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For Immediate Release

Historic Council meeting votes NO to 'North Stoneville'

In what was the biggest council meeting the Mundaring Shire has ever hosted, 1,100 Mundaring Shire residents turned up last night, to hear their Councillors deliver a unanimous NO vote to plans by the Anglican Diocese of Perth and developer Satterley, for a controversial townsite of 4,000 people in North Stoneville.

The Council transferred the meeting from Council Chambers to the Mundaring Sports Arena in anticipation of huge numbers. Roads around the Arena, including Great Eastern Highway, were blocked by hundreds of cars, as more than one thousand residents and ratepayers made their way to the meeting.

The Save Perth Hills action group said the Councillors' NO vote was a resounding win for the community and signalled the Councillors had listened and responded to the will of the people.

"We congratulate our local community for their unprecedented 1,000 public submissions lodged with the Shire, and for their unwavering commitment and desire to protect and preserve Perth Hills' culture, landscape and environment for future generations," Save Perth Hills Chair, Paige McNeil, said.

"We won a big battle last night – but there's still a long way to go," she said

Land developer Satterley wants to build 1,450 suburban style homes, some blocks as small as 300 square metres, on 555 hectares of isolated land, owned by the Anglican Diocese of Perth. The area, eight kilometres from the nearest community services in Mundaring, is 155 hectares bigger than Kings Park, and surrounded by an Extreme Fire Zone.

Local residents, aged 8 to 80, lined up last night to deliver deputations to the Councillors outlining concerns about the scale and inappropriateness of the proposal, the lack of safe bushfire management and emergency escape routes, the widespread environmental destruction, and risks of an unproven 'test case' sewerage plant.

Many deputations focussed on the additional financial burden the development would bring existing ratepayers, while the private landowner, the Anglican Diocese, would reap tax-free commercial gains from land it was originally gifted, more than 100 years ago.

The unanimous Council decision, to refuse Satterley's North Stoneville Structure Plan 34, will now move to the Western Australian Planning Commission for ultimate decision making. This could take up to 4 months or longer.

"Concerns over proposed development at North Stoneville have been high on our community's radar for more than 20 long years," Paige said.

"Every time, the development plans have been rejected - and every time, another new proposal in thrust on the community. Last night our Council drew a line in the sand and said enough is enough."

“In addition to the Shire Officers’ report, recommending that the plan be rejected on traffic safety issues, our Councillors added many more motions stating the area was unsuitable for large scale urbanisation, the fire risks were too high, environmental losses would be too great and the development would not be serviced by public transport.”

Specifically, Council corrected the Shire Officers’ statement that the plan was ‘*generally*’ compliant to ‘**partly**’ compliant given the plan conflicts with the WA Planning Commission’s own Bushfire mitigation policy 3.7: “***Avoid any increase in the threat of bushfire to people, property and infrastructure. The preservation of life and the management of bushfire impact are paramount.***”

Councillors stated that the application process had cost ratepayers in order of \$50,000 which cannot be recouped by the landowner or Satterley.

Satterley accused the Shire of not providing the necessary road upgrades to support the development with Cr. Brennan stating that ratepayer funds should not be used to pay for road upgrades for a private development so strongly opposed by the community.

Save Perth Hills’ Chair, Paige McNeil, called on the Anglican Diocese of Perth not to waste anymore taxpayers’ money and to withdraw the application from the WAPC.

“Structure Plan 34 is dangerous, destructive and a planning disaster. This land should have never been zoned ‘urban’ in the first place. A mistake was made, and it will take courage to fix this mistake.

“We are heartened that the Shire of Mundaring Councillors demonstrated diligence, prudence and responsible decision making which focussed on the inappropriate scale of the development.”

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