

Council

**Wednesday, 30 November 2005
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN
THE CIVIC CENTRE, 6 WAIPAREIRA AVENUE, LINCOLN, WAITAKERE CITY,
ON WEDNESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2005, COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM.**

PART B - REPORT OF THE MAYOR

WEST IS NOT SOUTH - AVOID THE CONFUSION

It's a relatively unknown fact but the word 'news' came from a combination of the four points of the compass. North, east, west and south. Therefore news, you would think, comes from all four locations however lately it's been more weighted with stories from the south about deaths and beatings and South Auckland's youth gang woes. An ill wind on the weather vein.

No one could be oblivious to the tragedy of South Auckland and it's a tragedy made somehow worse with the knowledge millions of dollars have been poured into its infrastructure. This community has I believe suffered from neglect where its mattered most and I say this from many years observing its continued escalating problems.

Not unlike the Paris riots, so well described in an article in the NZ Herald on 8 November by Gwynne Dyer, which says rioting kids is about lack of ownership, lack of perceivable understanding and lack of nurture. It's worth just spending a moment to consider how the French got themselves into such a worrying mess and it is a serious lesson for New Zealand which fortunately has avoided this kind of rot at the core of administration. The hundreds of cars that have now been burnt in Paris streets are in fact a mark of the French delusion that all people can be treated equally and therefore will live happily under that objective. And while the French state has made it a mantra that all will be French citizens it is clearly not the case.

More than 30 years ago New Zealand governments, thank God, decided it was hopeless to transform urban Maori, Pacific Islanders and the new arrivals from Vietnam, Cambodia and China into the role model of white Kiwis. Even Muldoon, points out Chris Trotter in a recent excellent Independent article, was smart enough to suggest gang members be incorporated into plans for social and economic development. Remember, it was Muldoon (that tyrant of the day) that actually suggested young Maori offenders be sent back to the marae for Maori justice.

And so across the board both National and Labour Parties have avoided assimilationist policies. And that is a lesson we need to hold clear in Waitakere. Not that I have fears we are going down that road. I believe, because of our early Croatian, Dutch and Maori communities, we have in some ways avoided the ghettoising of communities through ethnic division and abandonment. The west has had a remarkable and positive response to new neighbours and settlers. It pleases me we have a history to build on and that somehow communities have made it work. Thus we have avoided what is evident in Paris and in a smaller way in south Auckland. But I am in no mood to let things slip and I am sure you aren't either.

I recently attended a remarkable event. It was the graduation ceremony for the Committee for Auckland leadership course. Our very own Enterprise Waitakere Chief Executive Officer, John Wadsworth, was being honoured and recognised.

The ceremony was preceded by a graduates' presentation on the work they had done over the past year. We heard about the development of an amazing website called Discover Auckland but what stunned the audience at the Auckland War Memorial Museum function was the work the group had done with south Auckland schools.



The presentation centred on mentoring and funding for these schools. What a tragic and sad picture was painted. These schools, with our future generations, were so deprived and desperate the audience was reduced to tears. To hear about schools which had run out of paper and that were now asking their young pupils to write on 'tiles' – that's right bathroom and kitchen tiles given by local suppliers. If the group was stunned when they were told this believe me so was the ceremony's audience drawn from Auckland's major corporates. These young leaders felt they had a link and a possible solution to the plight of these schools and spoke eloquently that they wanted to stay in the loop and to mentor and help principals and teachers that we felt must be in despair.

This really is about the core of education and communities. How can an education system produce young, proud and vital citizens while enduring this kind of existence? Many of us said these glorious young kids are simply fodder for jails, gangs, drugs and death.

So, groups like the Committee for Auckland and its leadership programme are reaching out to communities in the south and trying to bring corporate funding and support to this community. I felt I would also attempt to bring the other Mayoral colleagues to understand that the south is more than just the problems reported in the media. There is a deep and underlying situation that needs to be talked about and addressed by all of us in the region and indeed the country. When I drove home I thought I would write this report to you and ask you also support a New Year initiative so the Council could interact with our community leaders across the spectrum and understand what they want and need. A consultation to head any trouble off at the pass if you like. To that end I am making the recommendation at the end of this section of my report.

