

Agenda Item 11 - Town Centre issues (for information)

General Meeting Item submitted by President.

Letter sent to:

The Honorable David Speirs, MP
GPO Box 1047,
ADELAIDE SA 5001

16th July 2021

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Freeholding of town centre community land, Lot 101 American River page 1

Prior to council's informal gathering on the application of KI Shellfish seeking freehold title to their lease to process oysters, the American River Progress Association determined the following position regarding community land on lot 101 American River.

The American River Progress Association views KI Shellfish as an industry that fits well with the image of Kangaroo Island and our town of American River. We strongly support the seafood, food and retail sectors of the island. However, the processing part of the American River business must relocate to exist in quiet occupation away from our town centre.

KI Oysters processing occupies only 12.5% of the 3300m² coastal community centre land it leases. It is most unfortunate that growing and harvesting are well located, retail selling is well located but the processing is most inappropriately located and seriously suffocates any town centre growth. **It is worth noting that in recent years the Eastern Cove lease has reduced from 30 to 16Ha, possibly not indicative of a healthy and expanding business.**

Further, the current processing site is located adjacent the American River wharf: a wharf oyster processing does not need nor use. **All three facets of this town's triple bottom line, social, economic and environment are adversely affected by this processing location.**

With very extensive community consultation to develop the Hassel Plan back in March 2005, the priority imperatives of this expensive and professional report have been ignored for 16 years!

(page 6) the Vision for American River includes:

– A small but vibrant commercial and community hub will be developed - located adjacent to the wharf and servicing residents and visitors.

(page 12) the key opportunities for American River are:

- Enhance the wharf as a user friendly facility with an emphasis on the area as a public space
- Work with the owners of the oyster sheds to improve the outward appearance of the facility.

ARPA has been both concerned and active to address the bad location and outward very poor appearance of processing on lot 101. The lessee has countered with offers to tidy up and construct large decorative murals on the shed. These have not eventuated despite the Land and Environment Court decisions that apply to the oyster lease of lot 101. **A.R.P.A. unreservedly does not support the current application to convert this lease to freehold title and will be dismayed if it eventuates.** Under any modicum of common sense it cannot.

Instead, priority should be given to rationalise this town centre site so as to facilitate planning and development of our missing town centre. This could easily be done starting with the Strategic Plan identified (1A4) "...review of Town Centre location, including wharf and adjacent areas." Any need to rationalise or relocate oyster processing could easily be effected by a staged rationalisation approach leaving the "big

green shed" in place for some years, but that should not be a precondition of the Town Centre Review required by the Strategic Plan.

Freeholding of town centre community land, Lot 101 American River (cont) page 2



American River town centre July 2021

"Here is the link to the ERD court judgement which outlines the conditions, which have not changed:

<http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/sa/SAERDC/2004/4.html>

Pat Austin

Director Community Development"

"7. Subject to the terms of Condition 13, no storage of equipment, materials, goods, vessels, machinery or other equipment or products associated with the business is permitted outside the building. The external area beyond the confines of the building may only be used for landscaping, vehicle movement and car parking purposes."

"14. An off street parking area, comprising 4 spaces at right angles to the building on its northern side and 2 spaces parallel to the building on its southern side shall be constructed and surfaced with suitable hard standing material developed and line marked within a period of 12 months from the date of planning approval and maintained to the satisfaction of Council with the parking layout and design complying with Australian Standard 2890.1."

"15. Landscaping in accordance with a plan that has been approved by the Council prior to the commencement of any building work must be implemented and maintained in that area extending for a distance of 2.5m east of the fence on the Tangara Road boundary of the subject land."

Yours sincerely

Graham Walkom

Letter sent to:

The Honorable Corey Wingard, MP 16th July 2021 GPO Box 668,
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Sir,

The need for a community centre plan for American River must include the DPTI wharf.

American River. You may have heard of us of late.

We are very much the poor relation on KI, well behind Kingscote and Penneshaw in-pro-rata allocated rates and resources. Our council is unwilling or unable to adequately support basic services here appearing to view residents as most difficult to work with. We do seem keen to prove that view as correct often enough. In recent decades, our population has not expanded but has experienced an increasing number of new residents dropping out of traditional urban life, bringing with them different views to our traditional gatekeepers on the type and extent of community development.

We did not get mains power until 1972, deep drainage until 2011, and mains water is on the horizon for 2023

We were the hub of KI tourism from the 50's to the 70's but have identity issues these days, a few pushing hard for unbridled tourism and some gatekeepers keen to retain the "Bush meets the Bay" slogan and appeal.

The trading ketches stopped arriving at our wharf in the 1980's with the gypsum trade finishing. The gypsum crusher's concrete pad is still on the wharf.

