

Extract from the Minutes – Council’s Meeting held 18 December 2006

Strategy Committee – 12 December 2006

6. Referendum '07

<p>Policy on Determining Significance – In terms of the Policy the recommended decision is not significant.</p>
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Sue Dudman, Communications Co-ordinator, reports:

“A number of topics have been identified for inclusion in Referendum '07. These are:

- Water softening
- Wanganui Anniversary Day/public holiday

In addition, the following topic has been suggested for inclusion:

- Velodrome roofing

A separate referendum for the Heart of Wanganui project will be held in June 2007.

Final information on water softening will not be available until January 2007, so it is proposed that Referendum '07 be held on 14 April 2007 rather than February/March 2007 as in previous years. It is intended to distribute a brochure which provides background information on each referendum topic and to establish a dedicated website. The process would be:

12 March 2007	Information brochure distributed to all households
26 March 2007	Voting papers distributed to all persons on the Wanganui electoral roll
14 April 2007	Voting closes at noon.”

Discussion

Cr McGregor told the Committee he did not want to be a member of the Referendum '07 Working Party. He believed that the Referendum could be cluttered with items and said that to be successful a referendum should focus on a major issue and that voters should be provided the information to make an informed decision. Cr McGregor said a lot of people could not remember the four-page information document provided for the last referendum.

Mayor Laws in response said the community could get no more important issue than the affect the provision of soft water would have on every Wanganui resident. He said the provision of soft water would have a direct financial benefit to every household as whilst the Council would have to impose a cost, savings would be received by ratepayers from other sources.

Mayor Laws said identifying an 'Anniversary Day' for Wanganui was an important issue as it would state 'who we are'. At present, Mayor Laws said, Wanganui is grafted to Wellington and its Anniversary Day. Mayor Laws explained the Heart of Wanganui Project would be the subject of a separate referendum. He emphasised that the Council needed input from Wanganui's residents. It had been proven by the '05 and '06 Referendums that the public liked to participate and expected the Council to act on Referendum decisions.

In response Cr McGregor said by January 2007 the Council would know more about the ability to provide soft water but as the Council had to find new water sources, if soft water was found it would be used. He said the Council had the necessary information on the community's desire for soft water and should act accordingly. The public would express its view of the Council's decision at election time.

Cr Lindsay was keen to have salient items on Referendum '07 but noted his concern that Referendum '07 and the Heart of Wanganui Referendum would be held only approximately eight weeks apart. He thought this too close.

Cr Westwood believed a Referendum about soft water, which had been covered in a previous recommendation and was desired by the community, was an unnecessary cost. She said people could object to the soft water proposal through Annual Plan submissions when they knew what soft water would cost them in rates. She noted that each referendum cost the Council approximately \$35,000. She could not support this expenditure believing that Councillors were elected to make decisions.

Cr Westwood did not support the Velodrome roofing project proposal believing that the Splash Centre extension and Whanganui River Waterfront Project should first be completed. She asked that the recommendations to the item be put by division.

Cr Higgle said the Council had made a commitment to the Wanganui community to consult it about proceeding with the soft water options after bore exploration was complete. She asked if it would be possible to combine the soft water issue with the Heart of Wanganui Project referenda in May 2007.

In response to Cr Higgle's question Mayor Laws explained that information on the Referendum '07 issues – water softening, Wanganui Anniversary Day and the Velodrome roofing – were required for inclusion in the proposed Draft 2007/08 Annual Plan to be considered by the Council in early March 2007. He explained that the Heart of Wanganui Project had complex issues to be finalised for Referendum purposes once staff had dealt with the 2007/08 Annual Plan.

Cr Baker-Hogan said she supported the inclusion of the proposed Wanganui Anniversary Day in Referendum '07, noting that there was a strong move to promote Wanganui at a national level.

Cr Baker-Hogan supported inclusion of the velodrome in Referendum '07 but said it was not just about roofing. It was proposed to develop the velodrome as an Events Centre and to look at the feasibility of the Velodrome Events Centre complementing or replacing Springvale Park. Cr Baker-Hogan said Wanganui's Velodrome was

recognised as one of the top five velodromes in the world. She said Invercargill already had a covered velodrome and Hawkes Bay was preparing to develop a covered velodrome. Cr Baker-Hogan said she would welcome being involved in the Referendum '07 Working Party.

Cr Bullock believed every resident had the right to receive soft water and it was a Council responsibility to deliver. Therefore, she said, it need not be a referendum matter. Cr Bullock said there was no need for a Wanganui Anniversary Day and whilst the velodrome needed a roof there were already other projects in hand.

