

From the Chairman, Bill Brown.

I write in response to Jack McLeans's letter in the Shepparton News dd Friday 21st of November 2003 regarding the ongoing debate on Parkside Gardens.

I'm not sure whether this is the same Jack McLean who, at one stage was my boss, and later one of our Commissioners during the period from 1994 to 1997.

If this our former Commissioner then readers need to be reminded that the Commissioners planned for 54 medium density housing allotments for the land within the moats once the International Village was closed.

However, public objections totalling 35 written submissions and a petition of one thousand and eight seven signatures (1,087) objecting to this proposal, were received by the Commissioners who then opted to retain the site as parklands renaming it as Parkside Gardens.

The extensive minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held on Friday 15th March 1996 reveal that the Commissioners decided the following and I quote;

“In recognizing the valuable role played by those persons who have contributed significantly to the development and operation of the site over the years, and the community interest in and support to the parkland concept, it is intended that a “Friends” Community Group be formed to provide input to the Special Committee on matters concerning the future operation of the site. The group would be consulted in formulating future development plans for the complex.”

End of quote.

This group was never formed and community input has been virtually non-existent. Seven years later we are repeating history with the community again outraged with the proposal to put 148 (not 54) housing lots on **OUR** parklands.

We have already placed e petition of one thousand four hundred (1,400) signatures before State Parliament and there is no doubt that the number of written submissions objecting to Councils' proposal will significantly outnumber the thirty five (35) received by our Commissioners.

Judging by what happened in 1996 this should be enough to ensure Council abandons the proposal. The community, through the voluntary work during the International Village development now feels, rightly so, that it has ownership of the site and the community is prepared to fight hard to retain **THEIR** parkland.

I'm sorry but this debate can only end in one of two ways - Parkside Gardens are retained as parklands and a Community group takes control of the future development or this Council sells us out to developers and the responsible councillors wear the stigma of their action for the remainder of their lives.

Bill Brown.

Chairman, Greater Shepparton Botanic Gardens Ass.