

COMMUNITY COMMENT

Something awry with process

THERE was a meeting recently regarding the issue of urban deferral for the two proposed town sites at Stoneville and Parkerville.

The public who attended wanted to know why the decision for high-density development cannot be reviewed, overturned, or rescinded.

The shire insisted that the 1994 ruling cannot be overturned. It also stated that the zoning cannot be returned to rural.

But according to the WA Planning Commission, the landowner of the development property can ask the commission to change the zoning from urban back to rural.

However, it is highly unlikely that the landowner would change the zoning, as this person(s) has the most to gain from the development.

The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure isn't involved in the rezoning issues, while the commission can only change the decision from urban deferred to urban or vice versa.

It seems odd that the only person with the power to change the zoning back to rural is the landowner.

Why are the recommendations for urban zoning left only to shire councillors? There appears to be something wrong with this process.

The residents are not involved and have no power to affect these decisions.

And why is a decision made 14 years ago, before the complexities of environmental damage were well-known, appear to be set in stone?

Politics is all about change and bowing to the wishes of the voters. At the moment, only the commission has the power to decide our future without any input from the residents: why?

There have been suggestions for a referendum on high-density urban development or a move to gain legal protection for the Hills to permanently stop developers.

Whatever your opinion is on this issue, let it be known to either the shire or the commission. It may not change the process, but at least our views will be heard.

*Pat Cahill,
Gidgegannup.*

Little time to study report

YOUR article about Mundaring Shire voting to request the WA Planning Commission to lift the urban deferred zoning on the developments in Parkerville and Stoneville said the request was based on a report by an "independent consultancy group".

The report was actually written by the developer's own hired town planner, the Cardno Group. The 500-page report was delivered to the councillors the night before they voted, which makes one wonder how they could have had time to read it, let alone study it. The report is being kept secret to all but shire staff and councillors.

Cardno Group says it contains several "possible solutions" to the sewage plant. The council has been instructed by staff to accept these theoretical solutions as fact.

The council majority chose to ignore the fact that besides sewerage, there are five other

constraints against lifting the deferment.

They are instead relying on environmental, infrastructure and social-implication studies more than a decade old.

These suburbs totalling 2700 homes will be the start of urban sprawl across the Hills, which will destroy the forests, poison the water catchment and end the Hills lifestyle.

The full council will vote on the request to lift urban deferment at the September 23 meeting.

*Rusty Geller,
chairman, Save Perth Hills,
Hovea.*