

STONEVILLE PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.

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STONEVILLE POST OFFICE
STONEVILLE WA 6081

Mr. Jason Hick
Manager Environmental Services
Cardno BSD
2, Bagot Road,
Subiaco
WA 6008

21st March 2006

Cc
Minister for Planning
Jaye Radisich MLA
Jonathan Throssell, CEO Mundaring Shire
Tony Evans, CEO Perth Diocesan Trustees
www.saveperthhills.org

Dear Mr. Hick,

PROPOSED STONEVILLE TOWNSITE – LOT 69 ROLAND ROAD , STONEVILLE

Thank you for your letter dated March 1st which did not reach our PO Box until March 17th.

It has been stated by many people, including Shire Councillors, that this development is "years away". The fact that the Perth Diocesan Trustees (PDT) have employed such a high profile international company as Cardno BSD to solve their sewage disposal problems, thus enabling the rezoning of this land to 'urban', tells us that this development is in fact imminent. Furthermore, the fact that you have carefully composed a 4 page letter intended to convince us that we're wasting our time protesting about it tells me that clearly we are not. If this development was certain to go ahead as proposed I imagine we would have not received a letter at all or one that was 4 lines not 4 pages.

Your letter states that "...lifting the process of Urban Deferred will be largely focussed on the wastewater treatment and disposal issues." According to a letter we received from the Minister for Planning last week (enc.) there are a whole range of issues that must be considered before this can happen including considerations

Chairperson	Mike Davies	9295 3979
Vice Chairperson	Rusty Celler	9295 4481
Secretary	Joanne Sheil	9295 6665
Treasurer	Natalie Pratt	9578 3444

regarding local public transport, infrastructure and local employment. Therefore I consider your statement misleading.

You say that this development and others are intended to "...reduce development and environmental pressure on the existing Mundaring townsite..." Could you please give us the details of the Report or Study that quantified this pressure thus enabling the Shire and the WAPC to reach such a decision? Such information must have been made available to the town planners in order for them to determine the appropriate size of the proposed developments. Certainly population growth in 1996 and the median price of property in Mundaring would suggest that there was no great "pressure" for people to live there. Was this decision based on hard evidence or was it just a guess motivated by the desire to step up development?

I note that you propose to develop a treatment system that is "likely to deliver a substantially better environmental outcome than a large number of onsite wastewater treatment and disposal systems (septic tank systems) that are likely to result in a significantly lower level of wastewater treatment and therefore nutrient removal". If this is the case I am alarmed that therefore the Mundaring Shire is currently approving the installation of septic systems that are polluting the environment. I will forward your letter to the Shire's Manager of Health Services and ask him if this is the case and, if so what steps are being taken to rectify this situation.

You acknowledge our concerns regarding social and public health issues. In response to your claim that such a development will make the delivery of health services "easier and more practical" and that "community interactions and a sense of place will develop and therefore social issues and problems are less likely to result".

Firstly I should point out regarding the health issue that the Mundaring Medical Centre, modern and very well equipped, has great difficulty attracting doctors to its practice in spite of excellent incentives - it is currently short staffed. They were forced to close their surgery in Mount Helena due to staffing problems. A surgery that opened in Chidlow almost 3 years ago has never seen a patient as it has been unable to recruit the necessary medical personnel. Having visited our website I hope you read the letter we received from the CEO of the Perth & Hills Division of General Practitioners on this issue. He points out that currently doctors in the Hills deal with 3 times as many patients as their metropolitan counterparts and that "...the Hills region suffers significantly from GP, Nursing and Allied Health workforce shortages". This is confirmed by Dr. Paul Skerritt, President of the AMA, in the transcript of a recent interview on the ABC's 'Stateline' programme - also available on our website. The Stoneville and Parkerville developments will increase the population of the Shire (currently 34,000) by approximately 6 - 7000. I am at a loss therefore to understand how this will improve the delivery of health services.

The construction of a new Swan District Hospital with 120 extra beds will further increase the demand for medical personnel. The closure of Royal Perth Hospital will mean that pressure on Swan District Hospital will increase markedly. Even if the numbers of young graduate doctors increase dramatically, I am sure that they will hardly flock to an area where their social opportunities for meeting a lifelong partner are so severely restricted. Such is the concern of the Mundaring Medical Centre and the Perth & Hills Division of GP's

they are prepared to make submissions against these developments to the Minister for Planning.

Secondly, the social impact of placing a large number of people in an isolated situation 6 kilometres from the centre of Mundaring in an area with few employment opportunities, only 'neighbourhood' shops and where, according to the original town planners report, Transperth will not even provide a bus service is indeed grave. There are commercial properties in Mundaring that have been vacant for years so I wonder who will be interested in those 'neighbourhood shops'. On this basis I can see that as you say "community interactions and a sense of place will develop" but not of the kind you envisage. Furthermore the inclusion of retirement units in such an isolated spot suggests little thought has been given to the needs of the occupants.

It's a wonderful idea that simply by designing a 'village' you can socially engineer a community – create a particular type of behaviour. We were told by town planners that Ellenbrook was going to be a wonderful community with a 'sense of place'. Alas the reality bears no relationship to that concept and as a result they have only sold 47% of their projected number of blocks after 13 years. So often Western Australians have been subjected to this kind of hype and spent the rest of their lives living with the consequences when the developers and planners have moved on to their next social miracle.

You mention various environmentally detrimental effects that the large block option would create. I discussed in a telephone conversation with Mr. Tony Evans, CEO of the PDT, that I had obtained agreement from the 'Men of the Trees' that they would be happy to embark on a revegetation programme of large blocks (with assistance from local residents) should this eventuate. Many areas of the subject land have been degraded by clearing and grazing. Such revegetation with local native species would create a far better environmental outcome than suburban size blocks and actually increase biodiversity. Mr. Evans made no comment. Furthermore the Shire does not permit "widespread clearing" or "incremental lot clearing" as you claim on blocks larger than ½ an acre except within the restricted building envelope designated for the house construction.

Regarding weed invasion I fail to see how having 1709 lots will minimise this and less lots will increase the problem. Furthermore with scheme water residents can sustain plants that can become feral when their seeds are dispersed by birds and the wind into the bush. Also such reticulation encourages the planting of grass and exotic plants that rely heavily on fertilisers and insecticides for their survival – these inevitably enter the water catchment. As far as predatory pets are concerned, cats are more likely to be the pet of choice on a suburban style block rather than a bush block – people buy bush blocks in order to support the environment. Many residents belong to such schemes as CALM's 'Land for Wildlife' with this in mind.

Finally you say that this is not 'high density' because it is significantly less than the average in the metropolitan area. However, we are not living in the metropolitan area and when 71% of the blocks in this development range from 180 to 800 square metres (1209 of them in all) that is by Hills standards high density.

It's interesting that the PDT originally intended this to be a development of 5 acre blocks. Correspondence from them on our website confirms that this only changed as a result of pressure from the Shire. I can sympathise that as a consequence they have been involved

in a great deal of expense and effort in order to move this forward. Luckily for them the land cost them nothing and they will not pay any tax on their profit, so whatever the outcome they will substantially improve their financial situation. I hope that this is not achieved at too high a price for the existing community and those who will eventually become a part of it.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Davies", is enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Mike Davies