



**TOMAREE RATEPAYERS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION INC.
MINUTES - GENERAL MEETING – 12 August 2013 - 7 pm
Nelson Bay Bowling Club – Bay West & East Rooms Level 1**

ATTENDANCE: 36 as per attendance book and an estimated 15 others in attendance who did not sign the book.

1. Apologies were received from Cr John Nell, Ken Shadler, Jon & Fran Digges, Annie & Clive Howarth, Pam Mumford and Mark Penn.

2. Introduction of Brendan Callander – Dog Area Review

President Terry Wall introduced Port Stephens Council officers - Brendan Callander, Community and Recreation Planning Coordinator and Emma Shanks, Media Officer. It was emphasised that TRRA was acting as a platform to raise awareness in the community of the review and as such will not be making a submission and nor will any motions be accepted from the floor.

Main points made in introduction by Brendan

- 10 years since the last dog area review
- A petition from Fingal Bay to Council earlier in the year and other dog issues on the Tilligerry Peninsula had been the main catalyst for a review of the existing areas.
- Stage 1 involved staff looking at existing maps and where it was working and where it was not, overriding legislation and other factors.
- Stage 2 (current stage of process) involves community consultation via public forums at various locations, a Facebook page which already has 255 friends and 532 submissions and comments. This has been interactive and Council officers have been answering questions left on Facebook. A reminder was given that Facebook comments are not made with any privacy. Submissions close at 5 pm on Monday 19th August.
- Stage 3 will be a review of the comments, recommended changes to mapping and promulgation for Councillors to review at a future meeting
- Stage 4 will involve finalisation of mapping and presenting to Council for final approval.
- The new maps will not come into effect until approved by Council.

Criteria includes

- only Council owned and managed land, eg, NPWS areas are not included



- Associated legislation, eg, Companions Act which precludes dogs within 10 metres of a playground
- Mapping only for off lead and prohibited areas,
- Prohibited area examples include sports fields, high concentration of people reserves, areas adjoining Marine Parks (eg Fly Point); patrolled beaches, Fingal & Birubi
- Blanket approach for all other Council reserves taken as on lead
- Dogs on leads acceptable in prohibited areas on designated pathways to facilitate passing through a prohibited area to access other areas.

Importance of Education and Signage

- Signage will be an important part of the implementation phase
- Information will be provided on the Council website; brochures will be produced for the general public and also provided to Vets

Questions/Discussion with Attendees

- Anna Bay prohibited areas are too extensive. A large petition will be presented in particular to exclude Shelley Beach from the prohibited area.
- Definition of patrolled beach was the “general eye of the personnel patrolling”
- Strong concern about need for consultation with NPWS
- Suggested inclusion in prohibited zone of Dutchies from toilet block to play area as people would still be able to transit through with dogs on leads. Popular picnic area.
- Questions on lack of enforcement of current rules should be referred to enforcement officers and are not part of the review. Rangers cannot be everywhere all the time.
- Query on multi lingual signage – signs will include picture signage.
- Suggestion to check out other Council websites from around Australia, eg some allow dogs off lead on sporting fields when they are not in use.
- Not sending a welcome message to tourists with the limited areas we have for dogs off lead.
- Perception presented that 99% of dog owners are responsible and the whole exercise should just be risk managed.
- Concerns about how the message is relayed about transit through prohibited areas.
- Not enough dogs off lead areas, particularly on beaches or for people without vehicles to drive to dog beaches.
- Designated times for dogs off leads in the evening through to early morning seems to work well in many places.
- Beaches have few people on them outside tourist times and weekends. Call for more flexibility with seasonality.

- Current regulation of dogs generally on Birubi Beach and clarification sought on which area is designated as patrolled.
- New signage will be part of the review and resourcing this could be one of the challenges.
- Families would like a park set aside to picnic with their dog.
- Concern about dogs polluting the beaches and the fear that many people have of dogs off leads
- Access does not need to be the whole beach and the health benefits for owners is beneficial.
- How do we get people to read the signs? Education is the key
- Port Stephens dog laws appear Draconian compared to other States and places.
- Dog parks are available, particularly in densely populated areas, eg Leichhardt where there are coffee outlets and a general social area for dog owners. Opportunity for this to happen naturally at the proposed prohibited area at Fingal if cycleway and play area was fenced off
- Comment about the public consultation the lack of real opportunity to talk to Council officers present. Council used the “drop in” concept so that some of the voices not usually heard in a public forum would not be drowned out by the rest.

