

From: Patrick Synge
Sent: Tue, 17 Nov 2020 09:30:36 +1100
To: Huon Valley Council
Subject: Representation re rezoning and subdivision in Cygnet
Attachments: Representation to HVC re PSA 2-2017 and SUB 36-2017.pdf

Here is a representation from myself (not Cygnet Association).

Regards, Pat Synge

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**Representation to Huon Valley Council
re. PSA-2/2017 and SUB-36/2017**

Please note that any comments or suggestions that I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily align with those of The Cygnet Association (Inc) of which I am currently the secretary.

I would also like to emphasise that I am in favour of the residential development of this site. I mention this because I was pictured in a recent feature in the Sunday Tasmania and the accompanying article may have been misinterpreted as indicating that I am against developing this land for residential use. I am generally in favour of development but not impressed by the current plans.

I would like to see this land developed to provide good, sustainable housing for a broad range of residents of all ages and financial/social circumstances. This should, however, complement and enhance the existing character of the township, while contributing to its long term economic prosperity, I feel that the density proposed is about right but that significant improvements could be made to the plan at little, if any, cost.

This DA that has been submitted as part of this rezoning amendment application is for the creation of 61 generously dimensioned lots with 74 dwellings. This represents the biggest subdivision in Cygnet's history and, in itself, has the potential to transform the township's character. This could be for better or for worse and this largely depends on how the development is planned and actually realised.

- It is my understanding that if the land is rezoned this DA could then be amended or even abandoned and a new DA submitted to, for instance, create smaller lot sizes and/or more dwellings
Is this true?
- It is my understanding that if this current DA was abandoned and a new DA were to be submitted, consistent with the rezoning, the Huon Valley Council, acting as a Planning Authority, would be obliged to allow it to proceed.
Is this true?

I am not suggesting that the developer has any intention of doing this but it seems to me that the planning process itself is flawed if rezoning decisions are in any way based on, but not conditional upon, plans that can later be abandoned.

Good development can and should enhance the character and economic well-being of a community. It should not simply provide a developer with an opportunity to profit from the established character of a particular locality to its long term detriment.

Cygnet has a particular character. It is recognised for its rural setting and its unusual architectural features as well as what is touted as it "creative community".

"Cygnet is a popular Huon Valley small country town well known for its creative community and beautiful scenic location in the sheltered Port Cygnet Bay"

<https://www.huonvalleytas.com/local/cygnet/> (HVC tourism website)

The township's relationship with its environment is an integral part of its character. It is important in attracting tourists and has led many to make their homes here. *This is, and has been, the driving force in the township's and district's recent economic prosperity.*

There are many in our community who feel that the “rural village” character of the township is being swamped by undifferentiated sub-divisions and that the proverbial golden egg-laying goose is being killed in the process.

In this particular instance the proposal is to create a very typical suburban style subdivision in a prominent setting right on the main road. This would do absolutely nothing to enhance the character of the township. Quite the opposite.

But, if some simple measures were taken, it so easily could.

The provision of housing is important and the proponent emphasises this.

A well planned residential development can and should also

- *provide for good sustainable housing in a pleasant, livable and inviting environment*
- *enhance the character of the locality rather than detract from it.*
- *boost the long term amenity for its future residents*
- *fully integrate with the existing community.*

Traffic considerations

Twenty years ago traffic was beginning to be a consideration in Cygnet. Congestion was sporadic and was rarely more than a minor inconvenience.

In 2004 HVC engaged the planners Inspiring Place to develop a Cygnet Township Development Plan (CTDP). They conducted extensive consultation with Council, within the community and with all local business owners. I well remember the reams of “butchers’ paper” in pre Monkey Survey days.

Recognising, even back then, that there was starting to be traffic issue in the main street they included, as two of the plan's principal features, a new street running parallel to the east of Mary Street and a car park behind the Town Hall. This car park has since been developed but it is my understanding that next to nothing has been done towards the realisation of the new street. All stakeholders acknowledged that this was to be a staged plan but it was never suggested that these stages would take decades.

