

Government Panel recommends the Mornington Marina go ahead

Because so many MEA members joined the community individuals and appeared at the Panel Hearings into the proposed marina, MEA committee publishes this news-sheet for public information.

The recommendation in May 2011 from the panel to approve the construction of the marina in Mornington harbour has come as an unpleasant shock to many in the community and in Mornington Environment Association. But when the recommendations are read carefully, it appears Mornington Boathaven Ltd., the commercial company of Mornington Yacht Club, will be required to virtually start again! But, we still have the Council officers' report, the government reaction, and the Council vote to come. Perhaps they will reflect local concerns, and the stated no-financial commitment of the Coalition government. You may care to take some action as explained below.

David Morris, Mornington State politician has stated he will never support the use of the harbour by a small elite group. Nor will the Coalition government put further money into the marina. The former Labor government has already paid over half a million to SKM for the investigations for the Environmental Effects Statement, plus \$3.5 million for repairs to the middle of the pier. Parks Victoria, represented by David Ritman at the Panel hearings in February and March appeared to be working closely with Mornington Boathaven's Phillip Coombs but PV did not have a legal representative at the Panel and so any of its information or indeed support for the marina, could not be subject to cross examination. This meant, for example, we could not ask why was PV so determined to support this marina? What would happen to the end of the pier if the marina did not go ahead? Was the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) (the parent body under which PV operates) supporting the marina? And, a question for the government, will the Minister for the Environment have the power to prevent the marina proceeding if the Shire Council votes against the proposal? Or, is it just the Minister for Planning who can over-ride the vote and the Panel recommendation?

If you submitted an objection back in 2010, you may have received a progress letter in May 2011 from Frank Mangan, the Shire's Team leader Strategic Projects and Planning. Frank and his team have to report to the Minister on the Panel recommendations. Council has to await the Planning Minister's assessment of the EES; then Council votes on the zoning change, which is required before a private development can proceed in the harbour. We will be informed as to when Council will consider the proposal again. Meanwhile, MEA is keeping in close contact with our local Mornington Councillor, Bev Colomb, as well as meeting with MP David Morris.

As noted above, the **Panel had some 17 recommendations in its report**. You can request a hard copy of the report from Frank Mangan at the Mornington Shire office, or look at it on line on the Council's web:www.mornpen.vic.gov.au where the report sits on the opening page.

Here are a few comments on the **main recommendations**.

- 12 swing moorings and 8 fore and aft moorings should be removed (to free up space – and indeed, to enable safety of children playing in shallow water on Mothers Beach close to the public ramp and the Yacht Club). This means the cheaper options for boat mooring are removed.
- The detailed design of the wave screen should “explore opportunities” to reduce reflected waves (which would have greatly hampered boats and rescue boats from entering and leaving the harbour in northerly storms). Also, the height should be “reduced”, and should “provide an attractive finish that breaks up the bare concrete wall” and ensure the “horizon line” is irregular and not contiguous.
- The artificial reef (off Scouts beach) should be designed to maintain a low profile.
- Tall ships have to be able to navigate in and berth alongside the pier - we heard that 3 are likely to want to use the harbour after this year but can't if the marina proceeds. How this requirement is to be met requires a lot of talking.
- Further investigations are required to assess **impact and mitigation of the marina on the beach sand quality, water and sediment quality**; as most of the experts called at the Panel agreed there would be impacts. It is left to further experts to work out how these can be managed. Indeed, a great deal is left to

management, the Environmental Management Framework, government agencies and the Council. We have to assume that the Panel ignored the fact that the EPA, responsible for monitoring and acting on regulations regarding incidents such as the filth dredged up during dredging work in January this year for the Yacht Club and the Shire, failed to act on reports until pushed by MEA, community individuals and the Foreshore Advisory Group. Did the Panel realize that Mothers Beach will be closed for much of the year while dredging is going on? Do you want to lose this iconic beach?

- Boathaven also has to ensure construction and management do not affect the listed **endangered marine species** (including two species of pipe fish and other seahorse species identified by MEA's marine expert at the Panel). Apparently Boathaven will have to trigger the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act to satisfy the Commonwealth that the species are protected if the Marina proceeds.
- As to **parking** around the harbour – a major problem identified and confirmed by all the experts as well as those who spoke at the Panel – a “suitably qualified traffic expert” will have to assess the current demand (not done by Boathaven for the panel), then work out what to do about providing parking spaces – and provide a shuttle bus service. As not a single example of a **shuttle bus service** could be quoted by the Boathaven traffic expert and as Mornington car spaces are severely over-used already, we can only suppose that Boathaven will fast-track the construction of a 3-storey car park opposite Mornington Park for trailers and large 4WDs.
- **Beach monitoring** will have to be increased and a lot of attention paid to the Management Plan if the commitments by Boathaven are to be met.

So it is back to the beginning for Boathaven! We wonder how the members of the **Yacht Club** are going to cope with the financial burden and the demands of this commercial company – led by a man who does not even keep his boat in Mornington. We understand that Martha Cove, just 11 kms down the coast, is increasingly gaining boats from Mornington!

WHAT CAN WE ALL DO?

Keep informed. Watch the papers. Talk or write to David Morris MP, PO Box 2000 Mornington 3931 David.Morris@parliament.vic.gov.au; or phone 5975 4799 requesting he stick to his promise not to support the marina or have the Coalition government making any contribution to this marina proposal. Write/talk to Cllr Bev Colomb 5977 0612 (colomb@mornpen.vic.gov.au), PMB 1000, Besgrove St, Rosebud 3939, and make it quite clear what you think the Council should do when it votes.

ON OTHER BUSINESS: we are continuing to monitor planning applications in the Mornington area and watching for inappropriate proposals in the green wedge of the Peninsula. We also work with the Shire and Melbourne Water on creek monitoring (Waterwatch), the Friends Network and with other community groups on the Peninsula such as Banksia research Project. We are commencing a new project working with the local primary school on creek restoration and monitoring. We have just purchased, with a Federal grant, equipment for photographing, filming, and locating projects, and for publicity and promotion.

If you want to join us, or attend our Working bees at Fishermans, Dava Drive, Mills Beach or Tanti creek, please ask for a membership leaflet at PO Box 580 Mornington 3931 or ring Franz on 0407572089. Membership only costs \$10 and we would love to see you at our meetings every month second Thursday at 7.30 pm in the meeting room of the Shire library in Mornington.

Responsibility for this comment: Jan Oliver, President, PO Box 580 Mornington 3931, m 0417 9896 077.