

From: Karen Mackenzie
Sent: 11 Oct 2020 17:53:21 +1100
To: Planning @ Meander Valley Council
Subject: Attention: General Manager John Jordan

> Dear Mr Jordan

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> Re: Development Application: Rezoning of land bound by William, Lyttleton, Taylor and Waterloo Streets from Rural Resource Zone to General Residential Zone

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> I am writing to voice my opposition to the development proposal above to “provide new urban residential lots.”

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> My husband and I have lived in Westbury since moving here in October 1998 and have been ratepayers since purchasing our home here in February 1999. We have always found Westbury to be a pleasant place to live, people are friendly and the quiet village lifestyle suits our way of life.

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> The amenities I love about Westbury are its historic village atmosphere, historic buildings, Village Green and Town Common, to name a few.

> Westbury Village provides a quiet, relaxing environment in which to enjoy the lifestyle we have here. Since the bypass of Westbury many years ago, locals have worked hard to build up the tourist aspects of Westbury. The winning of the Tidy Towns award in 2015 is an example of how Westbury is viewed both by locals and people who do not live in the village. We are fortunate to have amenities that make this village a convenient place for people of all ages to live. We have two GP practices, a chemist, a Post Office, a Library, new IGA supermarket, a Community Health Centre, a butcher as well as a pub, local cafes, a maze and Pearn’s Steam World. We have recently updated sporting facilities, a beautiful Village Green and Town Common. As well as having the convenience of the facilities mentioned above, we also have the pleasure of living in an historic village with beautiful historic buildings to enjoy. I always smile when I see the number of families enjoying a picnic on our Village Green or walking their dogs on the Town Common. We are indeed fortunate to live a lifestyle that would be envied by many other people in Tasmania and on the Mainland.

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> It is developments such as the one proposed on farming land bounded by William, Waterloo, Taylor and Lyttleton Streets that threaten the lifestyle I have outlined above. If this rezoning is allowed to take place, it may be eligible for the 450m2 land size when the new Local Provision Schedule is approved. This will result in many more lots of land than already stated. Will the land size automatically change from 700m2 to 450m2 when the Local Provision Schedule comes about? How many lots of land would this result in, if this land size was used? Is adding this number of lots to the size of an already existing historic village progress? I think not! I am surprised at Council’s intention to rezone agricultural land considering the Tasmanian Government’s existing policy to protect existing agricultural land. The owner of the land has stated the land has become “too high a value to continue farming.” He is not saying it cannot be farmed. I can only hope that every other farmer in the Meander Valley Municipality does not decide their land has become too valuable to farm!

> I am very concerned that the very nature of Westbury as an historic village will be damaged forever by these types of developments. The intention to rezone this area from Rural Resource Zone to General Residential Zone will undermine the very good things about Westbury which include the sense of place, tourism and heritage. Current thinking within Meander Valley Council seems to be that any development that can be squeezed into Westbury is a good thing. I believe that this vision from Council is not wholistic and is lacking a greater vision for Westbury. When has the community been consulted about Council’s vision for Westbury? Surely ratepayers deserve the right to be consulted on whatever plans Council has for the future of Westbury as a whole, rather than having to fight individually against each rezoning?

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> Westbury is currently a wildlife haven for Eastern Barred Bandicoots and many beautiful birds, a living garden, that includes heritage hedges. We have already seen significant losses in each of these areas. What Meander Valley Council and developers are planning will result in significantly greater losses for both local wildlife and flora. The building of at least 200 houses as proposed will see more noise, more traffic and more light pollution to disturb our endangered wildlife as well as human beings. If we say that each house will bring 3 to 4 extra people Westbury that means an increase in population of 600 to 800 for the population of Westbury. Add in all the other subdivisions already approved or also in the pipeline and we could be looking at an extra 1,000 people in Westbury. This is a huge increase on the existing population of approximately 2,000 inhabitants. With extra people come cats and dogs which cause damage to our wildlife and farm animals. Cats especially, when not kept indoors at night, have a devastating impact on the local wildlife, not only as predators but as carriers and transmitters of toxoplasmosis to humans as well as wildlife. Will these people living on smaller blocks of land then complain about existing farming practices? Where does this stop?

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> I have already seen the removal of a significant tree to allow the development on the corner of King Street and Taylor Street some years ago. Recently so called pruning to the historic trees that form the border of the Fitzpatrick's Inn garden has damaged these trees. This damage to existing historic trees has been caused due to another development of 3 units on the corner of Meander Valley Road and Marriott Street. As a member of Westbury Garden Club I have been involved in the planting of Spring bulbs underneath street trees and the plantings at the Eastern entry to Westbury to further improve the beautification of Westbury. Council has supported the Club with a grant and more recently by providing fencing to protect young plants.

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> This type of development as well as others proposed for Westbury in the near future, will combine to detract from the amenities and sense of place of Westbury Village for locals, tourists, other visitors and businesses.

> The historic village of Westbury is not a suburb of Launceston and it would be detrimental if it was to become one. We have our own individuality as a village with its own community. In its own documents Meander Valley Council sees retirees as a proposed demographic but the very changes they are proposing, make Westbury less desirable as a place to live.

> It is clear from conversations with numerous tourists and many visitors from within Tasmania, that the attractiveness of Westbury is due to the rich history, built heritage, natural environment, good, friendly services, and spaciousness. Council seems to not fully appreciate that, and further seems intent on detracting from those aspects, due to a misguided belief that more houses, less farmland, less green spaces, equals progress that automatically has to be improvement. That is simply incorrect.

> I encourage Meander Valley Council to consider all the negative implications of this proposed development and to refuse this application. Thank you for taking the time to consider my views as a ratepayer of this Council.

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> Yours sincerely
> Karen Mackenzie Westbury

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