



## Christmas Greetings – and some updates

### Season's Greetings

May we first wish all our members and those on our distribution list a safe and happy Christmas and New Year. For those that are travelling, stay safe and enjoy your journeys. For those staying at home, we hope you have a fulfilling and / or relaxing time, depending on what you hope to achieve.

### Intensification – and Actions Now Required

**Developments over the past 2 – 3 weeks require some further action from concerned citizens.** By way of background, the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021, passed late last year with support from both Labour and National parties, required Councils in a number of towns to amend their planning rules to allow for 3 dwellings of up to 3 storeys to be constructed on a range of single sites. Councils' were able to introduce some safeguards through so-called qualifying matters. The range of such matters was heavily proscribed by the legislation. The consequential changes to Auckland City's zoning rules, and the associated qualifying matters, are set out in what has become known as Plan Change 78 (and some additional plan change numbers). Submitters will be able to present in support of their written submissions to an Independent Hearings Panel, or to simply rely on their written submissions. It is the responsibility of the Panel to recommend to Council any further changes or amendments to the published plan changes.

Auckland Council has now introduced some additional steps in the review process, and requires supplementary submissions to be provided by 20 January 2023. **Submitters are able to support or oppose submission points by other submitters** (and, similarly, to be on the receiving end of such feedback). Box Properties, the developer for the proposed apartments on the Steward Motors site, has made a submission supporting the up-zoning (intensification) but opposing the water and wastewater infrastructure constraint for the site. They request that this be removed. It is our view that the constraint must apply to the area a whole, and that the site does not qualify for special treatment. We therefore ask that submitters consider submitting their views on the request to Auckland Council by 20 January 2023. We can provide a copy of the Box Properties submission to interested parties, or they can find it on the council website.

By way of more general interest, members may like to know that we have had meeting to discuss our concerns regarding the legislation with Christopher Luxon, Chris Bishop, and Simeon Brown (twice), and with Watercare (twice).

### Sandspit Road Apartments.

We may have won a battle, but not the war! Box Properties legal advisor has advised the Environment Court that the current application to construct the 54 apartments on the old Steward Motors and adjoining sites is unviable in the present circumstances. The developer will therefore request leave to withdraw the proceedings. As foreshadowed in our 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph above, our concern remains that in order to create something that is "viable" he will use the new intensification legislation and Plan Change 78 to justify a higher density development. Whether this complies with the Plan Change 78 rules – and therefore requires no resource consent – remains to be seen. The location is subject to Qualifying Matters safeguards, but

Council planners may deem any future development is not effected by these provisions. We will keep members informed.

### **Déjà Vue?**

It is interesting to observe the debate on cost savings for Auckland Council. At the time that Auckland City was first established in its current format and the initial budget was being formulated, we made proposals about selling commercial assets that were producing a lower rate of return than the cost of borrowing; and reducing subsidies paid to Council Controlled Organizations not used to support strategic services such as bus and rail transport. This included subsidies to what are now Auckland Unlimited and Eke Panuku, which should be able to achieve sufficient revenue from their services to cover their costs. We also discussed with the late Dick Quax port ownership models used globally to ensure adequate rates of return to central or local governments.

### **Cockles**

The latest survey shows the cockle numbers continue to show a steady decline. We will be developing an action plan to address this issue.

### **Thanks**

A big thank you to the Howick Local Board for their grant towards restoration of the far end of Cockle Bay Beach and the walkway from Windross to Pah Road. A dedicated team of volunteers has been making great progress. Please go and have a look at what they have achieved.

### **Congratulations**

Congratulations to our re-elected ward Councillors on the HLB; to Damian Light on his election as Chair of the HLB; to Sharon Stewart on her re-election to Council and to Maurice Williamson on his election and new responsibilities sorting out an affordable budget.

December 2022.