



Community Meeting Minutes

Date: 9 August 2025 (2-3.30pm)

Location: Rukuhia School

Approx 80+ people attended

Facilitated by Dianne Mulhern and family

SWWTP site currently in Waipa District Council are but proposed to shift to Hamilton City Council

The designation of the land will need to change (This is done by HCC who own the land)

Notes taken from community meeting regarding the proposed Southern Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and related discussions.

Andrew Bydder (HCC Councillor)

Concerned about the project going to the Council Controlled Organisation (IAWAI).

Shaws Bird Park: Council had previously said it would be protected, but it has now been destroyed.

Will return to HCC to discuss the issues raised.

Rachel Karalus (Prospective HCC Mayoral candidate)

Grew up in Melville. Parents received notification of the Southern WWTP (SWWTP).

Advocates for a shift in council culture back to serving ratepayers.

Stressed careful consideration of ratepayer money.

Believes in "no surprises" governance; SWWTP is a surprise to the community.

Stu Aitken (HCC Councillor candidate)

Wants councillors who work for the people. Believes council spending needs to be brought under control.

John McDonald (HCC Councillor candidate and HCC Mayoral Cnadidate- also a writer for CityWatch)

Works for 'City Watch', investigative journalism.

Focuses on uncovering underhanded council activity.

Will assist with Official Information Act (OIA) investigations into the WWTP site selection process.

Intends to create a case study for other councils.

Encouraged attendees to take photos and keep records.

Mana Whenua Representative (Te Kopa King -Ngati Ngamurikaitaua)

Land at the end of Lowe Road

Seeks protection for Nukuhu Stream; claims misrepresentation by others.

Waikato Tainui aware of the matter.

Consultation with HCC in Jan 2025; 131 Raynes Road was not one of the sites considered initially.

Opposes 131 Raynes Road as the preferred site.

Reports being threatened and bullied to remain silent.

Proposed WWTP discharge area is a waahi tapu site — risk of desecration.

Urges unity for strength.

Noted an agreement with Kirsty Downey (WDC?) on recognition, but feels disrespected in consultation.

Ken Fitzgerald (Resident – Northern Side of Proposed WWTP)

Received conflicting information from HCC:

- Told about a proposed cycleway through WWTP site and his property.
- A 6-foot high boundary fence was planned.
- Later informed the paper road/cycleway would no longer be there.
- Told large tanks would be built on site.

Cyclists have tried to use his driveway due to incorrect maps showing it as a cycle route.

HCC previously estimated up to 800 cyclists/day.

Other Resident Comments

When community appeals the Designation, the decision maker (e.g., Environment Court Judge) will have full visibility of the site selection process.

Cycleway linked to airport development and Southern Links.

Surveyors already active at 131 Raynes Rd; project work appears advanced.

Need urgent support for mana whenua concerns, and protection of artifacts.

Archaeological contacts may provide supporting evidence.

Observed a “divide and conquer” mentality in HCC.

Concerns over secret/confidential land deals.

Reports of land purchases and demolitions (e.g., Sharpe farm) linked to the project.

Disputes HCC claim that 131 Raynes Rd has no heritage issues — presence of pits and cultural sites.

Tender for SWWTP “Concept design and consenting” Closed 8 December 2023- completed 4 July 2025

Other potential WWTP sites should be investigated, apparently 8 other sites were evaluated.

Lack of transparency

Much OIA information heavily redacted.

Waipa District Council (WDC) Involvement

Strongly invested in SWWTP due to Titanium Park development.

Currently carting wastewater to Cambridge WWTP — costly.

Mystery Creek consultation meeting in past indicated a high-tech self-contained plant within Titanium Park.

Environmental & Wildlife Concerns

Impact on bat population noted — bat mitigation already built on Raynes Rd, new plantings (on 11 hectare block).

Stream discharge and wastewater flow implications discussed.

Governance & Transparency Issues

Councillor Bydder:

- Power and decisions lies with council staff more than elected councilors.
- Southern WWTP not in 10-year long-term plan.
- Only learned of the project and land purchase a month ago.

Calls for better information sharing and respect for correct mana whenua, and public consultation.

Legal Action & Funding

Residents asked where to contribute funds for legal support — working group to set up dedicated account.

Calls for legal help to challenge land use and appeal designation.

Need for unified and coordinated community approach

Decisions & Action Points

1. Unanimous agreement: Proposed WWTP should be moved.
2. Gather and share information for future legal and planning actions
3. Working group to form and plan way forward
4. Establish a fund bank account
5. Councillors to take concerns back to HCC and demand transparency
6. Support mana whenua in protecting cultural and environmental heritage.

