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26 September 2007

General Manager
 Blue Mountains City Council
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By facsimile: 4780-5555 (2 pages)

Dear Sir

Springwood Town Centre Proposals

I have been a resident of Springwood for the whole of my life. My grandparents moved to the area almost one hundred years ago. I have practised as a Solicitor, in Springwood, continuously since April 1976.

I wish to object to any significant shopping centre/retail development in the Southern (Town Square) carpark, the Northern (Post Office) car park, or the Civic Centre precinct, for the following reasons:

1. A large retail shopping centre would be out of character with the existing "villagey" atmosphere of Springwood.
2. Experience elsewhere, with large shopping centre proprietors, is that one of two things occurs, namely:
 - 2.1 The shopping centre developer will attract existing successful businesses from the retail centre, offering incentives to relocate. After the "honeymoon period", the rental is inevitably increased, resulting in retailers having to increase prices in order to meet overheads (including principally increased rental). A further consequence is that, quite often, existing shops in the main street are left empty, creating a "ghost town" atmosphere; or

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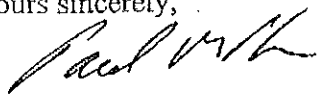


- 2.2 The shopping centre developer will attract some of the larger franchisee businesses, or other businesses, often ones which are identical, or similar, to those already established in the main street, by offering financial incentives. That can, depending upon the potential customers in the area, result in the main street business failing, or the shopping centre business failing. If the former, then the shopping centre invariably increases rental payable by the business in the shopping centre, who then has to pass that on to the customer, having a detrimental affect on the consumer, or the shopping centre business fails, resulting in the shopping centre attracting other users by offering even more attractive "honeymoon" financial incentives. Once the main street business fails, the rental for the shopping centre business increases, resulting in increased prices to the consumer.
3. The above considerations have an even greater impact in an area such as Springwood, and surrounds, where there is limited potential for residential development, and therefore an increased customer base. There are simply not enough people to patronise the existing businesses and a large shopping centre. Indeed, there are a number of empty shops in both the Winnalee Shopping Centre and the Springwood Shopping Centre. If a major shopping centre was to be established, in an area where there is a larger population base, the above considerations would not be as significant. However the uniqueness of Springwood, and its limited population, is such that a large shopping centre is simply out of keeping with what would be appropriate for both the public and business proprietors alike.

Notwithstanding the above, it is recognised that the Springwood Shopping Centre needs to be reinvigorated. There are a number of businesses who are attempting to do that, on an individual basis. Further, the Chamber of Commerce is also aware of same, and is discussing steps which could be taken.

In the above circumstances, I strongly object to any development which will include a major retail development in the Springwood Shopping Centre, and request Council to give consideration to assisting the Springwood community by investigating other ways of attracting people to Springwood, such as a tourist facility or facilities, possibly majoring on the association of Norman Lindsay with the area, or promoting it as an historic precinct, and attracting young families and children to the area by, for example, establishment of a tasteful indoor play centre. There are no doubt other initiatives which, with community input, could enhance the Springwood Shopping Centre in a more appropriate manner, and in a way which is more acceptable to the residents of Springwood, thus reinvigorating the Springwood Town Centre.

Yours sincerely,



Paul McPhee

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