

BEFORE THE HEARING COMMISSIONERS

WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER OF The Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF Submissions to the Proposed Waikato District Plan

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF IAN MILLAR THOMAS (SUBMITTER #398)

1. My full name is Ian Millar Thomas and I am the landowner of the largest parcel of land in the area proposed for rezoning to Country Living Zone (Lot 1 DP 454288). I also own Lot 3 DP 354939 adjoining. In total I own approximately 8.14ha of the ~25ha subject to this submission. My wife and I have owned and occupied the latter site since 2008.
2. This is a statement of evidence as a landowner and speaks to my experience owning and operating my land and knowledge of the current practices on all the land within the subject area beyond that which I own.
3. We bought the adjacent property in 2014 from the then neighbour and have owned and farmed it since. We have invested significant sums of money since acquiring the land to improve its suitability as a rural block of land. I refer to the property as my hobby farm as I simply farm it solely for the enjoyment since retiring as a dairy farmer in 2008 after more than 40 years farming. The property is small, unproductive in a rural sense, and in my opinion could not and does not make money being used for farming purposes. I run the farm at a loss. The reasons for my submission are outlined below.
4. The subject site is completely surrounded by lifestyle blocks with only a couple of my neighbours having any animals in addition to mine. This summarises how little rural productive activities are occurring on and in close proximity to the subject site.
5. The property is a hobby for me and does not make a profit. The subject site is farmed at a loss and I lose significant amounts of money maintaining the property, investing in the property and my animals, and is simply not productive and cannot provide an income or profit in my experience.
6. The property can only support low numbers of stock rates of approximately 3.0 animals per hectare, depending on the age of the animals, with significant supplements and other inputs. This is supported as and when needed by feed inputs on an annual basis and investment through fertiliser and other maintenance costs. This stocking rate is not financially viable for any productive economic gain.
7. Marychurch Road from which the site gains access is currently State Highway 1B. This road is to be returned to Waikato District Council on completion of the Waikato Expressway. It is almost guaranteed to become safer once the Expressway is complete with traffic volumes decreasing. Notwithstanding the fact the subject site has a formed vehicle crossing as a result of a subdivision from the previous owner, the access is safe and convenient and will be improved once vehicle movements along Marychurch Road reduce as a result of the road transferring to the Council.

8. A gas pipeline runs through the property and is registered on the title. This is located approximately centrally within the site and could easily be accommodated within a future road corridor or future lots without hindrance to further subdivision.
9. I have discussed the idea of further subdivision with neighbours and everyone I have spoken to are generally on the same page that housing development is the most appropriate for this area of Matangi.
10. One previous owner of an adjoining property (before moving out) used to complain about the sights and smells of the rural area outlining that rural activities sandwiched amongst lifestyle properties isn't appropriate.
11. The proposed rezoning would enable additional housing development and growth within the existing Matangi village area where rural activities will never predominate again and have not for a substantial period of time. Maintaining a rural zoning is counter intuitive to common sense.
12. The District Plan should growth in existing towns and villages. These objectives and policies are based on published and expert evidence. This submission supports the premise of growth within the existing village environment. I understand that a rural zone does not provide for any growth and that the Proposed District Plan will have Matangi stagnate. This simply cannot be a good thing for Matangi.
13. One dwelling can be established as of right on the property which does not enable any additional productive potential of the land. We are currently going through a building consent process to establish a dwelling on the land. The dwelling will be rented as it may as well be used for something. This is about the limit of income potential on the property, a residential activity.
14. The site has an existing vehicle crossing and metered water connection. Transport and water reticulation is available. This level of infrastructure supports the proposed rezoning to Country Living Zone whereby stormwater (and water as required) and wastewater can be accommodated on site and the property can be self-sufficient for infrastructure.
15. The property cannot be subdivided or altered to create a more productive or more economic rural property. Virtually every surrounding property has been subdivided under previous District Plans rendering the immediate area unviable for rural activities. A change to the zoning is a commonsense approach and makes good planning sense.