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NEWS BULLETIN

An official news bulletin produced by the Port Geographe Landowners Association Committee
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Communicating with Councillors

Several coffee meetings of late with Councillors and key City senior staff regarding a variety of issues identified by the Port Geographe Landowners Association (PGLOA) committee over the past months.

Garden presentation, footpaths, Specified Area Rate (SAR), Layman Road medium strip and verge trees, noxious plants and fire safety are all part of a mixed bag of topics that have been taken up on your behalf in the last eight months.

The old saying a squeaky wheel gets the most attention has rung true on many of the issues tackled.

What is pleasing is the involvement of community in a couple of areas which follow the theme "Pride in our Community".

While not all matters are resolved there have been some wins. And others are bubbling as lobbying and constant communicate with reasoned presentation place these issues front and centre. Some of these issues still to get traction include:

- Introducing Boat Ramp Fees with exemption for PG residents – this seems to be gaining traction.

- 25% equivalent of Specified Area Rate (SAR) from general municipality rate to be reintroduced to accumulate in PG Waterways Management reserve for coastal maintenance as was the case prior to the New Management Deed ratified by the City and State Government last year.
- Appropriate scrutiny of the bill Department of Transport (DOT) charges the City for coastal works.
- The account from DOT is paid out of the PG Waterways Management Reserve Fund held in trust by the City. The SAR contribution of your rates payment accumulates in this Reserve Fund. Currently we are the only ratepayers paying for the marina and canal waterways and coastal maintenance.
- The PGLOA argues that everybody can use the waterways and the PG and Wonnerup beaches and there should be some equilibrium and fairer contribution by others. The City can be billed up to \$300,000 per annum by DOT for maintenance work. The State Government pays the balance.
- We are alarmed at the extent of the DOT PG Coastal Management Area which extends from Morgan Street in the west and east of the Wonnerup town-site. This area is far longer than

when the previous developer was responsible for coastal maintenance.

- Better efficiency in the organization of garden maintenance.

Changes to Planning Policy.

The constant work through a problem approach by PGLOA over the last twelve months regarding planning and building issues, brought on by an old house on Spinnaker Boulevard last year, has seen changes to a 2nd tier local council planning policy to tighten restrictive covenants for all existing titled blocks in Port Geographe.

No old houses may be transported in any more.

Changes to the more powerful City's Town Planning Scheme finally adopted by Council to prevent transportable buildings is before the WAPC.

Word back on the progression of these amendments suggests that this is likely to be weakened from "transportable" to "relocated buildings". While not perfect it will still stop such old houses being deposited on vacant blocks.

SAT

It has been disappointing that State Administration Tribunal (SAT) has sided with the owner of 23 Keel Retreat, Port Geographe after the City issued a demolition order on a half start portion of garage in front of an approved two storey build.

The building permit had expired. The owner reapplied with another development application for the lot to build a single storey dwelling which was rejected by City planners before they issued the owner with a demolition order. The owner then forced the issue through the State Administration Tribunal and won.

However the City advised that strict timelines with a requirement to clean the lot have been negotiated. The big timeline being March 2016. If all these restrictions are not adhered to the PGLOA will become involved with SAT.

The same owner has also got extensions on the rebuild of the old house on Spinnaker Boulevard.

The PGLOA is staggered by decisions made for both lots (Keel and Spinnaker) and wonders how authorities can allow such ventures to play out the way they have. The problem all along has been there has been no developer to enforce their restrictive covenants.

Community Involvement.

The PGLOA is heartened by the community involvement in the restoration of park gardens on the eastern flank of the development and some foreshore tidying up on the old portion of the western foreshore.

On the latter, eight bags of rubbish have been gathered. Clearing of some overgrown undergrowth by City contractors at the request of residents in the area has been completed with promise of plants supplied by the City to replace bare sections.

The creation of a residents' Coastal Care group for maintenance of this strip of vegetation has been discussed with the relevant City personnel, and guidelines for operation are being drawn up. In the interim, the City has supplied a sprayer and weed killer to assist with keeping weeds in this area under control.

On the eastern side garden beds have been replanted and cared for by local community. The plants were supplied by the City.

