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Bob McLellan

7 Paton St

Mangaroa

Upper Hutt

bobsnotes@xtra.co.nz

4-5267775

1	CEX	UPPER HUTT CITY COUNCIL	8	PPM
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Proposed Plan Change 15
Upper Hutt City Council
Private Bag 907
UPPER HUTT 5140

November 04 2012

Ref Plan Change 15 Flood and Erosion Hazard Areas

I am not directly affected by PC15. I wish to be heard in support of this submission and I do not want to put a joint case. I require the Council to make a greater effort to actually engage with the affected people and arrive at a consensus on actions to be taken.

Reference

In this I am referring to the many documents released by the Council and GWRC in relation to the Plan Change 15, including the maps.

The points I wish to make

Hazard Management

There is no doubt that we should be assessing possible hazards and taking suitable action when they are identified. I am not convinced that the details of the hazards in PC 15 are correct and that the actions are appropriate.

I am concerned that this Change has been 6 years in the making and the affected residents have been given only 4 weeks to respond to a highly complex and technical proposal. While it is true that much of this has been previously available the formal response can only be done when the consultative documents are released. This requires validation of previous material, analysis of new material, accessing professional advice and consideration of the response.

PC 15 is based on reports done by GW and the Council seem to accept no responsibility for them. This leaves any resident with concerns to deal with both parties. The Council should accept responsibility for the material from GW that it is using and resolve any issues raised by residents with GW.

Hydraulic Analysis

This is acknowledged to be a desktop exercise with some limited field work. There have been serious concerns expressed, and not answered, about some of the aspects of this analysis. The attitude of Officers seems to be that it is expert work and they are not going to question it despite residents' concerns. This is not a very helpful attitude.

The council should provide support to the residents to reach a consensus position on aspects of the report.

Erosion Analysis

Similar to Hydraulic Analysis above.

Property Values

There are two letters included with the proposal which purport that the hazards have already been taken into account by residents when buying properties. They go on to suggest that because of this the property values already include an assessment of the hazards so Council notification will not affect values. [The risk associated with the hazard may have the effect of diminishing property value, however, it is not the hazard map that causes that effect; it is the risk itself. Bognar 11-06-2012]

This assertion is not supported by the facts. What seems to be happening in practice is that people are saying 'if the Council has approved this subdivision and building site, then it must be ok'.

There is about \$180M worth of property directly affected by this plan and Councillors need to be absolutely certain about the economic effect of any decision they might make.

Council Actions

The proposed changes to the District Plan are vague and will lead to inconsistency.

Recommendation 2 'THAT Council authorise Officers to make any minor non-policy changes to the details of proposed Plan Change 15 should the need arise.' is an open door to differing interpretations and ongoing contention. There are no criteria, no definitions, no review.

Any change should be brought before Council.

What exactly is being approved? If a property owner wants to develop the property they need to know exactly what rules apply to that piece of the property, down to the meter. The current maps are not accurate enough for that. Is the Council proposing that owners engage a detailed survey, one by one, then argue it through the Council? Surely not. There are references to the river channel, but this is loosely defined and moves with time.

The Plan Change should include the accurate details of property zoning and define these zones in a way that is able to be accurately identified.

The Plan Change changes the control on the St Patricks Estate from 'prevent' to 'The St Patricks Estate Area is identified as being in the River Corridor. Whilst new development should ordinarily occur outside of the River Corridor, the St Patricks Estate Area is recognised as an area in which development can occur provided the flood risk to the Area is appropriately managed.'

Given the history of this area the Council should separate this out into another Plan Change.

The intersection of Parkes Line and McLaren St is identified as an erosion risk. If this erodes, some 50 houses will be isolated. The main risk is erosion at the base of the cliff, which in turn is most likely to be caused by changes to the river, manmade or otherwise. There is no recognition of this potentially serious and costly problem.

The Council should designate an area of the river which requires special approval before any work is done on it.

The Council should develop a plan for residents access in the event of erosion of the intersection.

The Council should periodically inspect the area to note changes and anticipate any problem.

The Council should develop a plan to prevent such a problem.

The decision I require from the Council.

The Council decision must be to decline this Plan Change as it is currently proposed and make a greater effort to actually engage with the affected people and arrive at a consensus on actions to be taken.