As for the south, I believe there should be a task force set up to help and I hope that task force will encompass education, social and cultural support as well as advice if it's wanted by our colleagues at the Manukau City Council. To me, we are all in this together because, believe me, if something happens in the south it will spread. That's just the way it goes.

The south to me, and it is a personal view, has had enormous amounts of government funding poured in for the past 20 years but the problem is bigger than a quick funding fix.

In stark contrast while the west has struggled, when you compare us to south Auckland tragedy becomes triumph. Put simply this is a city hard to match. We've still got a long way to go, and we will get there, but the difference out west is hard work and commitment.

The 'west' on the other hand is on a high and in all modesty a New Zealand success story. Crime is down and our employment is up. Waitakere is functioning as a modern 21st Century City with new state-of-the-art libraries being built and opened or in construction and a glorious new stadium opened just over a year ago. In less than a year Council will move to its new Civic Centre in the Waitakere Central business complex and transport hub, solidly establishing historic Henderson as the heart of Waitakere City.

That's not to say Waitakere or west Auckland hasn't had heart before. It has. Its amalgam of cultures, both old and new, have found the ability to live together, supporting each other's lifestyles and embracing their differences. That's because this community is colour blind. In the west a neighbour is a neighbour and their kids belong to us all. That's our main point of difference.

The Council has been the glue holding together and leading the community as have the police, the courts and our youth organisations. Much of what we have done has been for our kids and we make no secret of that. We've invested in youth as our future.

And we've done the clean up. We pulled tonnes of rubbish out of the creeks and streams, we planted a million trees, we washed the street walls of graffiti and reduced violence and road wreckage. We replaced grunge with skateboard parks, swimming pools and walking and cycling tracks in 400 city parks.



We know boredom and lack of jobs can play havoc and so our community supports a myriad of volunteer groups, clubs, churches, sporting and social services, all cheered on by us, as they have for the past 20 years.

I'm confident our youth are more positive than their counterparts in other cities. They have more hope and view their future as bright. Why shouldn't it be? There are many opportunities out west for our young people. And they are proud. Again, why shouldn't they be? There's plenty to be proud about.

Marae play a huge part with kapa haka and kohunga reo and so the west starts working with them young, gathering them for the schools and the communities to nurture. And although we get a hard time this community thrives in a quiet kind of way. We've taken the criticism we spend too much time on consultation, Maori issues and social problems but it's been vital and the results are seen in our true progress.

The culmination is a sense of place. Our surveys show an overwhelming support for the City and what it offers. Part of our technique has been to celebrate our heroes by awarding monthly certificates and citations to those who have made a contribution. It works.

I think much of Waitakere's success can be laid squarely at the Council's doorstep in terms of strategic thinking and strong leadership. We've had a vision and a philosophy. Thirteen years ago I became Mayor and since then I have worked for and been committed to Waitakere's future and the future of its young people. My hero, the Roman general Aurelius said what's good for the hive is good for the bee.

At a recent Council strategic planning day, I introduced a former policeman, rapper and community leader, Glenn Compain. Glenn is one of many emerging leaders working with the Council to ensure our young do not drift to crime, drugs and despair - a safety net for the future.

Glenn certainly has the street credentials - he's already spent many mornings (i.e. from midnight to four o'clock in the morning) on the streets playing basketball and rugby with youngsters who either don't want to go home or who have no home to go to.

Glenn agrees with me west Auckland youth are nothing like the youngsters in south Auckland. More than half of our young people have a totally different mindset because they live in Waitakere City and have tasted the advantages in that. A particular point of difference is our heroes and how we have managed to use them and their skills. Glenn's mate and former All Black Michael Jones is a true inspiration to the kids out here and he attends every youth event he can. Then there's former Warrior Duanne Mann, Beatrice Faumuina, Karen Walker, Sir Edmund Hillary, Jan Hellriegel and Ewen Gilmour to name just a few. My recent book "Westies" chronicles just some.