Communicating with Councillors

The PGLOA has set up occasional coffee meetings with Councillors including new Mayor, Grant Henley, Deputy Mayor, Coralie Tarbotton, Councillor Gordon Bleechmore and Terry Best.

These meetings have been held to voice our rational views on a number of key topics. It will be interesting on how these unfold overtime. The PGLOA recognizes that many of these requests

will not be achieved overnight. Persistence is required.

On Site meeting with City Director

In October 2015 PGLOA representatives had an on-site meeting and tour of the development with Director of Engineering and Works Services and key City staff. Some of the issues which were identified as needing attention were:

- Cutting of grass on the embankment skirting Layman Road. (done)
- Slash reserve close to roundabout on Layman Road (done)
- Spray garden beds encroached with couch and kikuyu grass at end of Anchor View. (done)
- Concrete path over bridge to connect existing footpath and Port Lane on eastern side (done).
- Removing untidy weed and growth on the old groyne adjacent to carpark near Sensations Café to foreshore. (done)

Trees -Layman Road

The trees along Layman Road between the section Lanyard Boulevard and the western end of Wonnerup town site will be replaced with a new species. The City was going to plant peppermint trees but discussion during the on-site meeting (above) now has staff reviewing this selection (peppermint trees).

Our meetings with staff and Councillors on this issue have suggested a need for better choice.

The PGLOA has made the case that Busselton is now a City. And it should be making decisions that present Busselton as a City. The PGLOA believes first impressions are important particularly that Busselton is a tourist town. The route along Layman Road is the second major entry into the City via a tourist route. Therefore the PGLOA has made the point the trees should be a dress circle type suitable for this section which do not uplift the road or footpath surface and are able to withstand strong northerly winds during winter.

The City has a policy of native plantings although one Councillor has a view that this may need to be reassessed in favour of European trees which are fire retardant. We will see where this issue leads.

At the last meeting with two Councillors the PGLOA suggested that a working party be set up with professional landscape architects, representatives from the City and PGLOA to workshop the selection.

Whatever is the final selection it is expected that a section of trees will be taken out at a time and replaced with further section replacement in consecutive years.

Footpath Timeline from Sensations Café to Beach Pushed Back

One of the disappointing objectives the PGLOA pushed hard to achieve was the need for a concrete footpath linking the existing short and "going no-where" footpath from Sensation Café towards the carpark and the toilet block on the foreshore.

The PGLOA considered it a priority for safety reasons. There is still a dangerous mix of pedestrian and cars moving through the carpark despite a recent change to a one way traffic flow. The infirm and elderly have difficulty traversing over the sand and uneven ground to get to their vehicles to and from the café.

A stream of emails has been exchanged with the City's CEO, Mike Archer who remains unbending on the issue.

The City's engineering directorate claimed the footpath wasn't a priority on this year's budget and work allocation. The City's latest excuse was the design team would have to stop the design programme they have for this fiscal year in order to design the footpath. So it now appears the footpath will be allocated in the next 2016/17 budget and works programme.

It is rather ironic that a footpath was constructed on the eastern side across a bridge within a

couple of months and this bigger safety hazard will have to wait another year.

Noxious Plant

The castor oil plants spreading along the wetland side of Layman Road have been sprayed and removed after DPAW were alerted to the problem. Recently DPAW cut the dead remains and sprayed reseeded species.

The PGLOA has sent an email to DPAW requesting the area be slashed to tidy up the adjacent natural reserve infested with couch and other dry grasses.

Bees Round a Honey Pot

Thank God for Triathlon events! While barricades are put up on the day of these events restricting traffic movement in the PG area there is a positive side.

It is the time where garden maintenance staff, road sweepers and other private contractors such as Active Industries work like bees around a honey pot to manicure garden beds, whipper snip, spray, trim branches off footpaths and do a host of other maintenance.

It is the one time of the year that a makeover is done all at once in a thorough fashion. The PGLOA is active during other times reporting sprinklers not working, overgrown garden beds and other maintenance issues. The City on most occasions does respond to these requests, while other request take some prodding.

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