

EVIDENCE Robyn Hembry
TOPIC PC 113
SUB# 24
Hearing: DATE 20 Nov 2013

Ref: Whangarei Racing Club: Private Plan Change 113 – Ruakaka Racecourse

Venue: Ruakaka Race Course (Members Dining Room)

Date: Wednesday 20th November 2013

Time: Wednesday

Submission by Robyn Hembry

My name is Robyn Patricia Hembry I live at 5 Beck Place Ruakaka just off Tamure Place and located in close proximity to the Ruakaka Racecourse, the Ruakaka River, the Dune Lake and the Ruakaka Wildlife Refuge. I have owned this property and have holidayed there for the past 15 years. I have lived there on a permanent basis for 4 years.

I am a member of the Ruakaka Ratepayers Association and I also assist the Bream Bay Coastal Care Trust with planting and restoration of native vegetation at working bees, in the surrounding Ruakaka, Uretiti area.

I wish to support the following submissions in their entirety:

1. Patuharakeke Te Iwi Trust Board
2. Bream Bay Coastal Care Trust
3. Department of Conservation
4. Margaret Hicks

I do not wish to repeat previous submitters so I have selected the most pertinent points.

Council Policy:

The Whangarei District Council (Council) has failed to ensure that Developers comply with resource consents in this area of Ruakaka /Tamure Place:

For instance, Council has failed to protect a Pa site Q07/1204 on the bank of the Ruakaka River, by allowing cars to drive over it, failing to fence the area off and to provide adequate signage for this important cultural heritage site.

I believe also that Council has contravened the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010, (Policy 6 – Activities in the Coastal Environment, Section 2 - Additionally in relation to Coastal Marine Area, D) recognise that activities that do not have a functional need for location in the Coastal Marine Area generally should not be located there. ~~By~~ Allowing the Whangarei Racing Club to utilize the Ruakaka beach for horse training purposes does not constitute a marine activity.

Council is required by law under the Resource Management Act 1991, Section 75 to give effect to the New Zealand Policy Statement/.

Conflict occurs as a result of Council failing to respond to local residents' complaints / issues with regard to horses training, when the horse trainers and their jockeys fail to comply with the their own Code of Conduct. Just imagine the conflict between competing beach users when the number of thoroughbred horses trained here increases from 100 to 200, should the Private Plan change be approved.

The arrogance of some riders/trainers give cause for concern, yesterday was a prime example. When 5 horses and 3 riders exited onto the beach after hours. We stood and watched them.approx 10 minutes past 11.

This happens too often .

The local residents of Marsden Village have been raising issues with WDC for years. Having personally spoken to some older residents who remember when the arrangement was initially discussed with them to allow the horses to train on the beach. They are quite clear. The agreement was that horses must turn at the pine trees. (near the first stormwater outlet) Some how and at sometime without consultation with local affected residents, it has been extended to the second stormwater outlet. This shows no respect for our locals and the public's right

to use the beach without risk or harm.. It is quite impossible to walk over hoof prints and most certainly if one is older and or has balance or disability issues, and or youngsters. In the last 4 years since I have resided in the village I have on several occasions reported unacceptable behaviour. Some locals are intimidated when these thoroughbred horses get so close to them. The damage to the environment/beach is seen quite clearly below in the photos. It is unfair that this practice is allowed to carry on. I have until recently felt that as long as the horses could be restricted to using the area other than directly outside the village it could work however I no longer support this belief.. Nothing has been achieved in 4 years, nothing has changed in 4 years, some arrogant riders still abuse the option that they were given by the locals to use the beach all those years ago.. I truly dread the thought should this Plan Change be approved with the likelihood of twice the amount of horses. I am asking you, the Commissioners, to seriously consider whether this practice which does not constitute a Marine activity be cancelled outright and recommend it accordingly.

We must also contend with horse faeces often left on the beach . Our village children (and visitors alike) are regularly exposed to this when playing on the beach , it does not necessarily get swept out to sea at the tidal change. It can be there for days. Clearly a Public Health Issue. It has been said by some race course members that their horses do not defecate while training. Well the photos are there to prove it . These not from recreational riders as is so often said . The lengths that we as locals have to go to , to be heard, is shameful.

The beach is classified as a road. However, three years ago a petition resulted in approximately 2000 bona fide signatures were collected to put a stop to vehicles on the beach. With increase in traffic movement, should this development go ahead, there will be no room for pedestrian traffic?



Ruakaka Beach



Race horses being trained above high water mark



Tyre marks (and horse) on the Ruakaka Beach



The person taking the photos above was within 50 meters of this horse and rider which is contrary to the Racing Club's Code of Conduct.(outside the village)



Horse hoof prints in the soft sand close to the toe of the dune and across the beach.



Horse & rider beyond 2nd storm water outlet



Horse faeces broken up by tidal action



Fresh horse faeces – Public health issue!

Effects on People and the Environment of the Immediate Area:

The proposed 350 residential development along with its population, will, have devastating effects on the natural resources and will contribute to the destruction of the natural habitat in the surrounding area.

There will be major changes to amenities enjoyed by existing residents, e.g. substantial increase in traffic along Peter Snell Road and Tamure Place, should Tamure Place be opened for use by future residents. As well, there

will be serious risk to property and personal safety issues in terms of civil emergencies such as flooding and Tsunamis. We only have to observe what has happened in the Philippines recently to imagine what could happen here.

As everyone familiar with this area knows, there is only one entrance and one exit to Marsden Point Road, even if Tamure Place is opened up!!!!!!!!!!!!!!How on earth would the extra people be vacated and to where.

