

Perry Cameron

FEATHERSTON LAND SWAP – A different view

Mayor Adrienne made the public 'land swap' announcement on 25 August at the Featherston Crime Prevention and Community Support Meeting, held at the ANZAC Hall, and attended by about 600 residents for the real business of the day.

Masterton Licensing Trust, for commercial reasons, chose not to proceed with its planned extensive Featherston-retail upgrade. Now it owns the land! 'Trust House' has a pot of Featherston gold to sell, as it will. The charitable trust certainly knows its boundaries: in the 2013-year a grand total of \$5,250 was distributed to four Featherston clubs, the Community Patrol, and Lions Club – out of total distributions of \$2.8 million, about 0.19 percent!

We are left with a black hole in the heart of Featherston. I have expressed my concerns on the 'chicken before egg' circumstance, not the unknown facts or the politics, by the following means:

- (a) At the subsequent Lion's Club, 'Meet the Candidates Evening' at the Anzac Hall, 16 September;
- (b) Arrow FM (92.7FM): 'Community Board Election Special' for Southern Exposure, the Community Access Radio. Lucy Cooper has provided this link:
<http://recooper8.wordpress.com/2013/09/17/lots-to-look-forward-to-on-arrow-fm-92-7fm/>, and
- (c) In my 'five issues' and profile on <vote.co.nz.>: "The Town's strategic plan needs to re-address the proper & best community usage of recently announced land-swap assets..."

Public consultation should have been the imperative before Council reached such a significant decision on disposition of public land. Notwithstanding the lack of community consultation, ministerial approval has already been given. Approval of what, exactly?

In my view, Featherston has sufficient space already for a 'town square', somehow defined. The core components already exist: historic Fell museum (and several more), an information centre, library, playground, mini-rail, ANZAC Hall, skate-park, creative outdoor art, and so on.

Two years ago Family Works hosted a business-working group study and presentation, mentored by Mr Shane McManaway.¹ The team developed a concept for Featherston's economic development and wellbeing, with fresh options for the future. Council needs to get with it. For example, there is scope for small business outlets for the sale of South Wairarapa's horticultural and pastoral produce. More 'town square' space is not what Featherston or South Wairarapa needs.

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¹ See attached Featherston PROMO draft and ETHOS.

Featherston – Paitumokai: whither go'est thou?

ETHOS: the characteristic spirit and belief of the Featherston community. Our challenge is to make a positive and ongoing difference to the town's future.

Action Plan

- Listen to Shane McManaway: review the case "Featherston, A breath of Fresh Air".
- Identify areas of strength and concern.
- Define our mission and pathway forward.
- Find owners for the new direction.
- Make a five year action plan.
- Find managers for the plan.
- Agree on areas of immediate focus: enhance strengths and diminish weaknesses.
- Always promote success.

Vision

- ❖ Featherston regains its place in the Wairarapa community.
- ❖ Featherston's potential is recognised, and drives fresh business and quality of life initiatives.
- ❖ Featherston's current attributes and future achievements are recognised.
- ❖ Featherston grows a culture of success and achievement.

Featherston – Paitumokai: whither go'est thou?¹

Worksheet: Looking ahead, focus on opportunities.

Accommodation

B&B potential
'Longwood' &
Lodgings
Two Hotels?
Motel (lapsed)

Location

Central to South
Wairarapa.
Hard ride by road
from Wgton., easy
from the north. R.
Hill upgrade.
Easy rail commute
to Hutt, Wgton and
Stadium. Now seen
as a potentially a
dormitory suburb
for professionals –
need to avoid
Kapiti's mistakes.

Entertainment

On completion of
shopping centre:
movie theatre +
Kiwi Hall potential;
Existing skate park;
golf courses; Fell,
township, and
military museums.
Potentially a
component of trail
rides and walks,
including Wairarapa
Moana.
Martinborough Fairs
– NZ's two largest
fairs.
Food & Wine/Toast
Fairs, French Fair.
Tauherenikau track.

Culture & History

Close to Papawai
Marae; Grand old
homes;
Stonehenge-
Aotearoa; Prisoner
of War Camp
(Anniversary?);
Cross Creek and
Rail Trail; Mountain
ranges/reserves
(Barr-Brown Bush
Reserve) and South
Coast.sites (DoC).

Agriculture, Horticulture & Fishing - Wairarapa

Large dairy herd;
highly rated sheep
breeding;- potential
to allow viewing of
milking and
shearing.
Martinborough/Glad
stone active in
horticulture –
several public
events. Ngawi the
center for second
largest fishery in
NZ.

Issues

Part of Greater
Wellington: Public
Relations exclusions
and Stats. NZ
issues.

Oppportunitites

Tauherenikau track.
Market to foreign
tourists & NZ-ers.;
Regional Media,
Facebook, local
papers, and web
sites. Acknowledged
in business
publications.
Generation Baby-
boomers and X,Y.
Proximity to WOW,
Hot Air Balloon,
Shearing events,
and Mount Bruce
wild life.
Easy and
competitive cycling
routes.

Contacts/Mentors

Mayor Adrienne;
Chair GW Fran;
John MP, locals.
Wairarapa business
groups.

¹ The township is named after Isaac Earl Featherstone 1813-1876. (See Dictionary of New Zealand.) Featherston became the centre for Featherston County, the centre for a very large district also encompassing Martinborough, Greytown, and Carterton. The general area was known to local Maori as 'Paitumokai', commemorating the loss of a Kookako, a chief's pet parrot.