

The Forum was a public meeting convened by the Mapua and District Community Association to offer an opportunity for the Community and Council to engage constructively to share information and viewpoints and then to develop a respected approach in working toward a solution to the need for a replacement boat ramp for the Mapua District.

The meeting was chaired by Elena Meredith with Graeme Stradling recording the discussion and other members of the Community Association Executive helping to time manage and facilitate speakers. The meeting took 60 minutes, from 6.03pm until 7.03 pm at Bill Marris Room in the Mapua Hall.

Chairperson's welcome and apologies:

Elena Meredith welcome the Councillors and staff present, acknowledged members of the Boat Club and Mapua Community present. An apology was recorded from Zane Mirkin, Cr. Tim King. Approximately 120 people were present. Elena described the process for the meeting and the strict time control that would be part of the Association's moderation. She said that the Association took no position on the Boat Ramp issue except the desire for the community to engage effectively from the same page and learn from each other to find a common solution.

Tasman District Council presentations:

Cr. Trevor Norriss acknowledged the other TDC representatives and the chair. He said that as well as presenting the facts from the Council point of view, that Council was here to listen.

Cr. Brian Ensor, chairperson of the Waterfront Advisory Forum, described the membership and process of this group. It included representation from the Boat Club, Business Association, Wharf businesses and owners both Council and private, as well neighbours and the Community Association. He said the group had established a constructive and positive process to help manage the growth of the Wharf in the changing scene of increasing tourism, the Great Taste Trail, boat access changes and the Ferry. Council had invested many hundreds of thousand dollars over the last few years, and they recognize the Boat Club as a very important element in the Wharf story. TDC were supportive of a new or improved ramp for the district and he was confident that there would be a positive outcome.

Gene Cooper, the commercial manager for TDC described the changes in access to the boat ramp as the result of a clash between public and vehicles on the Wharf as public use became heavier. The recent Health

and Safety Review had left two alternatives, manage the risk or close the Wharf. Council has chosen to manage the risk and keep the Boat ramp operational but restricted. Under the current rules the ramp is open for public use before 10am and after 7pm, 7 days a week and 365 days per annum. He said that some inaccuracies had emerged in the reports and views. He said that The Boat Club existing use rights to the Boat Ramp expired in 2001 and were not current; no offer had been made by Council to move the Boat Club. He added that consultation with the Boat Club had been ongoing through the Forum in which Boat Club was represented. The Wharf ramp has been actually seldom used because of the difficulties both in access and risks involved in boating by the Wharf and the jetty. It was a dangerous launch. He agreed there was a real issue for the community in where to launch from, the real question was what to do from here.

Gary Clark, the transportation manager, explained the process and success of the Council Planning process. Council decisions are made under a framework of option reviews, and risk and cost, versus benefit approach. Any solution to the boating issue would be found from applying such a process.

Mapua Boat Club Presentation:

Martyn Barlow read a prepared submission. (see attached document 'Boat Club Submission')

Submission From The Floor:

Cr. Trevor Norriss wanted to correct some Boat Club assertions. He said the Wharf was not kept up with earnings from users but with been the recipient of considerable Council spending. The Dinghy rack would be re-instated and this had been overlooked in the planning. He added that the objective of the meeting is to help the community.

Geoff Rowling said he thought a more constructive approach would help. The Motueka community had been part of a similar process for their boat ramp and had experienced a helpful, facilitating attitude from TDC. He recognized a degree of negativity in the Mapua approach, yet the enthusiasm for a solution was obvious. Change and progress are inevitable and often difficult. The Mapua situation was not helped by the lack of earlier planning for a new boat ramp.

'Crimpy' from the fishing paper said that rather than the Boat Club not embracing change, the Council was failing to grasp the opportunity and scale of the growth in boating leisure worth millions of dollars.

Colin Walker said he was both part of the Boat Club and the Community Association Executive. Boating is the predominant form of recreation in the region. Council should be spending more money on it and had a responsibility to boating. He felt that a ramp should be treated as a 'parks and recreation' facility rather than an 'engineering' department structure.

Dale Smith made the following points: Boat numbers at Mapua increase by 100-120 in the summer with visitors to both the Leisure park and family and visiting friends of Mapua residents. The Leisure Park no longer has a functioning boat ramp. With new restrictions at the Mapua Wharf boat ramp extra trailer boat pressure is being placed on Grossis Point which is a popular picnic and swimming area. TDC should monitor this situation during summer 2015-2016.

Tim Robinson, boat club vice president, said the club had made three attempts to constructively find a new ramp site and the Waterfront Park is their last attempt.

Neville Bibby said that despite claims of losing the ramp without warning, access had been restricted for the last two summers with no boats or vehicles allowed in certain hours.

Gary Clark added that although there had been restrictions in the past, the area was not safe and Council has very few options.

Glenn Stevens said he had been involved in sea scouts in the region for 25 years and he considered the local site and ramp at Mapua Wharf had been difficult especially during construction but he acknowledged that it was still a preferred and viable location.

Fiona Bibby commented that as a mother of young children she appreciated the Wharf closure to cars and boats during the last couple of years. She was not keen on losing the Waterfront Park as a safe green space for families.

Where to from here?

Elena Meredith thanked everyone for presenting sometimes divergent views. Now it was time to advance solutions, perhaps

ways to improve consultation or a focus group formed from the meeting could be formed. What are the specific suggestions?

Peter O'Halloran said what was needed was an apology from TDC and a promise to fix the problem.

Cr. Trevor Norriss said he would apologize to Mapua and he would follow up Elena's request with an offer to form a group to work with the Council specifically to find a ramp solution in light of the obvious level of concern. The group should have representatives from boating from the Club and elsewhere as well as the Community Association and the Council. Gary Clark indicated he would be happy to assist and convene. Geoff Rowling and Justin Hall were accepted as nominees from boating outside of the Boat Club. On behalf of the Boat Club, Martyn Barlow accepted the offer. Two members also from each of the Boat Club and Community Association was the probable format with invitation as well to sea scouts group leader.

Cr. Norriss cautioned about advocating Waterfront Park as a solution, there were quite severe restrictions to the use of this space. Any ramp was necessarily an engineering structure and had requirements that would be very hard to achieve on the site. Others endorsed the Waterfront Park as a green family zone. Gary Clark too added similar caution. The parking requirements would be intrusive and we needed to be careful to preserve the coastal village feel in Mapua.

Annette Walker, Boat Club president, then spoke thanking the meeting and its moderation by Elena. She thanked the Boat Club team for their very solid work and submission and asked that Council find some forward progress soon.

Elena Meredith ended the meeting by thanking all participants and added that the focus group idea would be made an agenda item at the Community Association meeting happening next.