Mayor Laws reiterated Cr Higgle's comment that the Council had undertaken to go back to the Wanganui community with soft water options once the results of bore exploration were known as there were some significant costs around water softening. He emphasised that in 2006, 17,000 Wanganui people took time to consider and return their referenda papers which was an enormous commitment. Mayor Laws compared this with receipt of just 200 submissions to the 10-Year Plan. He said referendum had proved to be better tools for 'participatory democracy' and noted that whatever Councillors individual thoughts were on referendum there had been unanimous adoption of referendum results by this Council in the past two years.

The Chairman took the motions separately.

Committee's Recommendation

Proposed by Mayor Laws, seconded by Cr McKinnon:

THAT a Referendum '07 Working Party be formed.

CARRIED

Crs Bullock and Westwood noted their vote against.

Proposed by Mayor Laws, seconded by Cr McKinnon:

THAT the polling date for Referendum '07 be 14 April 2007.

CARRIED

Crs Bullock and Westwood noted their vote against.

Proposed by Mayor Laws, seconded by Cr McKinnon:

THAT Referendum '07 includes the topic of water softening.

CARRIED

Crs Bullock and Westwood noted their vote against.

Proposed by Mayor Laws, seconded by Cr McKinnon:

THAT Referendum '07 includes the topic of Wanganui Anniversary Day/public holiday.

CARRIED

Crs Bullock, Dahya, Westwood and Wills noted their votes against.

Proposed by Mayor Laws, seconded by Cr McKinnon:

THAT other topics for inclusion in Referendum '07 be discussed.

CARRIED

Crs Bullock and Westwood noted their vote against.

Discussion

It was agreed that the Referendum '07 Working Party membership would be Mayor Laws with Crs Baker-Hogan, Hughes and Lindsay.

Adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Strategy Committee held on Tuesday, 12 December 2006

Cr Dot McKinnon, Chairman, Strategy Committee, tabled and presented the minutes of the meeting of the Strategy Committee held on Tuesday, 12 December 2006.

Item 6: Referendum '07

Cr McKinnon suggested that the 'Gang Patch' issue could be referred to Referendum '07 to measure the community's level of support for this issue.

Council's Resolution

Proposed by Cr McKinnon, seconded by Cr Hughes:

THAT the proposed bylaw prohibiting wearing of gang patches in the Central Business District and other public places be added to Referendum '07.

CARRIED

ACTION: Sue Dudman

Cr McGregor commented on the continuing need to develop water bores and explained that the decision to close N^o 1 Bore, which produced hardwater, meant in his view, that it was not necessary to include water softening as a Referendum '07 issue. He also considered that Anniversary Day by whatever name would be a public holiday and, therefore, a decision could be made on the Day's name by the Council without referring this to Referendum '07.

Cr McGregor said he would like the matter of solid waste recycling to be an issue for Referendum '07. He explained that a lot of people were not using the central recycling station, but he believed recycling could become popular if Wanganui had a kerbside collection and/or provided suburban recycling collection stations. Further investigation of Wanganui's solid waste stream management was necessary.

Cr Wills commented on the value of occasional special refuse collection days.

Cr Higgle agreed that the Council needed to consider management of the District's solid waste streams including the provision of a landfill within the District and the possibility of including recycling depots at the proposed community gardens.

Mayor Laws explained that the Council had already identified a deficiency in its solid waste management area and officers were preparing a report on the issue for the Council.

Cr Westwood noted that she had asked her vote against all the Strategy Committee's recommendations for this item be recorded.

Council's Resolution

Proposed by Mayor Laws, seconded by Cr McKinnon:

THAT a Referendum '07 Working Party be formed

AND THAT the polling date for Referendum '07 be 14 April 2007

AND FURTHER THAT Referendum '07 includes the topic of water softening

AND FURTHER THAT Referendum '07 includes the topic of Wanganui Anniversary Day/public holiday

AND FURTHER THAT other topics for inclusion in Referendum '07 be discussed.

The motion was put by division	
For	Against
Mayor Laws	Cr Bullock
Cr Baker-	Cr Dahya
Hogan	
Cr Higgle	Cr McGregor
Cr Hughes	Cr Stevens
Cr Lindsay	Cr Westwood
Cr McKinnon	
Cr Pepperell	
Cr Wills	
	<u>CARRIED</u>

Proposed by Cr McGregor, seconded by Mayor Laws:

THAT the issue of kerbside and/or suburban recycling centres be included in Referendum '07.

CARRIED
UNANIMOUS

Proposed by Mayor Laws, seconded by Cr McKinnon:

THAT the proposed Bylaw prohibiting the wearing of gang patches in the Central Business District and other public places be added to Referendum '07.

CARRIED

