

Long Bay - Okura Great Park Society

Newsletter November 2008



GENERAL MEETING

Thursday - 20th November 2008

We encourage all our members to attend the next general meeting of the Society which will update you on our latest activities.

AGENDA

- Convenor's and Treasurer's Reports
- Update on Court Case
- Results from Gala Concert
- Request to Council to purchase more land at Long Bay
- Other general business.

2nd floor, NSCC Area Office, Glen Road, Browns Bay at 7pm

CONVENOR'S REPORT

Dear Great Park Supporters,

It has been an exceedingly busy month! We are in the middle of negotiations with the Council, Auckland Regional Council, Landco, OEG and HPT trying to nut out the final form of the structure plan for Long Bay. While the Environment Court has made its decision and fixed the general outline of what will be, there are innumerable details still to be resolved.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

The main issues under discussion are:

- Where the boundary of the Heritage Protection Area on the eastern end of Awaruku Ridge lies.
- Where the boundaries of the development zones that determine housing densities will run.
- What form the reshaped Grannies Bay Ridge will take.
- Whether or not one of the ephemeral streams flowing into Vaughans Stream will be realigned.
- What the urban form of the built-up areas will be.

Three months of tough negotiations will end on 30 November when the Council presents the outline of its new structure plan to the court and the Society will submit its position on this plan. This isn't the end though, as the four months until March will be spent finalising the details and wording!

It has certainly been a long and gruelling process, but we have achieved a remarkable amount in protecting the areas adjacent to the Regional Park from development. This is in no small part thanks to your sustained efforts at fundraising that has given us access to some of the best experts in the field and an extremely good lawyer!

Talking of fundraising, many of you attended our Concert back in September! Thank you for your support and I hope you enjoyed the music as much as I did. We had well over 500 people in the audience, so that was considerably more than \$15,000 in ticket sales alone. We are still working out the details, but we will have made a tidy profit as well as reminding councillors and politicians of the strength of community feeling for Long Bay.

This is all to the good, as last month the Society gave presentations to Council and the East Coast Bays Community Board requesting the Council to purchase a small, but critical, piece of land that was not protected in the Court's decision. I'll keep you informed as to how this is going over the next few months.

Warmest Regards,

Fiona McLaughlin *Convener*

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CONTRIBUTORS TO THE GALA CONCERT

LONG BAY CHRONICLE

Letter to North Shore City Councillors...

The Long Bay Chronicle is a sorry saga of lack of vision, lack of commitment and lost opportunities spanning 45 years.

The story begins in 1964 when the Vaughan family decided to sell the Long Bay farm. The ARA (as it was then) bought the narrow coastal strip which forms the bulk of the Long Bay Regional Park that we have today. The Robinson family bought the balance which became known as the Durafort Block. Jim Holdaway, recently honoured by this City for his outstanding work for the environment, was chairman of the ARA Policy and Finance Committee that negotiated the Long Bay land purchase. He has said recently it is a major regret of his public life that the ARA did not buy the whole of the Vaughan farm at that time, but it was early days in the acquisition of Public Parks and the full extent of the future need was not foreseen at that time. But credit where it is due - where would the people of North Shore City and Greater Auckland be today without Long Bay Regional Park - infinitely the poorer to be sure.

The next great visionary lapse and probably the greatest in the whole saga was the action by the Gair Council in 1995 in applying to the ARC for the Metropolitan Urban Limit to be moved to the Okura Estuary. It was said at the time this was necessary to provide a mass consumer base for the commercial development of the Albany Basin. Growth and development were considered paramount (and perhaps still are to a lesser degree) with sustainability and quality of life for the populace not in the frame. The ARC saw the fallacy and folly of it and refused the application ruling that Long Bay-Okura should remain rural. The Gair Council appealed the decision to the Environment Court and Judge Sheppard, in 1996, with the wisdom of Solomon drew a line down the middle - Okura to remain rural but Long Bay could be urbanised - a classic Environment Court compromised decision. The stage was set for the long, expensive and disputatious process that has followed. It was

(Continued on page 4)

2008 SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

Thank you to those who have paid their membership so promptly. Please find your receipt enclosed. (If your fees were paid in the last 7 days your receipt will follow in the next newsletter).

Please call **Beth** on 473 5097 for any queries.  Check your mailing label for subs overdue.

2008 SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL AND MEMBERSHIP FORM

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(Continued from page 3)

at this point in 1996 that the Long Bay-Okura Great Park Society was formed to represent the interests of the public in preserving the green fields adjacent to the Regional Park for the passive recreation of future generations.

Despite massive public opposition by way of petition and submissions, Council proceeded with the Structure Plan for the development. Durafort decided to opt out and put their Long Bay land on the market. NSCC and ARC were urged to buy it but considered it too expensive so Landco got it for what is commonly reported to be about \$30m. Two to three years later NSCC bought 35 ha at Piripiri Point for \$28.5m and ARC 4ha at the southern escarpment for \$6m, so that Landco got virtually all its money back in the space of 3 years and still had about 4/5ths of the land. Despite the bitter irony of this short-sighted dealing, these areas made a very welcome strategic addition to the Park Estate. Landco has of course since gone into receivership, resulting in the Todd Corporation taking full control.

Council and the appellants are now working their way through the monumental Environment Court Appeal process but the broad outline is already set in Judge Jackson's interim decision for the development to proceed.

Protection of the backdrop to maintain the rural ambience of the regional park was a long-term objective of the ARC's Management Plan and continues to be an extremely important issue for the vast majority of the public.

This is truly the 11th hour in the saga - the final defining moment when you must play your part in salvaging a little more of the bold and enlightened vision that should have been embraced from the outset. We strongly urge you to adopt the proposal put before you by the LBOGPS and ECB Community Board to add this additional area to the buffer zone adjacent to the Heritage Protection Area further protecting archeological and historical taonga for prosperity. Of equal importance, it will preserve the superb natural green vista that greets the millions of visitors as they approach the Park down Beach Road now, and throughout succeeding generations in perpetuity. By so doing, this Council will go down in history as writing a brighter happier sequel to the Long Bay Chronicle.

“Where there is no vision the people perish”

NOW IS THE TIME FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION. IT WILL BE TOO LATE WHEN THE BULLDOZERS MOVE IN.

“Yes we can! Yes we can! Yes we can!” - Barack Obama.

Bernard Stanley

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