

SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT COUNCIL

27 NOVEMBER 2013

AGENDA ITEM NO

FEATHERSTON MEN'S SHED – LOCATION ON COUNCIL LAND

Purpose of Report

To inform Council of the proposal for the Featherston Men's Shed Group to occupy Council land on Fitzherbert St (land-swap land adjacent to Skate Park).

Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Council:

1. *Receives the information.*
2. *Instructs officers that the Featherston Men's Shed Inc is to be granted a licence to occupy part of the above premises at a peppercorn rental.*

1. Executive Summary

A Featherston Men's Shed group has been formed under the guidance of Peter McNeur from REAP, and is now incorporated. The group has raised sufficient support to make a local Men's Shed viable. Trust House Ltd has offered to donate the existing bottle store building once the new supermarket has been built. The Men's Shed would shift the building to the site and pay a peppercorn rental to SWDC. There would be no costs to SWDC beyond rates for the site.

2. Background

Men's Sheds now exist in many towns in New Zealand and are created as ground-up local initiatives. The Henley Men's Shed in Masterton is a very successful local example. They provide a social gathering point where (mostly) retired men carry out personal and community projects.

Two public meetings have established that there is sufficient support to make a Men's Shed viable in Featherston. The group has elected an executive and achieved incorporated society status, and will be affiliated to the national Men's Shed Group. As with Greytown, workbenches, materials, tools and furniture have already been donated or ear-marked for the group.

Men's Sheds provide a valuable social gathering point for men. Research shows that they reduce social isolation and improve well-being of their members. They provide services to local communities such as toy-making for fundraisers, tool sharpening and contribution to community projects. The group intends to approach local schools and early childhood centres to offer assistance, and will be able to carry out projects on Council property as well.

One of the key points raised in the Featherston town meeting in August was the need for male role models for the boys and young men in the town, and then Men's Shed Group hope to be able to provide this. They envisage working with local youth to teach them skills, for example bicycle and skateboard maintenance and repair.

3. Discussion

3.1 Options

John Skipage has offered the use of his premises on Fitzherbert St (John's Shed) but this is only a temporary measure. The former Transfield yard on the corner of Boundary Rd and Harrison St East might be a possibility, however this is Crown land now in the hands of the Office of Treaty Settlements, so its future is uncertain.

The Anzac Hall shed was considered, however it has been used for around 20 years for storage of tools used by the Probation Service PD workers, and there would be some difficulty in finding another suitable location for them. There does not appear to be any formal arrangement between the Probation Service and SWDC for the use of the shed, however SWDC benefits from work done around the town by the PD workers.

As a result of negotiations between Her Worship the Mayor and Trust House Ltd, Trust House has agreed to gift the Featherston bottle store building to Council for use as a men's shed. Once it becomes available, this building could be relocated onto part of the land-swap land as part of the improvements to the space and the creation of the town square. A location adjacent to the skate park and playgrounds means there would be a regular adult presence in this area, and would make it easy for local children to access help with their bikes and skateboards.

3.2 Legal Implications

Assuming that the land-swap land will be incorporated into the Clifford Square Reserve, then the Clifford Square Reserve Management Plan would apply to the land. The placement of a Men's Shed within this reserve would fall within the recreational values of the plan.

3.3 Financial Considerations

The Men's Shed group would need to fund (or find sponsorship for) the relocation of the building and the connection to power, sewer and water, as well as any alterations/improvements to the interior. The group would be required to ensure that the exterior of the building and the associated landscaping are developed and maintained to an appropriate standard for the reserve location.

The quid pro quo for the application of a peppercorn rental is the expectation that the Men's Shed will contribute skills and labour to community projects.

Featherston Men's Shed will carry public liability insurance. A condition of the licence to occupy would be that all improvements to the property would have to be approved by SWDC in advance, and would revert to SWDC in the event of termination. This would include the option of SWDC either choosing to retain, or requesting the removal of, the relocated building.

4. Conclusion

Creating the Featherston Men's Shed in this location will be at no cost to rate-payers, and will improve the social wellbeing of both individual members and the community as a whole. There is zero financial future risk to SWDC, and many potential benefits from the Group's ability to contribute to community initiatives.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Menz Shed New Zealand About Us – from website
<http://www.menzshed.org.nz/about-us/what-shed/>

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Appendix 1 – Menz Shed New Zealand About Us