

PROPOSED NEVERMAN RESERVE

Significance of Report: Operational
Legal Reference: N/A
Reporting Officer/s & Unit: Tony Billing, Reserves Asset Manager
File Reference: R50-0002

2.1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To gain Council approval to accept and vest a portion of donated land as a Council Reserve.

2.2 BACKGROUND SUMMARY

In March 2007, an approach was made to Council enquiring whether Council would be interested in accepting a parcel of privately owned land and designating it as a reserve. This parcel of land formed part of the estate of the late R.A. (Dick) Neverman and has been extensively planted in a wide variety of native trees. The family is keen to see this area preserved in perpetuity and are offering the land to Council at no charge.

Dick Neverman was a well known local identity, operating a native plant nursery in Burness Road for many years. In addition, Dick was an ardent conservationist and was awarded the Hawke's Bay Regional Council Environmental Award in 2001.

Following receipt of this offer Council staff have met with family members, inspected the parcel of land in question and communicated with the family's legal representative to ascertain details of the proposed donation. Council's Lawyers have also been approached to provide advice and to assist in completing this transaction, should Council decide to accept the land.

*** The area of land proposed for reserve purposes is located at 33 Burness Road and borders the existing drainage reserve alongside the Napier/Hastings Expressway. It extends for a distance of 200 metres south of Burness Road and encompasses an area of 4,364 square metres (refer to aerial photograph attached on **page 21**).

The proposed reserve area is a model example of native vegetation restoration within an urban environment and has significant aesthetic, educational and botanical value. Currently there are no less than 73 different species of native trees established within the area, some of which are extremely fine examples.

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Access into the area has been investigated and determined. Pedestrian access for visitors can readily be obtained off Burness Road via an existing portion of drainage reserve and vehicle access for maintenance purposes is available off the adjoining drainage reserve running parallel to the parcel of land.

2.3 ISSUES

There are no significant issues associated with either the proposed donation of this land or with vesting the area as a Council reserve. The area in question more than adequately meets the criteria for acceptance of a parcel of land as a Council reserve and it would form a valuable addition to the Council's Reserves portfolio.

To complete the process of acquiring this donated parcel of land will require the surveying and legal vesting of the donated land and the transfer of ownership to Napier City Council.

2.4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications associated with this issue are relatively minor. To complete the transfer process from private ownership to Council ownership will require the proposed parcel of land to be surveyed by a Licensed Surveyor, the title of the land to be legally transferred and registered to the Napier City Council and the area officially vested as a Council reserve. All costs associated with these actions can be funded from the existing Reserves Asset operational budget.

Once this parcel of land has been transferred to Council ownership there will be an ongoing cost associated with the maintenance of the area. As the area in question is relatively small and also reasonably low maintenance, it is estimated that these costs will be in the order of \$3,000 per annum.

2.5 OPTIONS

Two primary options are available Council in this case:

- i) Accept the donated parcel of land, as per the bequest of the late R.A. (Dick) Neverman, and vest as a Council reserve in perpetuity.
- ii) Decline the bequest to accept this parcel of land for reserve purposes and inform the Neverman family of that decision.

2.6 DEVELOPMENT OF PREFERRED OPTION

As the parcel of land in question has significant aesthetic, educational and botanical value, the preferred option in this case would be to accept the offer to donate this land to Council as a reserve in perpetuity.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That the Council resolve:

- a) That the wishes of the late R.A. (Dick) Neverman to accept the donation of this parcel of land as a Council reserve, be acknowledged.
- b) That the significant aesthetic, educational and botanical values of this parcel of land be recognised and vested as a Council reserve and that the new reserve be formally known as the 'Neverman Reserve'.
- c) That Council staff in conjunction with Council's Lawyers, be instructed to complete the acquisition and designation process in the most appropriate manner.
- d) That \$1,500 be allocated to the Reserves Asset budget at the upcoming 6 month budget review, to cover maintenance of this reserve from December 2007 – June 2008.

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- e) That the sum of \$3,000 be allocated to the Reserves Asset annual budget (commencing July 2008), to cover ongoing maintenance of this reserve.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That the Council resolve to adopt the Officer's recommendation.