LMCC Ordinary Meeting

22 June 2020

Chair of this meeting was Deputy Mayor, Cr Nick Jones

Time within proceedings, start at 28 minutes 40 seconds

Notice of Motion

20NM009 --- Munibung Hill

Report by: Councilor – Wendy Harrison, Councilor – Barney Langford

Recommendation and Background – See pages 3 and 4

**Deputy Mayor Cr Nick Jones** – Cr Harrison and Cr Langford, you guys, have co-authored this motion. Councilors, Notice of Motion 20NM009, do I have someone to move that?

**Cr** **Harrison** – Yes, I’d like to move that if I could

**Cr** **Langford** – I’d like to second

**Deputy** **Mayor** – Moved and Seconded. I’d be a bit disappointed if it wasn’t you guys. Moved by Cr Harrison and Seconded by Cr Langford. Do I have any speakers on that item?

29.13 **Cr** **Harrison** –

Yes I would like to speak briefly Mr Deputy Mayor.

Munibung Hill is well known around these parts, *and* further afield.

Locals and others who climb Munibung are in awe at the magnificent views it affords of, and beyond the lake.

In his recent book, THE LAKE, Scott Bevan suggests the word ‘hill’ doesn’t do this ancient landform justice.

During its 250 million year history it served generations of the Awabakal people and since European settlement has survived being mined under, farmed on, quarried, contaminated by nearby industry and neglect.

Councillors and staff who have climbed Munibung appreciate what it has to offer. However, access is difficult and can be dangerous. This limits many people from visiting what could be a major recreational area for the city - *though I am well informed that during COVID-19 lockdown it was a popular destination, receiving more visitors than usual!*

Because access is difficult, damage is occurring to the existing natural environment including habitat of endangered species and wildlife corridors. Implementing Council’s Glendale Contribution Plan, which would facilitate a network of pathways and walking trails would help minimise this damage. However, there are a number of barriers to this including multiple landowners and a legacy of contamination left by many years of operation by the zinc smelter.

This NoM is seen as a step towards working through and addressing those barriers.

I would like to recognise members of The Munibung Hill Conservation Society for their vision for this site and their tenacity in garnering support from Councillors, Members of Parliament and community organisations to see Munibung improved and preserved for future generations.

I also thank Mr Prince for his assistance, and advice from Mr Farrell who is well informed on issues affecting Munibung and who, I believe, is a fairly regular visitor to the site. He, as much as anyone, appreciates not only the benefits of making it accessible to more people but also the barriers we need to overcome.

Councillors, I seek your support this NoM and Cr Langford may well want to make some comments.

**Deputy** **Mayor** – Thank you Cr Harrison. Any further speakers? Cr Langford?

32.14 **Cr** **Langford** –

Thanks Deputy Mayor, just to echo the words of Cr Harrison, I think that Munibung Hill has the capacity to be yet another jewel in the crown, along with a whole number of jewels in the crown that is Lake Macquarie and if we can further that through the various processes that are at work at the moment, then I believe that we can provide the city with a really outstanding recreation and cultural area into the future, thanks.

**Deputy** **Mayor** –Thank you Cr Langford. Cr Shultz?

32.57 **Cr** **Shultz** –

Thank you Deputy Mayor, just a question to staff. I do recall attending a briefing at Council, probably 12 to 18 months ago in relation to Munibung Hill. Can staff just provide an update on any of the progress and, obviously, how this notice of motion will interact with any of the work that has been ongoing for a long period of time? Thank you.

**Deputy** **Mayor** – Thank you Cr Shultz. Mr Farrell?

33.23 **Deputy** **CEO, Mr Tony Farrell** –

Mr Deputy Mayor, the main progress that’s occurred in the ensuing months has been the transfer of the northern part of the Hill precinct from under the control of Ferrier’s, the administrators for the Pasminco smelter, to the Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC). The long term plan is that the unremediated sections of the site will end up under the control of a government agency called WAMC (Waste Assets Management Corporation) who mainly look after former government landfill sites and predominantly in Sydney. Their control of the site means that we have a much more willing agent to deal with on the future management of the land and we are actually currently preparing a brief which we would hopefully get an agreement from WAMC and potentially other land owners, to allow us to do proper and comprehensive investigations of the site that we could lead on to preparing some proposals for the site’s development.

**Deputy** **Mayor** – Thank you. Any further questions Cr Shultz?

**Cr** **Shultz** – No, nothing from me, thank you.

**Deputy** **Major**, **Cr** **Jones** made the following comments …

Congratulations to Cr Harrison and Cr Langford and all the staff involved and of course all the residents that Cr Harrison rightly pointed out. It’s a bit of a strange one – I worked in Warners Bay for eight (8) years and I lived in this area for 30 something years and paid very little attention to Munibung Hill, which is shame on me, considering the size of the thing, but I think any progress in the direction that makes the site more accessible and usable and user friendly for people would be a fantastic outcome. I appreciate what all this work could potentially be. So thank you again Councilors for bringing this to us tonight.

So I will go to the vote on that one ….

Mayor K. Fraser – apology (absent)

Cr B. Adamthwaite – **for** …… …… North Ward

Cr K. Baker – apology (absent)

Cr B. Langford – **for**

Cr C. Grigg – apology (absent)

Cr D. Belcher – **for** …… …… West Ward

Cr J. Pauling – **for**

Cr W. Harrison – **for**

Cr. L. Cubis – apology (absent)

Cr A. Shultz – **for** …… …… East Ward

Cr N. Jones – **for**

Cr C. Buckley – **for**

Cr J. Gilbert – **for**

**Deputy** **Mayor** - Fabulous, thank you Councilors, I declare that motion passed.

Log on address: <http://webcast.lakemac.com.au/archive/video20-0622.php>

***Notices of Motion***

***Monday 22 June 2020***

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| **20NM009**  | Munibung Hill |
| **File**  | F2020/00237 - D09737001 |
| **Author**  | Councillor - Wendy Harrison, Councillor - Barney Langford |

<https://www.lakemac.com.au/Our-Council/Council-meetings>

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**Background**

Munibung Hill looms large over Lake Macquarie’s ‘jewel in the crown’, the lake. From the top of Munibung views are afforded of the coast, the Watagan Mountains, and large areas of the settled parts of Lake Macquarie, Newcastle and Port Stephens.

Munibung Hill has special significance to the Awabakal people and has also played a significant part in the lives of many people since European settlement. It attracts people for its scenic amenity, natural flora and fauna, proximity to suburbia and has the potential to complement Lake Macquarie’s visitor economy objectives.

A relatively small proportion of Munibung Hill is in public ownership which limits lawful access. Unauthorised access is damaging the existing natural environment, including endangered species, valuable habitat and wildlife corridors. In some places this access could be dangerous, both due to the landform and due to past contamination. These risks could be minimised by analysing the capability and limitations of the hill for public use, and then preparing plans, in conjunction with the community, for the use of the hill.

Ideally a Plan of Management (PoM), which would provide a plan for the Council owned or controlled land on Munibung Hill would serve the site best. This NoM is presented with a view to progressing Council’s plans for Munibung Hill including the Precinct Area Plans – Munibung Hill, Speers Point Quarry and Pasminco which consistently emphasise:

1. The conservation nature of the land;

2. The significance of the land to indigenous people;

3. The role of the land in providing habitat for endangered species and corridors for wildlife mobility;

4. The opportunities for properly managed public access; and

5. The availability of scenic views and potential visitor economy benefits.

Council’s ‘Local Strategic Planning Statement’, in relation to the Munibung Precinct states, among other things:

• Improved scenic amenity, ridgeline native vegetation corridor of Munibung Hill and appropriate access facilitated.

• The Aboriginal cultural heritage significance of Munibung Hill is recognised, conserved and interpreted in cooperation with the local Aboriginal community.

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The *Munibung Hill Conservation Society* have been working to promote access to Munibung Hill and the realisation of past Council visions. They have advised they have harnessed support from a range of organisations and individuals as set out below:

• Mayor Kay Fraser

• Councillors Langford, Grigg, Baker, Buckley, Belcher, Adamthwaite and Harrison.

• Federal Member for Shortland, The Hon Pat Conroy, MP

• State Member for Lake Macquarie, The Hon Greg Piper, MP

• Community groups / organisations including:

o Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)

o Biraban LALC

o Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre

o Australian Plant Society - Hunter

o Hunter Bird Observers Club

o Geological Society Hunter Valley

o Charlestown Lions Club

o Warners Bay Rotary Club

o Warners Bay High School

o Warners Bay Sustainable Neighbourhood Group (SNG)

o Lake Macquarie Business

o Newcastle Astronomical Society

o Newcastle Flyers Running Club

o Hunter Wildlife Rescue

o Cardiff High School

o Hunter School of Performing Arts

o St Pauls Catholic College

o St Pius High School

o Transition Newcastle

o University of Newcastle – Faculty of Science

o Watagan Wanderers

**Recommendation**

A. The North Ward Site Inspection previously resolved for Munibung Hill (18GB008), now be conducted as a Council Site Inspection programmed when Covid-19 restrictions permit a physical inspection, via the former Pasminco Land.

B. The General Manager advise on;

i. Barriers to implementation of the Glendale Contributions Plan as it affects Munibung Hill,

ii. Opportunities to address those barriers, and

iii. Programs to conceive and implement a community vision for Munibung Hill.

**Attachments**

Nil

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