Another strong point is our highly respected and successful schools such as Massey High and Kelston Boys'. Glenn, whose father is Fijian and mother Maori, puts Kelston Boys' success down to the fact many of its teachers have been there continuously for years and that they actually really do care about what happens to their charges.

The same is the case in our primary schools. Indeed it was a teacher at his primary school who turned Glenn's life around. The class clown and an under achiever academically, Glenn was called to this teacher's office one day where he was told he was as intelligent as a dolphin. To use Glenn's words it was a turning point. No-one had ever told him something so positive and so Glenn thought if I'm as intelligent as a dolphin I don't need to misbehave. The rest, as they say, is history and Glenn is now firmly back in west Auckland with a desire to impart similarly strong messages to the next generation in order to make a difference. I know he will be heard and he will be successful.



This is a story of the west. There are thousands and together they weave a positive present and future. It's a story that needs to be echoed throughout the region and maybe New Zealand.

I think we can help the south but we also need to clearly identify with our own stakeholders in the New Year what is needed, what we are doing and what we could do.

This is not, by the way, about funding. It's about mentoring and about putting companies and organisations together with our own communities. It's tried overseas in Australia and it works. There are a number of very good models where business mentoring to schools and cultural organisations make enormous differences.

In one way it's simply about support and leadership and it's about caring and belonging. It's not all warm and fuzzy. It's actually about the realities of the future. I believe this Council and its officers and staff are more than capable of bringing together a series of forums that may lift our concern, our knowledge and our support and I urge you to support the following:

Recommendation

That Waitakere City Council actively promotes and hosts four open forums in March, May, July and September 2006 so Council and Councillors can hear about the concerns and challenges being faced by groups and organisations in the City including Police, the schools (both secondary and intermediate), Maori and the Pacific community.

Subiaco

Not to be confused with the Subiaco Academy in Arkansas, America or the town in Italy! This Subiaco is in Perth, Western Australia and as its name suggests it has a subway, an underground rail system and that's why last month I led a delegation including Auckland Regional Council Councillor Joel Cayford, Waitakere City Councillors Linda Cooper, Derek Battersby and Penny Hulse, Waitakere Properties Chief Executive Officer Greg Parker, Enterprise Waitakere Chief Executive Officer John Wadsworth, Auckland Regional Transport Authority Chief Executive Alan Thompson, Auckland City Councillor Richard Simpson, Hamilton City Councillor Maria Westphal, AMP Head of Alternative Assets Murray Gribben and ONTRACK Manager Ted Calvert to see it. What a trip it turned out to be.

This is a redevelopment project centred around a sunken railway station that has become the new hub for an array of successful commercial and residential developments.

The history of Subiaco, as captured in the book 'Identity Prized', is one of boom and bust. It is regarded as vibrant, successful and fashionable. However, as a commercial centre in the 1980s that was not the case and it was perceived to have major shortcomings.

The buildings had become tired, the scale of shopping on offer did not match the major regional shopping centres and retail vacancy rates were relative high.

In response the Subiaco Mainstreet Project emerged with a mission "to unite all retailers, businesses, residents and shoppers together for the same goal - to promote and revitalise the Subiaco area".

Despite considerable effort and good intentions the project struggled and collapsed after a few short years. Agreement on priorities was not able to be reached, there was criticism from other commercial centres within the City the Council only provided limited support and the business community by itself was not able to fund the implementation of the plan.

Some years earlier the railway line from Perth to Fremantle had been closed and speculation abounded at the time that the motive for this had been to use the railway reserve for a six lane highway. After intense local pressure the line was eventually reopened but rail service appeared to be more about some past era than a way of the future.



