



SHALE CHAMBERS: WAITEMATA LOCAL BOARD REPORT

Daylight saving and summer is behind us, and has been replaced with the colours of autumn.

On a balmy autumn day in March, local board members, aided by some councillors spent time listening to your local submissions to council's annual plan, and the local board's annual agreement. Thank you to those who took the time to delight us with their aspirations for our community. We are truly in good heart.

One of the important local board initiatives that has recently been the subject of a lot of thought and community feedback is the Ponsonby Road master plan. Public spaces and parks are always uppermost in our minds and the prospect of having another open space and Ponsonby Road's own square at the present council-owned Nosh site has sent us into overdrive.

The board has approved as a special project outside the masterplan work on the design of two options for the 254 Ponsonby Road site. One will be a 'whole of site' open space park, and the other option will have an active edge and open space urban plaza, with both informed by high level urban design principles.

Whilst we have heard from many in general terms, you will be able to give your opinion on which is the best option for Ponsonby, and what is the best mix of activity within each option, during a public consultation process to be finalised this month as the options are developed this year.

Last month you may have caught the debate over how Victoria Park is used for events and wondered what all the fuss was about. In one corner was the Grafton United Cricket Club whose home ground Victoria Park has been for many years. Like most of Auckland's sports parks, Victoria Park is very well used by children and adults playing cricket, soccer, league, touch and rugby all year. In the other corner was the successful 'Taste of Auckland' event and its 20,000 paying visitors who have tasted Auckland's best food and wine on the grounds for the last four years, and who claimed the right to its use . . . but who damage the sand-carpeted turf and close out the sports people and other park users for three to six weeks during the height of the cricket season.

Events are important for Auckland. Victoria Park is a much loved and used park. Victoria Park's use for major events needs to be weighed against these competing needs. It was for this reason that two years ago the local board clearly signalled that the end of its resource consent in 2013 was to be Taste's last on Victoria Park, and another venue needed to be found. The board then developed, and has now adopted, a Victoria Park Event Guideline to guide future use of the park.

In this case the precious green space and the right of our young people playing active sport throughout the

season on the sports fields was given priority over the commercial use of our park that unreasonably impeded this. Up to three events of a maximum five days duration, that are most likely not to damage the turf have been preferred over a single event of longer duration, that does. Victoria Park is a large park, and the areas that do not comprise the sports fields have guidelines that allow more flexibility for events. There is definitely a place in Auckland for the popular 'Taste' event, but it is not on a critical Auckland sports park. Council is working with Taste to find them a new venue.

'First Thursdays', which act as a platform for emerging and established artists, are back in K' Road starting 1 May. There is a free Block Party on Queens Wharf on 12 April, 2 - 6pm with live music from local emerging bands, amazing visual installations, and vintage and artisan handmade markets. The 2014 Comedy Festival also starts 24 April with 118 shows across Auckland until mid-May. The ever-growing in popularity Grey Lynn RSC Anzac Day march and service will be held once again in the Grey Lynn shopping centre and Francis Street on 25 April starting at 9.30am. Come and join us there.

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(SHALE CHAMBERS) 