Noosa News Dec 18 2014

Stick to the plans

Mayor says fight worth it

By **PETER GARDINER**

IT IS the price Noosa must pay for stopping development that could tear its planning scheme apart, according to Mayor Noel Playford – and the starting price could be as high as $2 million in legal costs.

Cr Playford, at last Thursday's general council meeting, set the hardline tone for what could be plenty more development battles ahead, as he spoke in support of refusing the Noosa on Weyba estate development application.

"I think many of us who have been around for a while realise that as the land that was easily able to be developed in the Noosa area was developed, obviously eyes turned towards land that is really constrained," he said

"It's hard to think of a larger parcel of land that's in private ownership in this area that is more constrained than much of this land (from Lake Weyba to Noosaville).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Refusal is 'only option'

By PETER GARDINER

COUNCILLOR Tony Wellington said the Sunshine Coast Council, as concurrence agency, had directed Noosa to refuse the section of the Noosa on Weyba development that fell in its area.

"The development raises many planning conflicts, not just with the Noosa Plan, but also the SEQ Regional Plan," Cr Wellington said.

"Other state concurrence agencies, the Department of Transport and Main Roads plus the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, have both insisted on conditions that make the current development unworkable, and which would cause the development to have to be resubmitted.

"With or without these concurrence agency responses, it remains that the development must be refused for all the reasons that the staff report notes.

"It would impact adversely on the ecology of the area, it is a badly located and unwanted extension to Noosa's urban footprint, it will potentially bring the Noosa sewerage treatment plant to capacity," the councillor said.

Noosa on Weyba would also, according to Cr Wellington, have unacceptable impacts on the local road network and "fails to provide the necessary infrastructure to support its population".

"Other residents of Noosa Shire would be forced to subsidise the residents of this development as far as council services and infrastructure are concerned.

"And let's not forget that the biodiversity offset that allows this development to be considered would not offer a net benefit to koalas or other creatures if the development were to proceed.

"There is really only one sensible response to this development application, and that is a refusal," he said.

Community 'must fight' to protect plan

FROM PAGE 3

"SADLY, because of the value of land in places like this, if a material change of use can be obtained, we're going to have more of these sorts of applications."

He said resisting development applications that were not in the community interest was "what the Noosa Plan is all about".

"The worst part about all this is that it's going to cost ratepayers money to defend our decisions (in the Planning and Environment Court).

"And at times we're just going to have to grit our teeth because, if we don't, then we trash the Noosa Plan. And that's the blueprint for our community's future, as decided by this community.

"It's a heavy price to pay and sometimes I would hope the State Government would see things differently from what they have in the past."

He said the likely court appeal Noosa Council would face from applicant Northbrook Corp "doesn't apply in the rest of Australia".

"The system allows for applications and appeals against decisions that are simply upholding legislation, in this case our own local plan and the South East Queensland Regional Plan, which has the weight of the whole south-east Queensland and the State Government behind it.

"It's pretty sad, when we're looking at the potential of spending, who knows, $1 million or $2 million to defend our decision in this case, when the application is clearly not in this community's interest either environmentally, socially, culturally or economically.

"And the only people to benefit from it, were it to be approved by a court, would be the proponents. I fully support the motion."

The refusal was passed unanimously.

NOOSA FIGHT: Friends of Lake Weyba are keen to protect their special patch.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

Council has been listening

FRIENDS of Lake Weyba president, Anita Brake, said the decision by Noosa Council to reinforce the Sunshine Coast Council's refusal for the Noosa on Weyba estate showed councillors were listening and "taking the advice of the community".

"I think it's just a really resounding victory for Lake Weyba and the local community," Ms Brake said.

"We've now had two councils both refuse the development.

"I think Lake Weyba deserves our protection, so the community and the council has to do whatever's required."

She said this application "put an inappropriate development in what's currently a pretty pristine environment".

Ms Brake said the unanimous council rejection was "the culmination of a whole lot of work that people have put in".

"I think the council staff have certainly put in a lot of effort and time (in assessing the development)."