

SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT COUNCIL

4 JUNE 2014

AGENDA ITEM C2

APPLICATION TO ERECT ELECTION SIGNS ON COUNCIL LAND AT OTAUIRA RESERVE, STATE HIGHWAY 2, FEATHERSTON

Purpose of Report

To enable Council to decide whether election hoardings should be permitted on Otairua Reserve Featherston, during General Election years.

Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Council:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Approve use of Otairua Reserve by all political parties to erect election signs during General Elections, provided they comply with all other relevant standards in the Wairarapa Combined District Plan.*

1. Background

The Labour Party has applied to erect election signs on Otairua Reserve, Featherston, for the upcoming general election. We expect other political parties to make similar requests in due course. The reserve is located on the Rimutaka side of Featherston near its entranceway to the township.

2. Discussion

2.1 Public Places Bylaw and the Wairarapa Combined District Plan

Signs in South Wairarapa are regulated by the Public Places Bylaw and the Wairarapa Combined District Plan (District Plan).

Section 4 of Part 2 (Public Places) of the Masterton and South Wairarapa District Council Consolidated Bylaws 2012 prohibits obstructions (including signs) in public places without the consent of Council.

In addition to Council's agreement as landowner, election signs must comply with the following rules in the District Plan in order to avoid the need to obtain a resource consent (set out in Rule 21.1.16(g)):

- (i) The total face area of all signs per site must not be greater than 5m².

- (ii) Any one sign must not exceed 3m².
- (iii) The maximum height of any sign is 6 metres.
- (iv) Any temporary sign advertising a General Election shall not be displayed for more than 8 weeks before and shall be removed within 7 days after the date of the event.
- (vi) No sign shall be located on any public road or other public place.
- (vii) Signs must not be located in a position that would conceal the required sight distances from any access or intersection (Appendix 5; 6 metres from entrance).
- (viii) Signs must not conceal the visibility of an existing official sign or traffic-controlling device.
- (ix) No sign shall use reflective materials, or be illuminated, flashing or moving.
- (x) The following minimum letter/character height standards for signs in the 100km/hr speed zones shall be: main message 300mm, second message 150mm.

2.2 Prior Approval

The use of public land for election hoardings was addressed by this Council, in 2011, approving the erection of election hoardings on Otairua Reserve for the 2011 General Election. The decision was effective in managing the placement of election signs in the District and Officers consider it would be administratively prudent to permit General Election hoardings in Otairua Reserve for the upcoming elections in September. Officers consider that Council could adopt a policy to allow the use of the Otairua Reserve by political parties and candidates for all future elections.

2.3 Otairua Reserve/State Highway 2

State Highway 2 is considered to be the only road suitable for displaying election signs. However, at the entranceway to Featherston the highway has steep banks and wide shoulders that make random sign placement potentially dangerous for motorists.

Otairua Reserve proved to be a suitable election sign location in 2011 after Council agreed to allow election signs there, as long as they were not in the road reserve. The use of the site does not adversely affect traffic safety or reduce required safe sight distances.

2.4 How would the District Plan apply?

If Council approves the use of the site for election signs, the following standards in the District Plan would be implicitly consented to:

- (i) *total face areas of signs greater than 5m² (which would collectively allow other political parties to place hoardings on the site) and*
- (iv) *locating a sign on a public place.*

All other standards would still apply and would act as triggers for resource consent.

3. Conclusion

Officers recommend that Council approves the use of Otairā Reserve for the placement of election signs by all political parties during any General Elections. The reserve is the most suitable site in the South Wairarapa and is located at the Featherston town-threshold from the Wellington Region.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Location Map

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Appendix 1 – Otairira Reserve, Featherston Location Map

