

Dear Community,

The public meeting organised by Friends of Houghton Valley last Thursday 19th February was very fruitful.

More than 30 interested supporters turned up to hear Barrister Graham Taylor speak about preparations for a Judicial Review of WCC's decision to grant a non-notified consent to build 13 houses at 215 Houghton Bay Rd. After looking at Council information relating to their decision, Graham explained that some key facts were not considered in their decision and feels that we can win a review of the decision. Membership forms to join the society were circulated and generous offers of voluntary help and donations were received.

Friends of Houghton Valley Inc are working to preserve the landscape character and environment of Houghton Valley. We know that the View Road Headland Scenic Reserve, the Te Raekaihau Point Scenic Reserve and the Marine Reserve are not only recreational assets used by many Wellingtonians and other visitors, but also produce a unique character within Houghton Valley and the city.

We expect development on the site at 215 though it needs to be in keeping with its surrounds. The current proposal of thirteen houses crowding up the hillside towards the scenic reserve on its boundary will certainly and undeniably change the openness of the area and views of coastal bush.

The developers of 215 did not instigate consultation with the community. There was no discussion or collaboration with the community at all during the development of their proposal and their participation in a public meeting in December 2013 was agreed to only after being invited by the community.

It was made clear at that first meeting, and in correspondence to Council since that time, that the main issue the community has with the development is its density. However, over the ensuing 15 months since that meeting there has been no suggestion of compromise to reduce the number of houses in the proposal by the developers.

The intensiveness of the development can be understood by the number of potential residents who will live in the subdivision. No other area of the same size in Houghton Valley can house up to 69 people. The density of these 13 three and four bedroom houses will also create further problems within an inadequate infrastructure which is already stressed.

WCC has not been mindful of the unique and valuable character of this area and instead has granted a non-notified consent to construct a subdivision built-up to a density which doesn't fit in the context of the site at 215. Many of the community and others who value the uniqueness of this area are very disappointed and saddened that Council did not notify this consent, or decline the proposal as inappropriate for the site. As this is our last chance to prevent the character of Houghton Valley being irreversible changed, we are left with no other option than to contest this Council decision

As WCC will need to defend their decision the developers have suggested that our legal challenge of their non-notified consent is a waste of ratepayers (council) money. Our opinion is that this is a very short sighted view of the situation. The View Road Headland Scenic Reserve has been established because the unique character of this area has been recognised as being of value to the city not only now, but also for future generations. We are certain that our money (council money) is well spent in seeking to ensure that the present built character of this special area is maintained and not intensified in a development adjoining the Scenic Reserve.

If you would like to support this initiative please email: friendsofhoughtonvalley@gmail.com
Or phone Dolf on 9708948 or Jacob on 3879541

The best way to show your support right now is become a member of Friends of Houghton Valley Inc. The incorporated society protects any individual from fees or outcomes incurred by this legal action. Becoming a member means that if you like we can provide you with updates, but more importantly membership clearly shows the Court, or Judge, the level of community support.

Thank-you for your support and interest,

Coral Hyam
Chair