

Good evening. Welcome back. Its good to be back and having meetings again.  
A special welcome to our speaker tonight, Tenby Powell our Mayor, Tina  
Salisbury the deputy mayor and councillors Dawn Kiddie, Steve Morris

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I have been asked to be quicker than usual tonight so let's start.

PRRA has been busy during the lockdown period. There are some very important issues out there and soon being voted on by the Council. The community needs to be involved and heard before the issues are signed off. And you need to know all the facts, not just a distilled version which advantages one side of the debate.

PRRA has made bespoke websites on the issues which affect the Papamoa community. These websites contain a comprehensive summary of the situation to give you the facts to make a balanced decision.

The issues are Rates Increase, a council controlled Rubbish & Recycling system and the planting in the Palm Beach reserve.

Please read them and send your comments on the issues to your local councillors and the Council CEO. Email addresses are on the council website and will be on the PRRA website.

The PRRA has also made two submissions to the Annual Plan 2020/2021 process. These are comprehensive reads and are available to read and download from the front page of the PRRA website.

## RATES

### **Tauranga rates are amongst the highest in New Zealand.**

The website is called “Keep Tauranga Rates under Control” and is at [www.noratesincrease.org](http://www.noratesincrease.org). This site conducted an online poll during the Lockdown and over 1200 people responded to the poll. All the results are online, but the most thought provoking part is the feedback section which highlighted the poor financial situation of the elderly and working poor in our community and how they could not afford the proposed high rate increases. These groups are approx. 30-40% of our community.

As you know the council started with a 12.7% rates increase (just highway robbery), reduced this to 8.7% (still highway robbery) and is now talking about 4%. (too much).

PRRA has all along been advocating 0% rates increase for 2020/2021, simple to do --- just reissue last year’s rates demands again, very easy and low cost.

With the economic uncertainty and job losses now and in the future from the effects of Covid 19, 0% rates increase is the only way forward for 2020/2021. If necessary, cut council spending on large growth projects if the rate take is insufficient.

**Which bring us to the big question** – where are the rates spent, why is there always not enough. Tauranga has the highest rates in NZ. A large part of your rates are spent on providing infrastructure to the new residential areas. Successive councils and this council are hell bent on growing the size of Tauranga by extending the city boundaries and making existing ratepayers pay for the core infrastructure required for these areas. **Growth does not pay for growth.** It just leaves a large chunk of debt the ratepayers must fund and results in underinvestment in the existing city.

Currently hearings are being conducted to include another 190 ha of West Tauriko land into the city to build another 8000 new homes. Even before this is ticked off, there is money allocated in this year’s annual plan to start building infrastructure here.

What about adding two lanes to the Turret Rd Bridge instead and benefiting all of Tauranga. We are seeing an unhealthy obsession on growth.

This Annual Plan business model is not financially sustainable and absolutely broken.

**The community has a choice,**

keep the growth of Tauranga inside the existing boundaries for the next 5-10 years by encouraging more intensive housing and spending the rates on improving the quality of life for the residents of Tauranga, invest in the city centre, make the roads work by removing the bottlenecks, new cycleways, community centres, improving asset resilience and so on.

or

continue city expansion into greenfield areas and keep increasing the rates to pay for the infrastructure, more traffic problems, longer travel distances across town, more pollution, a public transport system that can not work, a hollowed out city centre core, no investment in improving the quality of life for the ratepayers..

**This choice is for you to make ----- the ratepayers**

One interesting line item in the Annual Plan was \$1.8 million per annum for annual staff salary increases of 3%.

It was reported in the newspaper recently that the govt had offered the Tauranga City Council a loan of \$500 million dollars interest free for 10 years to get around the debt level constraint on council borrowings. This is very deceitful way to break the law.

Remember – **a DEBT is a DEBT**, however it is gift wrapped and the ratepayers will have to repay it. This council is committing future generations of ratepayers to paying higher and higher rates.

## **RUBBISH & RECYCLING**

The website is called “**Keep a lid on the cost of rubbish and kerbside recycling pickups**”.

There are changes coming up for your rubbish collection. This will be voted on in August. It is complex, and too much for a short presentation. The handout sheets summarise the key points.

The major points are ..

TCC proposes to impose a council controlled kerbside rubbish system for rubbish, recycling, food scraps and glass. Each house will have 4 plastic bins. There is no opt out.

The council will tell you Tauranga has the highest domestic rubbish weight per capita and this new system will save each household \$83 per annum with the new system. As they have not announced the cost per household, this figure is in doubt.

The truth is that Tauranga is about average for domestic rubbish per capita, the proposed domestic kerbside collection system cost will be added to your rate bill,

your rates bill will increase,

we estimate the cost per household to be between \$350 -\$450 per annum, (and then add on another sum - the TCC administration markup).

