

GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE

SECTION 3 ORGANISATION & RESOURCES

GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE - ORGANISATION & RESOURCES

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ITEM: 63 BUSHFIRE BRIGADE - RELOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS
BRIGADE

FILE NUMBER: GF010/043 Pt02/GMA

REPORT:

At its December Meeting the Council considered a report regarding the relocation of the Headquarters Brigade from Wilberforce to Bligh Park. This proposal met with opposition from local residents. Following further discussions with the Fire Control Officer and Headquarters Brigade personnel an alternate site at the intersection of George and Thorley Streets was proposed.

A letter was forwarded to all residents seeking their comments, following which it was proposed to place this report to the Council for the consideration of preparing the appropriate development and building applications.

The proposal has met with significant opposition with letters and a petition from the residents of the adjoining homes in Rich Close. They represent nine of the properties that would be in the area of the proposed station. There have also been personal representations by telephone and visits to the Council offices of a number of other persons who indicate they support the volunteer movement and do not wish to have their name disclosed, while at the same time they object to the proposal proceeding.

The reasons for opposition are:

- A decrease in land values
- Noise - there is an indication that there is noise emanating from the activities associated with the Brigade's tender that is currently housed in the WestBus premises from activities associated with its maintenance and training
- There would be removal of trees to construct the premises
- There is already a bush fire brigade in the area and therefore no need for an additional unit
- If Councils are out to reduce costs and waste, why support a bush fire brigade in a New South Wales Fire Brigade area
- Suggestions of other sites if the Council wishes to proceed
- Has there been any study to show the need for the Headquarters Brigade and its location in Bligh Park
- It seems the only justification given is that some of the volunteers live in the area

- Residents were advised when purchasing land that the proposed area would be for passive recreation
- Floodlighting of premises would interfere with neighbours
- Indicated that the station would be used as a staging area.

The land is zoned Residential 2A and has been since the original rezoning for the Bligh Park Estate. The reason for the area being set back from George Street was due solely to the need to only utilise land above the 1 : 100 year flood frequency for residential development. The land was purchased by the joint venture at full residential value.

Preliminary enquiries indicate that purchasers may have been informed that it was to be used for passive recreation and further enquiries will be made and confirmation provided to the committee.

The Council is in a position to move with procedures to permit the construction of a fire station on the site.

Other sites that may be suitable and bring less objection include an area adjacent to the existing community and shopping centres off George Street, an area at the end of Rifle Range Road and land that could form part of the future playing fields in Berger Road. It is quite possible that these sites could be made available at no cost, other sites would need to be purchased.

RECOMMENDATION:

Council agree in principle with the relocation of the Headquarters Bush Fire Brigade to the Bligh Park South Windsor locality and an assessment be made of alternative sites with this being reported.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

FN:OG228LBX.G10

****** END OF ITEM 63 ******