

BEFORE THE NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL

UNDER

the Resource Management Act 1991 ("RMA")

IN THE MATTER

of PC18/00049 being a request under section 73(2) of the Act by **HAREB INVESTMENTS LIMITED** to the **NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL** for a Private Plan Change to rezone 2 Johnston Street, Waitara from Rural (FUD) to Residential A and Open Space.

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE - MATTHEW COREY HAREB, HAREB INVESTMENTS LIMITED

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My full name is Matthew Corey Hareb. I am the director & shareholder of Hareb Investments Limited (HIL), the applicant for this plan change. I have undertaken a number of infill developments in Waitara in the last 7-8 years, providing 9 new houses to the town over this time.
- 1.2 I am passionate about Waitara. I used to live in Brixton and loved it there. I have recently bought the land at the end of Johnston Street where I intend to build a new home and establish an avocado orchard.
- 1.3 I purchased the site at 2 Johnston Street in 2016 with the intention of developing it one day. All planning aside - I was interested in the land immediately because of its aspect, and its proximity to the Waitara residential zone and infrastructure, its easy connectivity with New Plymouth and the frustration and slowness associated with my infill developments within Waitara. The FUD overlay on the land signalled to me that I would be able to develop the land over time, and it was a good investment.
- 1.4 At the same time, I had a large number of people wanting to buy and/or rent every house I developed in Waitara. At this time I was experiencing first hand that the demand for housing was far outstripping supply in Waitara.

- 1.5 Since 2016, I can confirm my opinion that the situation has only got worse in Waitara, with increasing demand, and decreasing supply of land and houses.
- 1.6 I was therefore very surprised in 2017 when I received a letter from the NPDC asking for comments on the 'Draft District Plan' and proposing to remove the FUD overlay from my land. In the face of the demand I was seeing in Waitara, the success of the Dreavers subdivision on Armstrong Ave, and also house prices and difficulties first home buyers were having accessing the market, this seemed completely counterintuitive.
- 1.7 I asked the NPDC why, and they told me there was enough land in Waitara, and other areas that were better suited for development. I don't believe there is a better place in Waitara for a quality, greenfields development, and quite honestly, I thought the NPDC were out of touch with the demand and housing needs in the township and that their direction for Waitara was completely wrong.
- 1.8 I get asked regularly by members of the public, real-estate agents and home buyers when the sections on my land will be available. I could have sold many of the proposed lots already.
- 1.9 I have a list of people who currently want to buy sections from me when they are ready for market, and at last count (at the time of this evidence) this stood at 27 parties. This list is not attached to my evidence for privacy reasons (but a copy can be produced in confidence for the commissioner if required). Real estate agents in Waitara are in touch frequently asking when sections might be available for their clients. They confirm that there is a shortage of residential land for development. A letter from Miss Jay Realty dated 2 November 2020 is attached as '**Attachment A**', and this lists the following issues;
- (a) There is a shortage of residential property for development currently and into the foreseeable future;
 - (b) People returning to the area to build for their retirement have few land options;
 - (c) 90% of Miss Jays sales are to people from outside of Waitara;
 - (d) The proposed development would go some way to assisting with the housing shortage problem; and,

- (e) Bank terms are more favourable for house and land packages, rather than for buying older homes that require work.
- 1.10 I agree with Miss Jay, and am hearing similar concerns from other agents who work in the town.
- 1.11 There are comments in some of the reports relating to the productive soils on this site, and potential other productive land uses. I've looked at a lot of alternative options, especially when the NPDC told me I might not be able to develop the land. I have experience growing and investing in Avocados and Kiwifruit. Neither of these options would be economic on this site and there would be difficulties, for example, with shelter, access to water and security. In my opinion the site is not economic for a stand alone stock or market gardening operation as it is too small. Maize cropping and temporary grazing provides me an income off the land, but this essentially covers the costs of me holding it.
- 1.12 I am concerned about the comments in the Cultural Impact Assessment about failure to consult with Hapū. I feel I provided ample opportunity and a lot of time for comment and feedback, and had a number of discussions with Donna Eriwata of Otaraua in late 2018; during which she echoed the concerns relating to the ability of hapū members to secure housing in the town, and did not express any major concerns. I want to have a good relationship with them and thought I had done the right thing by talking to them early, and all the way through.
- 1.13 In February 2019, I confirmed this with a letter to Ms Eriwata, agreeing to give her hapū first option on 5 sections so they could get ahead of the wider market. I thought this offer had been accepted, however with the submission in opposition it is clear this is not the case. This letter is included as '**Attachment B**'.
- 1.14 I am disappointed that the Hapū opposed the plan change and I thought Hapū and I shared a common goal of providing houses for the community and improving the stream. I hope we can overcome this and sensibly work together for the benefit of the township and community, and I hope that the additional wording we have put forward gives them certainty that this has always been my intention.
- 1.15 My planner Kathryn Hooper also had discussions with Iwi and Hapū, and she will discuss in her evidence.