This will put all the local rubbish companies out of business and the contract will be let to a multinational company (profits will leave the country) for 8 years with an 8 year ROR. The value of the contract is around \$20 million per annum. One company monopoly arrangement.

**We will be trashed. Ever increasing cost.**

Side note to council : **NOW IS the Time to be Buying Local.**

The other truths are

The council turned over rubbish collection to the private sector about 10 years ago and this has been working well. Every household in Tauranga has their

own rubbish and recycling solution that meets their needs and budgets, some have private contractors to take away all the bins, others have very little waste, use the council prepaid bags and take their recycling to the transfer stations. **You pay for what you use.**

Between the private rubbish companies and the drop-offs at the transfer stations, Tauranga currently recycles around 34% of the domestic rubbish by weight. The council target is 65% recycling by weight. -- almost there. If paper and food waste was picked up then the target is reached. A simple addition.

With the compulsory council system, all households including rental properties will pay the same cost (\$350 -\$450 per annum), **The frugal will subsidise the wasteful. There is no OPT OUT.**

I have heard two reasons for changing and neither is good enough to change something that is working well.

- 1) Too many trucks drive my street on rubbish day
- 2) Tauranga is the only NZ city without a council controlled kerbside pickup system. Vanity is not a valid business case.

As of last week, TCC has not announced the cost from the tender process and has said **it will not consult back with the community** before it makes the final decision. This is undemocratic and not within the spirit of Local Government Act.

**It is your money they are spending.**

Again, the cost will be added to your rates bill, not included in your current rates amount.

So, add \$400 for rubbish collection to your rates bill – how do you feel about that. **After this Tauranga definitely will have the highest rates in NZ.**

**We are asking the council to defer the decision for another 5 years.**

## **Stop Wetland Planting in PALM BEACH RESERVE PLANTING**

[www.palmbeachreserve.com](http://www.palmbeachreserve.com)

Palm Beach Reserve is part of the Wairakei Stormwater Reserve. It is the grassed parkland from Gravatt Rd to Palm Beach Boulevard and onto Harrisons Cut and is the stormwater emergency holding area in times of torrential rains. And it is a very small part of the total Wairakei Stormwater Reserve which runs from the city limits in East Papamoa to Evans Rd. It has been like this for the last 30 years, enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.

Back in 2015 TCC received a water resources consent 63636 from Bay of Plenty Regional Council to discharge stormwater to the sea from the total reserve and included in this consent was the requirement to produce a draft landscape plan for the total reserve. This is all driven by the new development planned for Te Tumu, another future greenfield extension of the city boundary.

And with no real consultation Boffa Miskell produced a landscape plan for TCC to present to the regional council in order to obtain the consent. This included wetland planting along the waters edges for the complete length of the reserve – a 3m wide strip of flaxes. One solution for all parts of the Wairakei Reserve.

The residents of Palm Beach Reserve did not know about this planting until it started to happen. They do not want the planting and wish to retain the beautiful grassland park that is currently there. They have pushed back strongly and temporarily halted planting in the local Palm Beach reserve, **IMPORTANT NOTE they do not want planting stopped in the rest of the Wairakei reserve that has been reported in the newspaper. This is a TCC decision.**

How did this happen?

One of the clauses in the consent 63636 stated that all landowners bordering on the reserve and all community groups must be consulted about the landscape plan before it is finalised. This was never done, if the local landowners had been consulted, the planting in Palm Beach Reserve would never have started and/or would have been different.

We like the green grassed parkland, the grass down to the water. It is the only park in Papamoa. For years the local residents cleared the weeds from the ponds, introduced the carp with DOC approval to keep the weed down and have looked after the area.

Common sense says that council should listen to the residents and stop planting locally in Palm Beach Reserve and devote their efforts and money to the areas of the Wairakei Reserve where this planting can make a difference. But no, the council is becoming entrenched and determined to plant. They have employed a public relations company to try and change the residents' minds. Why is the Council not listening – this is all a waste of time, effort and money. **Who is paying the cost – you are -- the ratepayer.**

The battle is ongoing. Join up to the mailing list, sign up on the web site and keep up to date.

**There is a theme here and elsewhere in Tauranga** --- little/no consultation or mock consultation by the council with the community --- we see often council staff who try and impose ideas on the community and do not attempt any consultation until the plan is hatched, budgeted and about to be built. It is too late then. Community consultation at this point is just a tick box affair.

**The community must be included at the start, after all they live locally and know the areas.**

**I encourage you all to get up to “get up to speed” on these topics. This is only a small snapshot of the contentious issues in town.**

It is your money that is being spent ( wisely or unwisely) -- it is for you to decide. But you must speak up, not just mumble across the fence to a neighbour.

Please send comments to your councillors. All of them each time.

All the background information can be found on the PRRA website.

Thankyou.