SEE HAZARD MAP

Effects on Birdlife and the Ruakaka Wildlife Refuge:

The Ruakaka Wildlife Refuge is a mere 200 meters from this proposed development. It is home to wading birds such as the oyster catcher which lives, feeds and breeds in the refuge and along the Ruakaka beach.

I have witnessed, on many occasions, hundreds of godwits in the vicinity of the Wildlife Refuge, particularly when they cannot roost or feed in the Whangarei Harbour during King tides. The increase in recreational beach users will surely have a devastating effect on the wellbeing and survival of these vulnerable, defenseless creatures. I remind you all, that the godwit, the champion migrant of the bird world, is protected under an International Agreement for the Protection of Migratory Birds, to which New Zealand is a signatory?

I will most certainly be sending a signal to the organization, of the possibility of Council consenting to this Private Change 113.

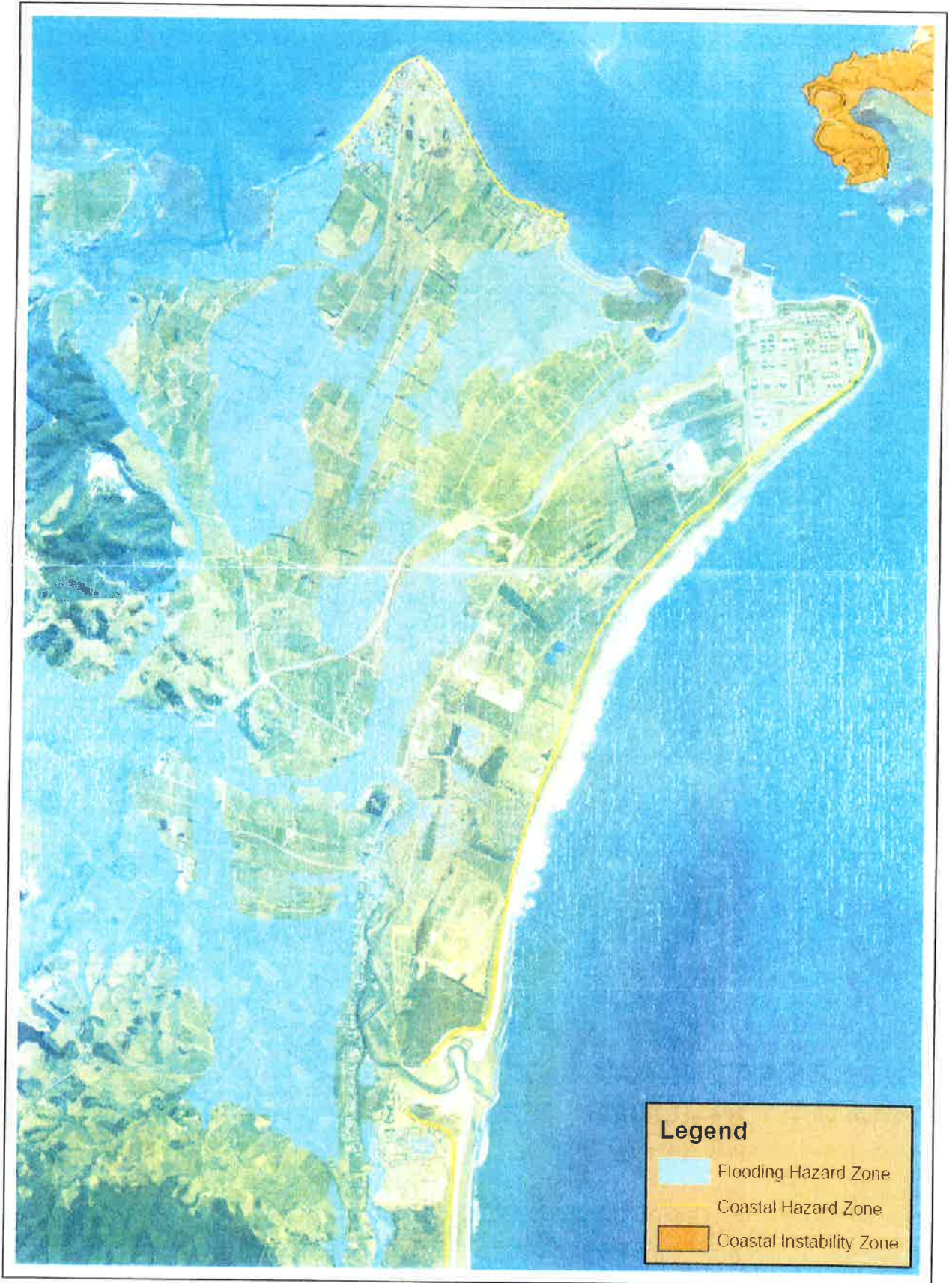
For the uninitiated the Wildlife Refuge follows the Ruakaka River to the bridge on Marsden Point Road. Already in the past 2 weeks I have observed (new to the area) local residents playing with their 2 very large dogs on the sandbanks in the river itself. Dogs are not permitted in the Refuge. The effect on the wildlife, should the human population increase does not bode well.

IN CONCLUSION I wish to emphasise the necessity for a precautionary approach. To consider all those issues raised by local people, people who live in and know this area. ~~People who do not have a vested interest.~~ I wish also to remind you of the affect the issues raised now, have on the locals. This Plan Change 113 is after all in support of Gambling.

MANS GREED SHOULD NOT DISRUPT or DAMAGE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

Flooding and Coastal Hazard Zones

0 0.4 0.8 1.6 2.4 3.2 Kilometers



Appendix 2 Tsunami Inundation Map