North of the railway line was the Jolimont Special Area zone. This was in decay with a number of large industries closed and either relocated or planned to close and relocate to newer industrial estates in the middle and outer suburbs.

This led to the state government of the day exploring the possibility of selling its land holdings in that locality. At the time a proposal was presented to raise the railway line two metres to overcome problems at the underpass which for a long time had been a traffic bottleneck. However, the community reacted strongly against the proposal seeing it as accentuating the already existing physical barrier posed by the railway line through Subiaco.

As an alternative the City developed a concept called Subiaco 2000. That concept proposed not raising the railway line but lowering it. The project has now been complete with the railway line sunk and the public infrastructure works completed. The railway station works and high quality public spaces have been created. The critics have been silenced, the commercial negatives have simply not materialised and property values have risen. It's a huge success story and the delegation learned an enormous amount which will only help and benefit our discussions about New Lynn.

The other benefit of the trip was to develop stronger relationships with our local and regional partners who were part of the delegation. As we all know, strong relationships are a huge asset in local government.

A huge thank you to Yvonne Rust who pulled favours from old friends and colleagues to get us all there. It was so heartening to see the respect Yvonne had with her former colleagues in the transport business and I thank her sincerely for the concept and the delivery.

The Mayoral Report posed asked delegation member Auckland Regional Councillor Joel Cayford to give us his thoughts about the trip and I have included them immediately below.

"I begin by acknowledging Waitakere City Council's initiative in arranging the Perth Study trip and its energy organising site visits and presentations from key Perth local and state government officials.

I found it an invaluable visit. It is one thing to go to a city and see things that would be good here in Auckland, but it is quite another to understand the journey that lies hidden in the background and the past that led to the sights we feast upon. For me the highlight was to appreciate the learning that has unfolded in Perth as the city has progressively undertaken urban regeneration projects.

These began with east Perth, an inner city industrial area which was cleaned up and subdivided into a stunning medium density housing development around its own waterfront. This terraced housing backing onto service lanes has been so attractive that other parts of Perth wanted the same thing. This first development completed in the 1990s has served as an exemplar for medium density housing for a population that is just as wedded to sprawl and large lot development as Aucklanders.

However East Perth lacked good connections with public transport, included no social housing provision, and was largely separate from other parts of the urban fabric. Subiaco was the next opportunity for redevelopment when surplus rail siding land became available. This was a brown field area, around an old railway station, and next to a rundown town centre. Its redevelopment has successfully integrated the new with the old (heritage preserved), delivered a wonderful transit orientated design, and provided an integrated retirement village and other mixed uses. As an exemplar it stands clear and strong as the sort of outcome that could be achieved at New Lynn. Provided we make it happen.



A goodly part of the trip was spent discussing how that might happen. Clearly Auckland Regional Council, Auckland Regional Transport Authority and ONTRACK need to sign up to that vision for New Lynn, and work together to make it happen. I am committed to working with Auckland Regional Council councillors and officers to bring about the institutional and informal changes needed so a process unfolds and funding lines are enabled to make an exemplar out of New Lynn for the rest of the Auckland region."

I also invited Mr Cayford to make a presentation to our meeting this month and I am sure you will agree with me the presentation is outstanding. Councillors Hulse, Cooper and Battersby will also make a presentation to the Council meeting in response.

Taking Waitakere to the World

It's nice to see us on a world stage. By now you will have heard about Waitakere's wonderful west coast providing the inspiration for New Zealand's 2006 Chelsea Flower Show entry. A model of the garden, designed by Xanthe White and sponsored by Tourism New Zealand, was unveiled at Ellerslie Flower Show. The garden has a simple black and green colour scheme and includes sculptures, glass water features, mirrors, pebbles and insets of pāua and greenstone. It follows the movement of water through the hills of the west coast out to the black sand beaches and the horizons beyond. By all accounts New Zealand's entry is tipped as a potential Chelsea show-stopper and it is simply wonderful to know Waitakere is such a major player.

