

2 VITAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Environmental Management Plan

DATE: MONDAY 20 JUNE 2005
TIME: 7:00 pm

Rural Land Study Recision Motion

DATE: TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2005
TIME: 7:00 pm

Venue for both:

Council Building, 129 Showground Rd, Castle Hill

Both these meetings will discuss issues that directly affect members and supporters, so please make every effort to attend.

We encourage you to speak at meetings wherever possible—either in the community forum held at the start of council meetings, or directly to an item on the agenda, in which case you need to call the council on 9843 0277 the day before to register you name. (You can find out what is on the agenda by calling the council on 9843 0130, or by visiting their website www.baulkhamhills.com.au, 3 days prior to meetings.)

Councillors vote against our interests

At the council meeting of Tuesday 7 June we witnessed something we hope to never see again—one north ward councillor together with 6 councillors from other wards voting against our interests.

The item being debated was the further report on the Rural Land Study, comprising recommendations from the working group (reviewing the study) and council officers. Not unexpectedly council officers recommended that the draft plan rejected in September be placed on exhibition, with some minor changes. Cllr Harty moved that this occur, along with further recommendations to seek the views of DIPNR regarding village expansion and subdivision of 25 acre lots where there was town water. (For full details of the motion and the amendment, refer to the minutes on the council's website: www.baulkhamhills.com.au.)

Given that we already know the views of DIPNR—they oppose any rural residential subdivision—this will not move us any closer to a reasonable outcome. In fact, if the draft plan is approved as it stands, we will be in a worse position because of the restrictions imposed by the environmental overlay.

Cllr John Griffiths moved an amendment that would have seen the original plan (LEP & DCP) retained, and advice sought from DIPNR as to how best to achieve 2 hectare & 5 hectare subdivision as recommended by the working group. This would have resulted in a far better outcome—at least we would not be faced with an environmental overlay.

With debate restricted to only 2 for and 2 against, the amendment was lost 7 votes to 5. However Cllr John Griffiths has lodged a recision motion, which means that the item will come back for debate on the 21 June. Be there!

President's Column

It was really good to see so many of you at the council meeting of 7th June. Like you, I'm very disappointed at the way our interests continue to be set aside, apparently "for the greater good", so that others may enjoy being surrounded by a green belt at our expense.

I know it can be quite difficult to make arrangements to attend council meetings, however during the next few weeks we need to make our presence felt as often as possible to show councillors how we feel about being denied freedom and choice.

Taken together, our members own some 3,000 acres, worth hundreds of millions of dollars. That gives us considerable strength—a point we mustn't overlook when we are making our case for sense and reason to prevail.

Alex Davidson, President

Action Plan

Once the result of Tuesday night's council meeting is known, your committee will be meeting to determine what actions we can take to ensure that our interests are furthered. Apart from the standard procedures involving submissions and representations to the council and councillors, we will be considering all other avenues for challenging the process – political, legal, and media-based. These challenges will be on the basis that the Rural Land Study and review process were biased and lacking in rigour; that we are being denied the right to determine our own future, and that we are being deprived of property rights without any form of compensation.

After the committee has prepared a list of suggested actions, we plan to call a general meeting of all members help finalise our plan, and consider issues such as fund-raising. The date will be advised shortly—please make sure you attend.

More information ...

The primary aim of **5 Acres Now** is to regain the right, withdrawn some 40 years ago, to subdivide large lots to 5 acres in the so-called "rural" area of the shire of Baulkham Hills. That's why we are called **5 Acres Now**. We believe this is a very reasonable goal

that will benefit the area by restoring a moderate level of growth without undue impact upon the environment or infrastructure. To find out more, visit our website: www.5acresnow.com.au, or contact us as detailed below.