

Catherine Hill Bay Progress Association Newsletter

Catherine Hill Bay Progress Association and Dune Care Inc

October 2010

www.catherinehillbay.org.au

For Association members, Friends of Catherine Hill Bay, residents and supporters everywhere

Report on meeting with Lake Macquarie Council officers, Sharon Pope and John Ferguson.
Tuesday 26th October.

BACKGROUND

I requested this meeting following advice from the Department of Planning that CHBPA should seek a meeting with the Council to urge them to take ownership of the land behind the houses in Middle Camp as DECCW had declined to do so. Further, it had been pointed out that someone had to take ownership and responsibility for the land otherwise it could be argued that the only long term solution was to subdivide it for further residential development.

I waited until the Coal & Allied community information day on the 16th October to see exactly what land was involved. From the documentation provided, it appears that DECCW will take ownership of the land to the boundary fences of the houses on the western side of Middle Camp so the land in question is behind the houses on the eastern side of Middle Camp.

On the 16th, Keith Dedden, Project Director for Rio Tinto, pointed out to me the land that Coal & Allied was going to keep. He said that DECCW and the Council were not interested in this land and that C&A intended it to have an E4 zoning. This was indicated by a band of mauve that took in the land behind the houses on the eastern side of Flowers Drive and Slack Alley. I asked why this was the case and he told me that DECCW did not want to look after the wetland and was not interested in land that had houses on it. Interestingly, the Crown will take ownership of the land along the coastline, minus a small triangle of land which is where the house called, The Pines' stands. C&A will keep this property. So such an argument is not consistent with the previous reason given for Slack Alley not to become crown land.

MEETING WITH LMCC

I subsequently met with Lake Macquarie Council officers, Sharon Pope and John Ferguson on Tuesday 26th October. Their feedback and comments are:

- LMCC has never had discussions with Coal&Allied about the land at Slack Alley nor had been offered ownership of the land at Slack Alley. John Ferguson said that they would indeed be interested in this land.

- LMCC was not interested in ownership of the land behind the houses but would certainly be willing to advocate for other outcomes, such as, this land being given to the owners of the properties resulting in the moving of boundary fences further to the east. Or support for the CHBPA setting up a Crown Reserve Trust which would take guardianship over this community land. (Before this could happen the Crown would have to become the owners of this land.)
- Sharon Pope said that the Council would strongly support the new land zoning of Slack Alley to be E2 She noted that if the land were to be zoned E4 this would mean that a new housing development was possible in Slack Alley.
- The LMCC have had no maps or paperwork at all concerning this proposed development. There have been a couple of telephone calls and the Council has requested maps etc but nothing has been forthcoming from the Department of Planning or Coal&Allied.

My view on this is that Coal&Allied wish to have another residential development at Slack Alley (as originally proposed). It is very feasible that in a couple of years' time Coal&Allied will approach the Department of Planning and say that their on-going ownership of this land is unsatisfactory and too onerous. They are a mining company, not really a land management agency and it is likely that they would wish to sell it off. If there is an E4 zoning there would be no impediment to this occurring and no impediment to further subdivision and residential development. This would directly contradict the recommendations of the IHAP that clearly stated that there should be no development in this area (Precinct D). In order to avoid such an outcome, public ownership needs to be secured and the land zoned E2.

PROPOSED ACTION:

That CHBPA write to C&A, Council and Department of Planning reporting on discussions to date and outlining the concerns that have arisen.

I will send out a draft letter next week for your approval and comment (This weekend is a very busy one for me as my youngest grandson is to be baptised and there will be lots of celebrations.)