

SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT COUNCIL

24 JUNE 2014

AGENDA ITEM NO

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE DESIGN OPPORTUNITY FOR FEATHERSTON

Purpose of Report

To inform the Community Board and the Mayor about a Victoria University, Landscape Architecture design opportunity for Featherston.

Recommendations

Community Board Member Katie Beattie recommend that the Community Board:

1. *Receive the information.*

1. Executive Summary

Featherston has been chosen as a case study for two papers for advanced Landscape Architecture students at Victoria University.

The course would be fully designed and managed through the University.

Council, iwi, other agencies, interest groups and the community have an opportunity to share their local knowledge of the region and town during the workshops and field trips, associated with this university paper.

The community also has an opportunity to fully engage with this programme and to offer hospitality to the students during their initial visit.

2. Background

Recently Featherston Citizen Jennie Marks contacted me on 12 June 2014 about the possibility of a professor at Victoria University of Wellington using Featherston as a case study for their programme of Landscape Architecture. Jennie introduced me to Bruno Marques, who is a Lecturer in Landscape Architecture. I met with Bruno on 18 June.

Bruno was looking for an existing or new town that his 4th year students would use for two papers. The location would ideally be able to identify with its natural and historical features. The location would also ideally

have a community who were willing to engage with the students in their work.

In my discussion, we touched on the town square proposal, the state of the main street, Clifford Square Reserve, the Fell Engine, the town's military history, and the town's location near the Forest Park, Incline and other bicycle Trails and Wairarapa Moana.

Following our discussion, Bruno and the university have designed their papers to use Featherston as their case study. His plan is to focus the first paper on the regional scale – how does the town and its community identify with the larger historical and natural context. This paper would also investigate the natural and structural environment of Featherston.

For the second paper, the students would drill down to the street scale. They would prepare design ideas for the main street, specific parks, sites and features.

3. Discussion

3.1 Council and Community Engagement

For the first paper, Bruno would have his students and a co-professor come to Featherston for a 1 or 2-week period in mid-July. During this initial time, they would explore and get to know the town.

Bruno would be seeking volunteers to billet the students during much of this one or two-week period. The students would also need a large space to work in, which could possibly be provided for in the Featherston Community Centre or in one of the Halls or Clubs.

A series of field trips and workshops would require local people to share their knowledge. This may include officers from both SWDC and GWRC, representatives from DOC, Rangitane o Wairarapa, Kahungunu ki Wairarapa and local historians.

The opportunity exists for the learning during this phase to be shared back to the community either during the workshops themselves, or through other venues specifically targeted to the community.

The second paper runs at the same time. For this paper the students would look at the smaller-scale design elements of Featherston, such as the town's main street, public spaces and playing fields.

3.2 Consultation

The proposal is a Victoria University programme, and as such is not being conducted under the Local Government Act. Nonetheless, the success of the design-work relies on the students engaging with the community to firstly understand the identity of the community and secondly to translate this identity into landscape designs.

3.3 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications anticipated.

3.4 Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications anticipated, other than some officer time for information sharing.

I would be happy to find a volunteer that will coordinate the billeting of the students during their time in Featherston.

3.5 Other

It is anticipated that Council and the community may want a guarantee that the final designs reflect Featherston in a positive and prosperous manner. We may want to consider a basic Memorandum of Understanding be drafted to achieve this desire.

4. Conclusion

Featherston has been chosen as a case study for two papers for advanced Landscape Architecture students at Victoria University.

The course would be fully designed and managed through the University.

Council, iwi, other agencies, interest groups and the community have an opportunity to share their local knowledge of the region and town during workshops and field trips.

The community also has an opportunity to fully engage with this programme and to offer hospitality to the students during their initial visit to Featherston.