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**ORDINARY MEETING**

**OF**

**CITY STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS**

**Time:** 9:30am  
**Date:** Thursday, 16 May 2019  
**Venue:** Ngake (16.09)  
Level 16, Tahiwī  
113 The Terrace  
Wellington

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**Business**

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**3.4 Oral Hearing - Proposal to remove encumbrance at 79 Dixon Street, Te Aro**

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# Proposal to discharge encumbrance on 79 Dixon Street, Te Aro

Oral submission to Wellington City  
Council Strategy Committee Meeting  
on 16 May 2019

Prepared by James Cunningham

Existing “pocket park” is on the sunny side of Victoria Street and has no steps



# So-called “replacement park” is shaded by buildings and has steps



## Factors to consider

- Sun
- Access, especially for elderly and disabled persons
- Wellington as a “livable city”
- Not consistent with encouraging pedestrians
- Transfer of amenity value to private property owner

## Suggestions

- Require a much stronger justification
- Compensation should be publicly disclosed
- Valuation methodology and calculations
- Consult further
- Reinvest proceeds into other parks in Te Aro or its vicinity

# Finally

- Once the “pocket park” is gone, it’s never coming back
- Do you want to remove an inner city park at a time when Wellington City’s population is growing rapidly?
- Thank you – any questions?



For City Strategy Meeting May 16th 2019

Greetings Wellington City Councillors,  
Tēna koutou, My name is Sophie Jerram and I'm here today as Chair of the Greater Brooklyn Residents' Association.

I personally bring 9 years of brokering and activating city and suburban spaces for community and artistic activity and also currently have an academic research focus into the creation and governance of common or shared spaces.

#### Background

GBRAI first received notice of the Wellington Bowling Club at Tanera Park building lease consultation (excluding the two bowling greens) in mid December 2018 and was asked to respond to the consultation by January 10 2019. The notification was poor for wide community consultation over the Christmas-New Year period. Given the significance of the building and historic interest in the site we gathered together a brief submission which you have a summary of. This is an extended submission formed after information gathering and meetings with Residents.

#### Position

We want it to be clear that GBRAI has no interest in taking the lease of the building. Nor do we intend to cast any shadow on the soundness of the professional activities of the current tenant - Wellington Swords Club - at the Bowling Club, who run an effective fencing programme and should continue to do so. We are here to advocate for a suitable community-drive process to manage this building and give fluid and transparent public access to it, since despite contracted agreements it has not been made available for wider usage.

We have five submission points.

1. The Leases Policy for community groups needs to be altered to allow for genuine community input.

Following the hasty submission made in January this year, GBRAI met with Council officers in February and were disappointed to learn that officers had already recommended extending the lease without genuine community consultation. This is being handled under the radar with an



obvious preference for the incumbent, which would presumably mean indefinite lease renewals. Instead we suggest that Council officers should actively ask what is the best use of this space. Our first point of submission is that the leases policy on significant public buildings should allow reasonable opportunity to consider community interest and concerns before recommending lease renewal.

2. An underutilised public building in our burgeoning city is an anathema.

The Bowling Club building is underutilised. In Brooklyn and around the CBD we know there is an increasing need and interest in public spaces with a diminishing number of safe buildings. The winding up of the Council-funded Urban Dream Brokerage service was in large part due to a lack of available private retail spaces; the loss of our Wellington Central library is clearly a dreadful blow for our City's shared space. In our suburb, the Brooklyn Community Centre, Vogelhorn Hall, Vogelhorn Bowling Club and recently deconsecrated St Matthews Church are in regular usage by one off and regular users. The Tanera Club is not one of the buildings considered in the circuit of 'bookable' spaces and remains underutilised. The incumbent's membership has not grown during this 8 year lease period.

The Tanera Bowling Club site is unique - with no immediate neighbours and surrounded by green space it has special attraction to sports clubs. The sprung floor would be a boon to actors and dancers needing a place to rehearse. Given that it has less sound restrictions and considerable aesthetic surrounds, we know it would be well used given the right mechanisms.

3. Five years for renewal is too long. Any lease renewal, stipulating partnership with BCA should be for a briefer, two-year transitional period.

The current tenant has not met the terms of their existing agreement.

Report 4 (1215/53/IM) to the Regulatory Processes Committee dated 9 November 2011 noted that *"The Swords Club have expressed an interest in increasing the usage of the building during the day when current usage is at a minimal. The Swords Club believe that greater use by the wider community is seen as a particular area for growth."* To test the waters, Council officers recommended a 3+2 year lease. Unfortunately this wider use has not transpired and the need for a better arrangement is obvious.

More specifically, the 2011 contract between WCC and the current tenant guaranteed Brooklyn Cricket and Brooklyn Northern United Football Junior clubs access to the toilets inside the building. This has not been honoured despite repeated requests from the clubs.

The current officer recommendation is for five years with a 5 year right of renewal. Five years is a very long time for a community. Children complete their primary schooling and move in five years; or a new community can spring up and transform the dynamics around it - as in the case of Vogelhorn. The current tenant has had 8 years to fulfill their community obligations and in the case of the toilets have failed to do so. If the incumbent tenant agrees to work with BCA

during a transitional period, we recommend a 2 year lease while a better way of managing the building is developed.

4. Use resources for building relationships not dividing communities.

It is only with this community attention, 8 years on from the original agreement that the Council has been to look at building external access to the toilets as an alternative to the current tenants having to share the internal toilets. This is a baffling and wasteful idea which directly counters the growing trend toward shared resources. Who is paying the cost for these external toilets? A maturing community with self-awareness can be trusted to share spaces rather than having walls fragmenting it. I am sure The New Zealand Company in 1840 who established the Town Belt did not imagine spaces within the public reserve being enclosed by one small sports code to the point of exclusion of all other users. In the case of Tanera, secure storage (lockable cages/cabinets, false wall with lockable door with keys only for Swords and Kung Fu to access their weapons / for precious equipment and a further lockable internal door to prevent access upstairs) could be much more easily and cheaply created than external access to toilets, and would not create an unwelcome and inappropriate sense of exclusion.

5. Access to public buildings and spaces requires public booking mechanisms

Even if the incumbent is open to hiring out the space, searching online for "hire bowling club Tanera park" returns nothing helpful, and in 2019 few will look beyond a quick web search. GBRAI originally proposed that another group such as the Brooklyn Community Association take the lease - for Town Belt permitted activities - because they have the experience, networks with other spaces, booking systems and procedures for dealing with a wide range of users, along with cleaning and maintenance, that a sports code club does not.

Tanera Park is in GBRAI's constitution area of operations so we have been asked to be involved in advocating for these changes in regard to the Tanera Park building and clubs using the facility. We hope to further highlight and bring these concerns and comments to your attention and highlight the importance of greater sharing of the facilities and being more inclusive in regard to the facilities in our city's green belt. Ultimately, our recommendation would be that all Town Belt buildings citywide- along with other available spaces - be managed across a centrally managed booking database or through a network of administrators. These are precious public assets that deserve to be made available to all on an equitable basis in accordance with both the intent of the Town Belt's creation, and the spirit of our times.

Thanks for your time.  
Sophie Jerram