Where to from Here?

- Need to accept that people, other than dog owners, need a voice as well. Not everyone will be happy with the outcomes.
- Brendan and Emma will be advised when minutes are available on the TRRA website. There will be no separate TRRA submission. Members need to submit their own.
- Submissions will be sorted by Council officers (due to the volume) to find common threads. Names are not included on the business papers for privacy reasons. However you should be able to identify the comment you made.
- Changes from the current maps will be highlighted for the Council meeting and included on the agenda (publicly available from the Council website from 5 pm on the preceding Friday). Once adopted a new set of maps will be produced and publicised (as indicated in the introduction.)
- Everyone advised to put their own comments into Council by Monday 19th.
- Full contact details were displayed on the screen. They can be in any form, eg, email to council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au , letter to P O Box 42, Raymond Terrace or join in Facebook.
- Recommendations are made to Councillors and it will be up to them to decide.

At this point 8.30 pm , half of the attendees left the meeting.

3. Minutes of meeting held 3rd June 2013 as posted on the website were confirmed.

Moved John James, seconded Nigel Waters. Carried.

4. Matters arising – Deferred to Item 8

5. Introduction of New Treasurer and Treasurer's report

Moved Geoffrey Washington, seconded Neil Hansford that the Committee action be endorsed for the appointment of Dennis Pittorino to the position of Treasurer following the recent resignation of Brian Watson-Will. Carried.

Moved Joy Haines, seconded Jean Armstrong that a thank you letter to Brian be sent for undertaking the Treasurer's role since inception. Carried.

The President welcomed Dennis as Treasurer who reported that the current balance was \$1,146.62.

6. Correspondence In and Out - A register was tabled and members were invited to request copies of items of interest to them from the Secretary

7. Current Issues – Information has been posted on the website. Only brief summaries were given at the meeting.

(a) Nelson Bay Road Cycleway update John James reported that identifying the safest entry points (grades and visibility) and a funding issue with Council as the main challenges for further work on the gravel road left by Ausgrid along Nelson Bay Road. Meetings had been held to have it converted into a cycleway to link Frost Road with Salamander. Ausgrid has now signed off and gave Council funds. Further funds will hopefully be available from Council in the next financial year

(b) Planning Issues – Nigel Waters reported briefly on a range of issues, many of which are awaiting approval/information from other departments/authorities before further consideration, eg, **Park & Ride at Old Anna Bay sports field; Sand Access Road, Cabbage Tree Road “tourist” development**, which is not part of the airport planning framework. He expressed concerns about the major planning **changes to the NSW planning system** which will cut into community consultation except at the start. An independent lobby group Better Planning Network has been formed and the most comprehensive information is available from them. We have been following up a submission on **sand movements from the Salamander Shopping Centre to Deimars Quarry which will involve truck movements through Wanda Beach Shops**. We have major concerns about the **funding for Birubi Surf Club and Shoal Bay Foreshore work** now under way. Both are positive for the community but wonder where the money is coming from. We continue to express concern about the way the **Samarau Resort** has been handled particularly with around \$10M already down the drain. We are currently considering the **reclassification of land immediately in front of Soldiers Point Marina**, public land which the Marina has been using free of charge for many years. Council now undertaking a reclassification. We are concerned that the ratepayers receive a good return on such a valuable piece of real estate. Public access is also a major issue and one which we will be watching. We are working with Soldiers Point Community Action group who have major concerns. .

(c) Other Issues from Members from Previous Meeting

Samaruai - Dick advised that a posting will go on the website about this.

Development on the Dunes on Anna Bay Road behind Birubi Surf Club

David Birss asked about why this was allowed to be developed. TRRA did put in a submission previously. There was a loophole with its classification as rural (which permitted some types of tourist developments) and not a lot that could be done at that time. Members generally expressed concerns about the sand movement there.

8. Other Issues

(a) Nominations for TRRA Committee for AGM were encouraged

(b) Reminder – Membership Subscription Renewals was given

9. General Business: Nil

NEXT MEETING – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS - Monday 14 October

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm