

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)

AND

IN THE MATTER of Private Plan Change 55

HEARING DIRECTIONS FROM THE HEARING PANEL

1. We have received a request from one of the submitters (Mr David Walsh) to postpone the hearing until February 2022. We have attached his request to our directions. In essence, his submission raises concerns about submitters ability to effectively engage in the hearing process given the impacts that the Covid-19 lockdowns have had on the submitters.
2. We sought the applicant's view of this matter, and this approach was not supported by the applicant, where they have expressed a strong desire to continue with the hearing dates as directed in July. We have considered the matter and agree that while the Covid-19 lockdowns have an impact on **all** the parties this has not prejudiced any party's ability to effectively engage in this process given the significant period between our directions to setting hearing dates on 22 July and the actual hearing dates on 8 to 11 November 2021 (a period of 15 weeks). We are also aware, as set out in our directions of 23 August 2021, of our requirements under the Resource Management Act 1991 to consider this application without undue delays.
3. As a result, while we understand Mr Walsh's concerns, the hearing dates of 8 to 11 November 2021 stand, as does all the existing evidence timetable provision.

Any enquiries regarding these Directions or related matters should be directed by email to the Council's Hearing Advisor bevan.donovan@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.



Dr Lee Beattie
Chair on behalf of Commissioners Basil Morrison and Hugh Leersnyder
28 September 2021

From: [David Walsh](#)
To: [Bevan Donovan](#)
Subject: Request to delay the Plan Change 55 Patumahoe South Hearing
Date: Tuesday, 21 September 2021 9:56:59 pm

Dear Bevan,

Could you forward the following message to the chairperson.

I request that the PC55 public hearing be delayed until at least February 2022, in order for allow time for the public to recover from the Auckland lockdowns and be able to fully participate in this planning process. I believe that delaying the hearing further in 2021 will have the same impact due to the proximity to Christmas, hence my request for a date in February of 2022.

The latest lock-downs have had a considerable impact on the citizens of Auckland, both mentally and financially. In the best case scenario, Auckland will be in Level 2 on Wednesday 6 October, having been effectively locked down for 7 weeks. The school holidays, which are due to start of Monday 4 October have not been moved and parents of school aged children (a significant portion of this neighbourhood) will have had their children in their care for 9 weeks. The Q4/Term 4 is going to considerably more stressful this year as businesses and schools attempt to catch up prior to the Christmas shut down. As a quick example, the Patumahoe School Calf club is going to be run over week 1 and possibly 2 of Term 4. This was originally scheduled for the last week of Term 3. Calf club takes up a considerable amount of work outside of school hours and the brunt of this will ultimately fall on a the parents. And this is a minor event in the overall scheme of a working parent with children.

On [1 October 2020](#) the Auckland Council Planning Committee elected to accept the PC55 plan change, in part, for the following reason:

accepting the private plan change request will enable a range of matters including infrastructure provision and development on elite and prime soils to be considered on their merits, during a public participatory planning process

Note the phrase, *public participatory*. It is my concern, as a member of the public, directly effected by the Auckland lockdowns and the outcome of PC55, that a significant portion of the local population will no longer be in a position to participate in this planning process due to the stress of lockdowns and the time pressure that will be placed on them between early October and Christmas. It is important to keep in mind that, unlike employees of the Council and the applicant (and the applicant's legal council), most members of the public have a full time job and/or own their own business and have to find additional time in their day to participate in a public planning process. Council elected to enter the public into the process instead of outright denying the plan change and they need to ensure that members of the public are going to be in a position to participate as they have indicated. Furthermore, as of 11 August 2021, rate payers had already contributed \$2,507.01 to the process (Official information request 8140008890). They deserve to get their money's worth, so to speak.

The applicant has already had the hearing dates moved under the guise of fairness (but also for their advantage) and if they had not done so, the original hearing would have been

completed prior to New Zealand going into Level 4 lockdown on August 17 2021. Based on this, I see no reason why the applicant should have any objection to ensuring fairness for the public.

On 6 October 2020, an [article on stuff.co.nz](#), claims that developer Askew Consultants, by seeking to rezone 34.5ha of Patumahoe, "...will create much-needed jobs and housing...".

In June 2021, Statistics New Zealand reported that the [national unemployment rate](#) was 4.0%. The last time the unemployment rate was below 4.0% was June 2008. Additionally the [latest GDP figure](#) of 5.1% annualised is the highest GDP growth since June 2004. These two metrics indicate that there is no immediate requirement for the country to "create much-need jobs".

In regards to housing, [Statistics New Zealand](#) notes that *"In the year ended July 2021, the actual number of new dwellings consented was 45,119, up 20 percent from the July 2020 year."* Furthermore, with regards to international migration numbers, which ultimately impact housing requirements, [Statistics New Zealand state](#), for the year ending July 2021 , *"annual net migration gain: 4,400 (± 700), down from 78,500 (± 30)."* This is nearly an 18 fold **reduction**. It is clear, again, that there is no pressure to "create much needed housing".

Taking the above statistics into account, I do see any economic nor social reasons why we should not be able to delay the hearing.

Kind regards.

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David Walsh
drw@fastmail.com