1.16 I've kept in touch with my neighbours and will keep working with them to make sure that they are not disadvantaged by what I do. At the end of the day though, this land has been flagged for urban development since 2013 (which is one of the reasons I bought it). New people coming to the area since then have moved in with this knowledge. Existing residents and other people in the district were able to voice their concerns at the time the FUD was notified. I don't believe anyone in the area has been surprised by what I propose to do.

2. CONCLUSION

2.1 Waitara needs more sections. My site at 2 Johnston Street has been identified by the Council as one of the areas to meet this need, and I believe it is the perfect place to provide for the growth of the township. I am willing and able to invest in Waitara to develop an area that the town would be proud of and benefit from. I am experienced in providing the type of housing Waitara demands and needs, and I am committed to the town and want to see it thrive. I will be disappointed if this plan change is unsuccessful, as will many other people.

Matthew Corey Hareb

Hareb Investments Limited

9 November 2020

Attachment A - Letter from Miss Jay Realty dated 2 November 2020

MISS JAY REALTY

60B McLean St, Waitara
Shop3
027 4710565
office@missjay.co.nz
AREINZ

2nd November 2020

Matt Hareb

Re: Residential Land/ Raleigh/ Johnston St's Project

Dear Matt

I confirm our discussions that currently and for the foreseeable future there is an unfulfilled demand (shortage) for residential land for development purposes.

This market (Real Estate) primarily comprises of out of area purchasers, lots of ex Taranaki people are returning to the area wanting to build their retirement properties with little choice or options of land to purchase to do so.

90% of our sales are to people outside of Waitara wishing to move and purchase here.

I feel the proposed sub-division project you are hopeful of proceeding with in the Raleigh/Johnston St's area will go some way towards assisting with the Waitara/Taranaki area housing shortage problem.

Building new houses can only benefit the Waitara/Taranaki area. Also, the lending facilities (Banks) are more favorable for house and land packages, as opposed to older existing house's, where repairs need to be done.

New Plymouth can/will grow expediently with your proposed residential sub-division. It would only be a hindrance if council does not recognize the need for rezoning.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for assistance. Miss Jay Realty Ltd look forward to working with you on this development on Raleigh/Johnston St's Waitara.

Yours sincerely



Jay Mura AREINZ
Owner/Director
Miss Jay Realty Limited

Attachment B - Letter from HIL to Otaraua Hapū dated 27 February 2019

Donna Eriwata
Otaraua Hapu Management Committee
8 Warre Street
WAITARA

27 February 2019

Dear Donna

RE: 2 Johnston Street

Thank you for your email of 5 February in relation to the plan change at 2 Johnston Street and for meeting with me to discuss the plans.

As discussed, this email is to confirm that I would be pleased to work with the hapu to make home and section packages available to your hapu members. While we can continue to discuss the detail, I would be happy to commit to giving hapu members first option on 5 sections. We will be staging the development so I would see this occurring over the first two stages – with two sections available in stage 1, and three sections in stage 2 – putting them within the first 2-3 years of the development at 2 Johnston Street.

This would be subject of course to the NPDC accepting our plan change proposal. If they do, I will be in touch and we can formalise something in more detail.

Kind regards,

Matt Hareb
HAREB INVESTMENTS