From then, the sleepy port for a sleepy village still serviced a wide variety of marine vessels including trawlers, fishing charters, service barges etc - see photo 25 June 2021

The Cape Jervis ferry service to Penneshaw was well established by the 1990's, essentially bypassing 'The River' with the island's trade.

Community development can be stated as, "The process of improving the social, economic, and cultural conditions of a village or small town." If there is a village that could be characterised as opposing development, American River may well be it.

Today our official tourist guide states..."The wharf is located in the town centre and is still a working wharf."

In 2004 the Department of Transport facilitated (allocated land) the construction of a large Oyster processing shed on wharf land the north side of the narrow wharf access road but since giving that approval, DOT has not enforced their housekeeping conditions on that lease and the site has deteriorated significantly in recent years to become a real eyesore.

In 2013 the Department of Transport again facilitated the construction of a large light industrial shed on wharf land, this time to the south side of the narrow wharf access road but delegated the lease's (RIG) conditions to council. Apart from the unfortunate location of this shed, RIG, whilst short on parking and having a long over-run on their construction promise to this community, have been an exemplary occupant. These two lessees feature in their opposition to re-establishing trade and introducing log traffic through American River, understandably.

The community was alerted on May 25th to the possibility of exporting logs from the wharf. Then and since there has been no meaningful details on logs provided to this community (council now has some).

This "planning" is unacceptable with the resulting high level of opposition today to be expected, nay certain in that situation.

Co-incidently, when the 'export logs' proponent first addressed a very well attended general meeting of ARPA, the community of American River was quite involved and well advanced in developing its first strategic plan and the following alert was made to the community that the use and purpose of the wharf was conspicuous by its absence in the draft plan.

The ARPA committee resolved to determine their recommended position based only on community development impact on the American River township using a considered assessment of the likely effects on this town. A draft is attached.

from the ARPA facebook pages:

Very surprisingly, the wharf per se did not feature at Strategic Plan Workshop #2 and also provoked scant interest in the second (and final) survey despite prompting and reminders of the looming logs crisis.

Whilst there has been opportune references made to our Strategic Plan, it has only been finalised by the consultant on 12 July and presented to the community 18th July. The completed plan does make significant reference to sorting out our Community Centre. In my view, an understatement is that American River's 'Community Centre' is a dog's breakfast: it is development happening without a structure plan.

Currently there are two further unplanned proposals regarding our town centre -

- 1) To run logs through the centre of town and ship from the wharf;
- 2) An unsolicited bid to free-hold essential community centre land - further industrial development in the town centre strongly indicated.

Let us please stop knee-jerking and get something right. We need as a priority:

A council, DPTI and community agreed structure plan and policy for the wharf and harbour. A council DPTI and community agreed structure plan and policy for town centre land.

Whilst a town centre plan is council's responsibility, the wharf and harbour is definitely a part of that centre but owned and controlled by the Department of Transport. The near term possible additional use by SAWater contractors and the American River Resort importing their construction materials via this wharf are matters that this community must be consulted about.

The Committee decided to ask both KIPT and KIC to address the general River community at the next ARPA

general meeting, trusting that matters such as pollution upstream into pelican lagoon and downstream to the

aquaculture leases would be addressed. Also that the village wharf-centric focus would not be lost.

The committee further discussed that there was likely to be a significant community divide over this and believes

the Strategic Plan workshop #2 is perfect in process and place for some serious input from all stakeholders -

oysters, eco-action, community etc.

The most relevant section of the Strategic Plan follows:

1A4 Town Centre - provides a centre for focus of residents and visitors. It will provide deliniation for the future	IA4.1 Community led discussion and review of Town Centre location, including wharf and adjacent areas.	lead	ARPA, RIG, KIC, AR
	IA4.2 Development of formal plans for Town Centre development for American River	advocate	
	IA4.3 Advocate for funding for Town Centre development for American River	advocate	

development of business and commercial opportunities (in concert with IA1, IA2, IA3, IA10 and IA12)	IA4.4 Support implementation of Town Centre infrastructure	support	Businesses, Community Members
	IA4.5 Seek investors to contribute towards commercial opportunities for Town Centre	advocate	

attachments:

- **Analysis and Evaluation of different guidelines for the American River wharf:**
- **American River wharf Lot 102 (community centre land ARPA position)**
- **A.R.P.A.'s position on the purpose and use of the town centre wharf**
- **No to freeholding of town centre community land, Lot 101 American River**
- **Previous to Minister Wingard**
- **American River Strategic Plan 2021-2026**

Yours sincerely

Graham Walkom ARPA President