In 2009 the CTDP was revised. Recognising what had become by then significant pressures on the main street this revised plan included another car park (close to the new Post Office) and an extended new street. This was endorsed by HVC.

The population of the township has now increased far faster than was projected at that time. It is already what was predicted for 2036 and it has now been predicted to increase even more rapidly into the future (SGS).

Delivery vehicles clog Mary Street as they have no alternative access to the shops. Parking is at a premium despite the new car park behind the Town Hall. Seniors in particular often have difficulty crossing the street to do their shopping.

It is my understanding that despite endorsing the CTDP more than a decade ago HVC has committed no funding towards realising it and has not developed any detailed plans. Including a request for funding for planning in a Federal Election “wish list” appears to be the extent of any action.

Rezoning for 71+ new suburban dwellings in a small town with only one, already congested, street and no alternative through route is bad planning.

Until there is a firm and demonstrable commitment from Huon Valley Council to improve traffic circulation within the township I am reluctantly opposed to the rezoning of this land.

Scenic values

One of the amendments to be considered by TPC is the removal of a portion of the Scenic Overlay to allow for the construction of houses along this portion of the Channel Highway.

There can be no argument that this development will detract from the pleasant pastoral view over the water that currently exists. The DA indicates that the densest portion of the development will be right along this section of highway at the entrance to our township.

What the developer is asking is that a currently protected vista over farmland to the water should be replaced by relatively dense housing development. Welcome to Cygnet!

I would suggest that, if this open farmland is to be rezoned for residential use, a compromise solution should be considered.

If a strip of land, say 10m across, along the entire subdivision frontage onto the highway was reserved as a POS in the form of a "nature strip" it could be planted with shrubs and low trees that would largely obscure the view of the subdivision from the highway. In total this area would be less than the area of an average house lot. It is true that the existing protected view would be lost but would be replaced by something more attractive than a row of houses butting onto the highway. It would also improve the liveability of the houses at the Channel Highway end of the development by screening them to some extent from the ever-busier main road. It would also provide space for off-street pedestrian access.

This would make a significant difference to the impression of the entire development as seen from the highway which is from where it will be most visible for the vast majority of people

An example of this kind of screening can be seen at nearby Lourdes Rise development where a "pocket park" at the entrance has significantly improved its appearance despite the developed land sloping upwards. In this case the land slopes down slightly and this kind of frontage would be far more effective.

It is acknowledged that the developer would then be obliged to rearrange the orientation and number of lots at the highway end of the development but the local community and general public would benefit greatly, *and in perpetuity*, from the considerable "softening" of its visual impact. Any loss of overall density in the development could easily be overcome by slightly reducing the size of some of the larger lots or building some conjoint dwellings and/or units on some of them.

Concerns/suggestions about other aspects of the design of the sub division.

- As a community we have been active in recent years planting street trees and I believe that all significant housing developments should be required to include some street plantings. When this is done well it can greatly enhance the amenity of such a development.

Lifestyle, the environment and road safety would be improved for future residents if the "loop road" was made one way (clockwise).

- Much of the space 'saved' could be planted with grass and shrubs and thus provide for pleasant off-street walking and parking bays.
- This would encourage walking and be safer for both pedestrians and drivers.
- There would be no right hand turn from the entrance into the western portion of the development and no traffic from the right when exiting this junction. There would be less storm water run off due to the increase in permeable area.

- The entire subdivision would be more attractive.
- It might even cost the developer less.
- Win win win.

Small improvements such as these can have a disproportionate impact on the aesthetics and overall livability of such a development. They can make it a more desirable place to live and, by doing so, actually increase the long term value of the individual properties while “softening” the negative visual impact on the existing character of this very attractive township.

Why do something mediocre that detracts from the community's existing character when it would cost no more to provide the same benefits without the negative impact?

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Synge'.

Patrick Synge

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