and monopolising the area.
- Based on available information, the land was indeed Council land.

- Mrs O’Callaghan had not been informed of the proposed new name, but would be updated in due course.
- Proposed facilities for the reserve, and the possibility of appointing a manager, would be considerations for members during the next Long-term Plan process. Central Government funding would be applied for prior to that process.

TDC201705/07 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Tangonui Kingi
 Seconded: Cr Barry Hickling

1. That Council receives the submissions in relation to the draft revised Reserve Management Plan for Reid’s Farm Recreation Reserve.
2. That Council adopts the revised Reserve Management Plan [A2001054] for Reid’s Farm Recreation Reserve.
3. That Council amends the name of the reserve from Reid’s Farm Recreation Reserve to Hipapatua Recreation Reserve.

CARRIED

His Worship the Mayor advised that there was a need for members to receive further confidential legal advice.

TDC201705/08 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Tangonui Kingi
 Seconded: Cr Christine Rankin

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

I move that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting.

The general subject matter of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

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CARRIED

Members of the public left the meeting.

[CONFIDENTIAL]

The meeting closed at 12.22pm.

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the ordinary Council meeting held on 1 August 2017.

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CHAIRPERSON