A1-A4

You should also be pleased to see the pages from the international Air New Zealand magazine that features the organic industry and the comments from our very own Phoenix Drinks, an organic consumable company and success story for us in Waitakere, as attached at pages A1 to A4.

The organic cluster and our commitment to being the first city to be (and continuing to be) GE free is important to me personally and to many people in this City. The Green movement is still alive and well and when it is delivered in products that the article talks about we know something important is happening out there.

Two Letters you Should Read

It's felt a bit like trench warfare in the past month and it started when two Councillors raised the issue of inorganic collections.

You will recall we awarded citations to the extraordinary inorganic guys who pick up our mounds of inorganic rubbish. We did so because we wanted to acknowledge what a superb job they do, not only lifting what are Herculean weights onto their trucks but cleaning up the grass verges of all sorts of things including broken glass, much of which is often left by the scavengers whose blundering methods of poking around break as much as they retrieve. And then there's the dumping of huge piles of rubbish brought from as far away as Pukekohe to isolated streets in Waitakere, in the middle of the night, which is then hauled by Waitakere contractors to our bale site.

Councillors Hulse and Flaunty simply mentioned Council needed to take stock of the situation, a situation that could not continue without serious financial implications. We've always practised and indeed encouraged open and honest debate and that's what the occasion called for.

The subsequent reporting in the Western Leader led to a barrage of angry unbalanced mail disguised as Letters to the Editor. It seemed an open season of verbiage not dissimilar to the piles of dumped inorganics which encouraged letters to the editor on a variety of other topics from people who simply wanted to do a bit of Council bashing and / or attack Councillors on a personal level.



I came in for my own barrage from the well known angry letter writer Frank A Beuvink who earned the dubious honour of Letter of the Week for his lambasting of me over Maori representation and political preferences. It's a free society and everyone has a right to write angry letters but this was an over the top rant and my reply was edited down. Editorial licence saw too many pieces of my letter on the cutting room floor depriving me of my right of reply so I have published that below in my defence.

And as Councillor Hulse was also a victim of the cutting room floor I have also published a letter to the Western Leader from her which was simply not used.

My Letter ...

Dear Sir

I usually put down a period of 'silly season' to the after effects of the full moon however we've had a vintage silly season over the past month since Councillors Hulse and Flaunty mentioned their despair over dumped rubbish from other cities on our streets and the growing need to look at alternative methods of collection.

Councillor Hulse has been subjected to three weeks of hate mail passed off as letters to the editor of your publication.

Do Waitakere residents want Councillors never to debate or discuss anything in public? I don't think so.

Elected Councillors must have the right to ruminate without having to put up with the local newspaper whipping up readers' thoughts to a frenzy.

Mr Editor, don't you know when to say "this correspondence is now closed"?

And now I see you've decided to offer an incentive from sweetsdirect to encourage more and possibly better letters. A worthy idea however I would suggest the confectionery people might not want their all important brand name alongside 'winning' letters to the editor which leave only a very sour taste.

I would have thought you would need to go all the way to Mississippi to read sentiment such as that from last week's 'winner' Frank A Beuvink - hateful sentiment which abuses Maori and the democratic process and which has absolutely no place in modern, New Zealand society or anywhere for that matter. Yet Mr Beuvink is congratulated. I hope the confectionery hamper doesn't choke you Mr Beuvink.

Councillor Hulse's Letter ...

Barrar misinformation!

The letter to the editor from Merrydyd Barrar printed on October 28th was a sustained and personal attack and contained many serious inaccuracies. I wish to correct these.

Fact 1. I have always advocated most strongly for the provision of Older Adult Housing (pensioner housing). The accusation that I advocated to get rid of this housing is not only wrong, but possibly defamatory as the reverse is in fact true. I am currently chairing the Committee responsible for improving the provision of housing for Older Adults! In addition I have pushed for greater government support and funding for these improvements.



