

Hi BOI Watchdogs!

We had an amazing meeting yesterday, with about 40 FNDC residents attending the Duke Tavern in Russell. Most were from in and around Russell, but some travelled from Kerikeri etc. THANKYOU to everyone who attended the meeting, it was so uplifting to see the level of energy and interest in these issues, and the preparedness to do something about it.

We have kept a detailed record of comments which will help inform our submissions to Council, but we know you'd all like to know the heart of what happened. So some summary notes are attached – ADD YOUR COMMENTS BELOW please if we have missed out on something critical!

See you all next week at the massive Opuia Beach, 4pm Sunday!

Summary Notes

Meeting at The Duke Tavern, Russell, 29.7.17

Our next actions:

- (i) we are writing to Council to seek confirmation that the proposed bylaws and policy are halted, that they consult again, and that the new draft is good for dogs, humans and birds.
- (ii) We are also looking into some other areas of concern about lost dogs, signage in Russell, and council zoning of land vis a vis dogs and other pets.
- (iii) We will continue to analyse the current proposed bylaws and policy, so we are ready for the next round of FNDC consultation.

Our group:

- (i) our focus is to seek intelligent change to the draft bylaws and dog policy, after which we can use our structure to expand to other projects,
- (ii) we want to provide a consultation vehicle are expanding to cover all FNDC towns/areas,
- (iii) we will try to consult as widely as we can, using different means (eg papers, posters, email chains, web, facebook etc),
- (iv) we'd like to link with other pro-dog groups in the region,
- (v) Joshua Kosmala-George from Northland Tech is creating a website for us, thanks Josh!
- (vi) we are thinking about our name, now that another group has copied it for an anti-dog site
- (vii) we would love people to keep involved as we begin lobbying for change (vii) please contact Leonie Exel, Co-ordinator or any of the Coordinating Group Members - Alan Wilkinson, Kate Burdekin, Debbie Hinton, via our Facebook group page if you want to get more involved, or have specific skills
- (viii) we are keen in particular to hear from lawyers, and those who know about Council processes, and zoning.

Our bylaw/policy concerns:

multiple concerns were raised at the meeting. They included:

- (i) many issues about the consultation process (22 people there had NOT received the Council questionnaire!);
- (ii) the need for more off leash areas;
- (iii) fears about whether FNDC consultation leads to genuine listening anyway;
- (iv) anger that FNDC sees it as "ideal" that Russell Peninsula becomes dog free;

- (v) the proposed documents are negative and anti-dog, and seem to prioritise bird life over humans and their dogs;
- (vi) lack of off leash walking areas; ridiculous proposal of one tiny off leash beach for all our dogs;
- (vii) the need for a research based approach which includes research on eg kiwi aversion course efficacy, and benefits of dog ownership;
- (viii) concerns about the quality of the 'facts' about bird life and the dangers dogs pose in the current documentation;
- (ix) fears that the current documentation widens FNDC staff powers by taking some elements out of the bylaw on the grounds that it is too 'complicated' to be included.

Other FNDC concerns:

- (i) there was a perception that FNDC is being driven by conservationists within Council and conservationist lobby groups rather than all FNDC residents;
- (ii) there was a lack of confidence that our Council is representing, and defending, our views and needs as residents;
- (iii) questions were raised about the fairness of the manner in which even the current 2006 dog control bylaw is being implemented, for example, whether priority was being given to dogs that were being aggressive towards humans, versus dogs that were suspected "bird eaters";
- (iv) low quality of the pound and the fact that dogs are killed within days of being sent there;
- (v) fear about lost dogs being potentially targeted by Council staff;
- (vi) questions about micro-chipping; questions about Council zoning and whether the Council is quietly/slowly attempting to make all Russell areas pet-free;
- (vii) comments about the lack of a Welcome to Russell sign, and the legality of the "Any Dog Can Kill Kiwi" sign.

Next Event:

Members and their dogs at Opua Beach, 4pm, Sunday 7th August