Newsletter Update

Dear neighbour

I hope you're enjoying the current winter sunshine – so gorgeous.

Here's a short update since our AGM (Part II), way back in March. We are also grateful to Tony Skelton for his input and address to the meeting (click here to view a transcript of his address).

PC78

Overview Update

We are keeping a constant eye on the revolving door scene on Plan Change 78. At this time, we have had a reprieve on timing granted by the Hon. Chris Bishop to allow the Council to consider the impacts of the Auckland Anniversary floods, Cyclone Gabrielle and the cancellation of the Auckland Light Rail Corridor project. **The deadline for completing decisions is now 31 March 2026.**

The IHP

The Independent Hearings Panel has 5 new members including a new Chair, Matt Casey KC.

Concerns

That the detailed submissions, to the previous Panel, on the broader planning matters that concern St Marys Bay have not been addressed logically - hopefully the current IHP will go back and read these submissions.

Principal concerns for SMB:

1. Lack of capacity in our combined wastewater/stormwater infrastructure
2. Removal of the Special Character Overlay in favour of an intensification residential development model
3. The illogical walking catchment determination for the City Centre and Ponsonby Road

Hazard Study
As you are aware we have engaged Dr Ian Wallis of Melbourne, a world recognised expert in wastewater/stormwater infrastructure as our expert. Further, we continue to have representation at the Watercare/Healthy Waters Liaison Committee where we hammer home that the five rainfall events since the tunnel opened in August 2022, have caused network surcharging and flooding of private property with sewage contaminated stormwater - our members have recorded at least 40 properties where this damage has occurred.

We have demanded that the St Marys Bay Association is seen as an important stakeholder in the consultation which the Council is obliged to conduct on the hazard study which Minister Chris Bishop has forced upon them.

So far, the Council has failed to open the door to any meaningful consultation. We are keeping the pressure on for that purpose. We have sent a letter to the Chair Matt Casey (see copy attached), seeking consultation with SMB, however, we have received a rather disappointing response (see attached).

John Hill and Brain Putt are meeting with Watercare and Healthy Waters on 19 September, regarding the initial Flood Hazard study which has been completed without our input – check it out here: Flood Hazard Viewer.

Special Character
Removing the Special Character Area notation from St Marys Bay will have a devastating effect on our residential living environment. Our submissions opposing PC78 are focused on restoring the Special Character Area notation as it is in the operative Auckland Unitary Plan. There is no evidential basis for removing this protection and there is every reason, historically, socially, economically and physically to retain it. It is the administrative means by which the very character of St Marys Bay has been kept intact and protected for 30 years.

We will give you more updates on PC78 as they arise. At the moment, this hiatus has provided us with a breathing space to review our strategy and to consider our future funding needs.

Further, although we have convinced Council to remove THAB (5-6 storey apartments) from lower SMB west of St Mary's Road, two areas remain vulnerable:

- north/east of St Mary's Road
- upper West SMB alongside Jervois Road

It is vital that they are protected in order to retain the overall character of St Mary's Bay.

Infrastructure
As you may be aware, Watercare was successful in obtaining the use of Salisbury Reserve and further is not required to install overflow measuring telemetry in the eight Herne Bay engineered overflow points, which is disappointing. For more information on the Project Please click here.

SMBA supports the need to progress major public infrastructure work. We are advised that as one of the main stakeholder groups open lines of communication will be maintained. We have also registered our interest in this project with the Waitemata Local Board.

Further, we have contacted Watercare to remind them that we are awaiting their promised review of the operation of our SMT (St Mary's Tunnel) and how it will be connected to the CI extension. We have also asked them for an engineered response to the surcharging of the SMT and its impacts upon our combined sewer lines and hence our properties.

Leys Institute
Some good news - Council has now finally allocated funding for the seismic strengthening of the buildings. In case you missed it here is a link with further information: Our Auckland - Leys. We hope that it's not too long before some work actually commences and that we see some action and a reasonable timeline for using the buildings again. A huge thank you to Helen Geary - Friends of Leys Institute co-ordinator for keeping the pressure on.

We need people
We rely on a dedicated few to advance and support issues for SMBA. We need people with skills to support: lawyers, planners, communications, architects, engineers etc. Please contact us if you can offer some time and whether you would like to be on the Committee or put forward a nomination.

Communication – send us your mobile number
We need to get a bit more with the times! We'd like to be able to communicate with everyone in our area via a St Marys Bay WhatsApp group. We've of course have your email address, but if you could send me a note of your mobile number, we can start transitioning towards using WhatsApp.

Alternatively, click here to update your profile and check we have your correct mobile number.

This will allow us to send out short messages quickly and more frequently, as required. Please email your mobile details to stmarysbayassociation@gmail.com or click here to update your profile with your mobile number. Thank you.

Ponsonby News
Ponsonby News needs the community's help to keep printing. If you can help, consider supporting them via their givealittle page https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/ponsonbynews

We are always keen to hear from you – please contact us via email stmarysbayassociation@gmail.com

Kind regards

Alison Hunter
For and on behalf of St Mary’s Bay Association

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