Fact 2. The Council is required to consult on all aspects of its water services, including methods of charging. I have never advocated for the introduction of wastewater charges.

Fact 3. The Council has not voted to privatise Techscape. The future of Techscape is still undecided. The Council may well vote to retain the operation.

Fact 4. I did not table a motion to close Te Atatu Library; in fact I pushed for an extension of the service until the new library opens down the road in Henderson.

Fact 5. I am happy to support private enterprise setting up a school. Why would I not support the hundreds of children (and their families) who are forced to travel out of our city to get the education they want?

Fact 6. I have never suggested the dropping of the inorganic rubbish collection. But we do need to improve the way we do it.

Read my lips. Mr Barrar, you simply got it wrong.

A5 I have also attached at page A5 a cartoon Wally Thomas spied in the San Francisco Chronicle. It says it all.

MILESTONES

Michael Anthony Erceg

Michael Erceg was a true son of the west who tragically lost his life way too early as the result of a helicopter accident. Michael was one of our most highly successful businessman - full of entrepreneurship and innovative ideas. He took on the liquor industry and won with his range of ready to drink beverages. Michael was also very humble and a fiercely loyal family man who will be sorely missed. Our hearts go out to his wife Lynne, his mother Millie and the rest of his family and friends at this time of grief.

Announced

Infratil Limited has bought Auckland region bus and ferry services company Stagecoach and Fullers Group Limited. Infratil are our good friends and if anyone can get Auckland moving they can. As you know, we've worked together for the past three years on the Whenuapai commercial airport proposal. The company and its principals are highly respected and savvy business people specialising in transport. Infratil makes long term investment decisions and are prepared to improve facilities. Just look at what they've done at Wellington Airport. They are experienced in running airports in different parts of the world and with this latest acquisition they have the air, land and sea covered. Perhaps the most pleasing aspect is that key national infrastructure is once again in the hands of a Kiwi company committed to the good of this country.

Neil Wells

Neil Wells has been appointed Manager - Animal Welfare. Neil is an old colleague of mine from advertising days and takes over from Tom Didovich. Neil has a very impressive CV. A barrister and senior lecturer with qualifications in law, arts (history and political studies) and quality systems, his career has spanned international and national organisations including government, academic and not-for-profit sectors.

Neil's career focus is on animal welfare law and ethics and environmental and resource management and he has spent the past 15 at Unitec. His new position encompasses animal welfare investigations, dog control and stock control with the emphasis on promoting positive animal welfare, working with Council and community to ensure animals are well cared for, community safety with animals and getting education programmes into the community.



We welcome Neil to the team and we also sincerely wish Tom, who I believe did a sterling job, all the best in his new ventures.

Local Elected to Agricultural World Board

Meanwhile, another long time friend of mine and the City's, Brendan Hoare, has been elected to the General Assembly of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements.

Unsurprisingly Brendan is delighted with the election and says it is great to be part of a global movement that shares similar ideals. "With a mission of leading, uniting and assisting the organic movement in its full diversity and a goal of the worldwide adoption of ecologically sound systems based on the Principles of Organic Agriculture, there is a lot of work to do. I believe the Oceania / Pacific region has a lot to offer," he says.

With nearly 800 global members in 100 countries, and facilitating much of the world's multi billion dollar growth, International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements is a democratic organisation whose major aims and activities include: authoritative information, knowledge exchange, input into international policy forums, establishing and maintaining international standards and guarantee systems and building a common agenda for all stakeholders in the organic sector, including producers, farm workers, consumers, the food industry, trade and society at large.

Brendan has been committed to organic agriculture for 23 years. Over the past seven years he has served as the President of the Soil and Health Association, the Director of BioGro and a Founder / Chair of the Organic Federation of Aotearoa New Zealand. Currently, he chaired the National Organic Sector Board of New Zealand, is the Team Leader for the Pacific-focused Journal of Organic Systems, audits a national participatory guarantee program and serves as Chair of the 'econation2020 Trust'.

