

Oyster Barge facility. Submission. NRC. Appl 040976.01.01

I have lived in the Hopua area for many years. Our family lived on a farm in the Waikare Inlet. During the 1930's and 40's, I rowed all over the inner Bay and am familiar with the coastline. I have seen massive disturbance of the seabed and foreshore since the Bay of Islands Harbour Board was dissolved and Far North District Council with the LATE - Far North Holdings formed.

There is no necessity to destroy this beach and foreshore as per the application. It was understood that oyster barges would be catered for when the large public ramp was built at the marina. It was also agreed that the railway lines would remain to the wharf to accommodate the Minerva. Please refer to the attached resume of Far North Holdings which shows how the lines were surreptitiously removed.

If there is no likelihood of a logical outcome and the oyster barges are required to unload elsewhere; Whangae is the next option. There is all tide access to the flat area next to the Kawakawa-Hopua highway. There is also a gap between the bridge and mangroves that would enable a ramp to be constructed with no invasive earthworks. The barges can access under the Whangae bridge at any stage of the tide so there would be no interference with the cycle trail. It appears to me that there are people who sit in glass cages and make decisions with no knowledge of the geography or the history of the area.

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## **FNH ---A Resume -**

When the Northland Harbour Board was dissolved and Northland Regional Council and Far North District Council set up, assets were divvied up between them. Railway Reserve land went to FNDC which included the lagoon the Harbour Board had filled with the remains of the Bluff (known as Puketiti) and part of the ridge. Railway reserve boundary included the Harbour Board tanks on the ridge and down the hill to Beechey Street. The NHB was in the process of changing the legal designation of the land on which the two railway houses fronting Beechey Street formerly stood to “public reserve” status.

Work on the proposed reserve property by PEP workers and locals had already formed and landscaped an attractive picnic area above Beechey Street - the steep banks up to Franklin St. planted in native trees. A walkway had been formed down the hill, along the frontage and down to Beechey Street, eliminating the need to cross the dangerous U bend at the bottom of Franklin Street. FNDC was petitioned by the Opuia District Ratepayers to complete the legal process. Instead the land was included in assets handed to Far North Maritime the trading arm of FNDC. (Later changed to Far North Holdings). Locals were horrified to hear of a secret private sale being negotiated and tried to force FNM to halt it, insisting that the FNDC designate the parcel of land “public open space” as originally intended. This was agreed to. Despite assurances, FNM sold the property covertly for an undisclosed sum. Bulldozing the bank for the large concrete residence undermined Franklin Street causing the collapse of the footpath and ½ of Franklin Street, at considerable cost to ratepayers.

FNM decided to abolish the two 10min. Car parks in front of the Harbour Board building, placing concrete barriers across. FNM refused to discuss the issue - the barriers were broken up by gremlins one night and the public continued to park.

FNM claimed ownership of the wharf erecting high mesh wire gates across the entrance, locked to prevent public access. One night incensed locals managed to unhinge the gates and threw them into the sea. They were not replaced.

Then came the issue of the boat ramp. FNH (a name change but same body) decided to close the boat ramp by the store. Via the grapevine locals heard

that a concrete truck was due one day to dump a load of concrete to permanently block it off. So a group gathered at the ramp to protest. Approximately 1 cubic metre was laid across the ramp before the truck gave up and left. Locals worked hard to redistribute the concrete before it set, so again the ramp was usable. FNH were persuaded to include a free boat-launching ramp in the new marina plans in lieu of.

Opua Residents objected when FNH announced that the railway lines from the wharf to Ashby's boatyard would be removed. A group of locals confronted the CEO who seemingly relented when informed of the historical facts and as a show of good faith built their offices in the form of an authentic Railway Station alongside the rails – complete with platform and public toilets. We were appeased and withdrew our objection. FNH then permitted industrial development between the fake station southward! The rail lines of course being removed.

So that is the history of FNH public relations. They owe Opua big time. A proposed miniscule playground by the marina is the very least of their moral obligations to provide public space. Now they want to destroy part of the coast line that includes a beach to form facilities for oyster farmers. That was supposed to be addressed when the marina was formed. There is surely room at the present ramp for oyster farmers to unload.

The latest fiasco regarding the remains of Puketiti and the ridge can be laid at the feet of John Carter, Mayor; Tania McInnes and Andy Nock CEO, Far North Holdings. They travelled to China at rate-payers' expense and did a secret deal with a Chinese multi-millionaire. Resource Consents for development were never publicly notified so obviously there were no submissions. Complaints to members of Parliament plus the Minister of Conservation have been ignored. Carter, McInnes and Nock should be personally held accountable for all the expenses incurred.

Myra Larcombe.