I am sure you will join with me in congratulating Brendan on his election and wishing him well for the future.

Graduated and Graduating

- John Wadsworth Chief Executive Officer of Enterprise Waitakere at Committee for Auckland Leadership Programme graduation. Auckland Museum, 18 November.
- Rewi Spraggon, New Zealand Leadership Awards. Botanical Gardens, 7 December.

Both John and Rewi are two young men on a mission. They represent Council organisations and have made outstanding contributions in leadership to this City and its residents. They have been funded in part by Waitakere City and they have joined the very best and brightest of the corporate world in a year long course examining social policy, corporate infrastructure, urban development, local government and private enterprise. They have been mentored by some of New Zealand's leading practitioners from boards and corporations. Both have achieved amazing results and have been praised for their commitment and tenacity in their approach to leadership and both at their graduation ceremonies were designated rising stars and future chief executives. I am sure all Councillors will join me in congratulating both John and Rewi.

Wedding Anniversaries

I have had an overwhelming response from couples who have been married for 50 years or more to attend a celebratory morning tea early next month. It looks as though around 300 people will attend the event at The Trusts Stadium. Councillor Clews and the Mayoress are hosting the function with me and you are all welcome to attend - 6 December, 10.00 am to 11.30 am.



50th Anniversary

Congratulations to the Laingholm Volunteer Fire Brigade which has just celebrated its 50th anniversary. I attended some of the celebrations over the Jubilee weekend and it was good to see so many people enjoying themselves. On behalf of the Council I would like to congratulate the brigade on its past, thank it for the job it does now and wish it well for another 50 years.

True Colours

I was very interested to hear about Sport Waitakere's plan to explore a Waitakere City Sports logo and regional colours. The organisation says Waitakere has little consistency of colour logo for our City to affiliate too. It says we should form an identity within the greater Auckland region so we can be recognised as being from this region whether we are representing Waitakere or whether we are playing in Auckland or Harbour competitions. Sport Waitakere is going to talk to regional sports organisations and various other interested parties. It will also form a working party to investigate the concept further. I think this is an excellent initiative and I wish the organisation well in its exploring. I also look forward to hearing about the results.

Another Police Departure

Yes, we've lost yet another top cop. District Commander Roger Carson is now based in Wellington as Acting Deputy Commissioner (Operations) and is likely to remain there in the role until mid to late 2006. In the meantime Inspector Janet Hope QSM, Area Commander Rodney will be the Acting District Commander for the North Shore / Waitakere / Rodney District and will work from Takapuna.

I'm sure Janet will fill the job more than adequately but what about the culture? I thought the Police had finally got the message in this region that leadership and culture grow a future. In the 13 years I have been Mayor I have seen six District Commanders come and go. I wrote to the former Minister of Police about my concerns and it didn't get me anywhere, nor did my request for consideration of more police or the Council willingness to do more in terms of crime. Still we move on, as has Roger Carson, and this Council acknowledges with thanks the hard work he put into this district. We wish him well for the new role in Wellington and welcome Janet Hope. I will set up a meeting with Janet and Councillors in the near future.

In the meantime I have a meeting with the new Minister of Police, Annette King, early next month and I will again voice my, and the Council's, concerns. You will recall about a year ago I talked about having a "private" police force to handle smaller jobs so police officers could spend more time doing real police work. And you will recall everyone including Paul Holmes and Greg O'Connor, President of the New Zealand Police Association decried the suggestion. Now I see Mayors Hubbard and Curtis have come out with similar ideas and they are finding some support so maybe I was just right too soon. As I have often said, in politics it is wrong to be right too soon.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Report of the Mayor be received.
2. That Waitakere City Council actively promotes and hosts four open forums in March, May, July and September 2006 so Council and Councillors can hear about the concerns and challenges being faced by groups and organisations in the City including Police, the schools (both secondary and intermediate), Maori and the Pacific community.