

Rob McCann – Mayoral Candidate

Economic Development

- 1. What is your understanding of the Kotahitanga Board and the role that they play? Should they be independent?** The independent Economic Development Kotahitanga Board is one of the key outcomes from the Economic Development Strategy. While very new, the Board has been incredibly active - working on the Destination Management Plan, a Food and Beverage Sector Strategy, a Workforce Plan, an Intergeneration Strategy, Business and Investment Attraction and Facilitation, the formation of a Kāpiti Coast Tourism Advisory Board and establishing a Sustainable Business Network. I believe they should be independent, but there needs to be a connection to elected representatives and staff, so we can continue to work together with one voice
- 2. Kāpiti Chamber values town centres as vital contributors to our local economic system. What examples of benefits have you seen from town centres?** Town centres provide an identity for each area and a place for community to gather and belong. They also enable a density of customers to sustain economic activity.
- 3. How do you plan to support and grow town centres, and their relationship to the economic development team and wider business community?** By listening to the operators and valuing their input, rather than thinking that council knows best. During questioning about the Waikanae Library development in council chambers, staff admitted to me that they hadn't talked to current operators in Mahara Place. That doesn't engender confidence if a library project is also attempting to invigorate a town centre. It has, if the wrong actions are taken, the possibility of forcing out anchor tenants.
- 4. What is your understanding of the purpose of the Tourist Advisory Board and their relationship with Wellington NZ and KCDC?** The Tourism Advisory Board was set up to lead the implementation of the tourism projects in the district's Destination Management Plan. The advisory board reports to the Kotahitanga Board, but there needs to be funds and or resources to activate aspects of the plan, Wellington NZ . There has often been dissatisfaction with the relationship between Wellington NZ and the role they play in promoting Kāpiti. I am not sure if the organisation have resolved how to work together and action the Destination Management Plan. The Tourism Advisory Board and Wellington NZ has not been entities that I've had contact with as a councillor, and as Mayor that would change.
- 5. What are the opportunities around tourism in Kāpiti?** Tourism can provide jobs and careers and could become a much larger driver in our community. There are opportunities to grow the Māori Tourism Experiences and link to the natural assets and history of the region. I saw the Gateway as an opportunity for that journey, but that project has become both a financial weight and a public liability threatening any goodwill towards council. Clearly there is a need for better and more private accommodation and the new hotel being planned by the Safari Group on Paraparaumu Beach is an exciting development, as is the possibility of further development by the Templeton Group.

Better Infrastructure

- 6. What role do you think KCDC plays in the Peka Peka Interchange?** Council plays an advocacy role and a role in legitimizing the community call for an interchange. Having strong relationships at a staff and elected member level is vital, not just for this issue but for a great many issues.
- 7. KCDC has been making strategic housing purchases. What are your thoughts on KCDC as a housing provider or facilitator? What does intensification mean to you, and how do you think it could change Kāpiti?** As the Housing Portfolio Holder I've been engaged in this issue for the past three years. KCDC should not become a social housing provider, neither should we be in the role of being a developer. Rather, we should be setting up a Community Housing Trust that can bring together the people with the requisite skillset and passion. This can initially be funded through land purchases and later through inclusionary zoning. Our role is very much as a facilitator. Intensification needs to occur, but it should have taken place in a strategic manner as per our Growing Well Strategy. Instead, both major parties overrode our consultation on the day it was going out to the public. As I said at the time, it is a blunt instrument, but until it is changed, we have to follow the government legislation and have a working District Plan. Our region has lacked a fit for purpose document and it shows
- 8. As it stands, KCDC has funding to move forward with Te Uruhi. This has been a big talking point in our business community and membership. Assuming it goes ahead, what impact do you foresee the gateway having on business and community wellbeing in the Kāpiti region?** You are correct in that the funding to pay for the 116% increase in costs was in the annual plan, however the project is very unlikely to move forward following the resolution I added to the annual plan which creates a go/no go opportunity for the new council following the resource consent process. The impact would not have been immense, but it could have brought our rich history to the fore and increased Māori and other tourism opportunities by helping to pull together our Kapiti story. That aspect of the project should not be lost and could become part of a new town centre along with the Whale song project.
- 9. What do you think are the opportunities for business if the Kāpiti Airport stays an airport, or if it gets developed?** As the land is owned by the Templeton Group, the decision to keep an airport open should be theirs. Threatening obstructionist policies to reduce the opportunities for development is not the kind of enabling council I want to run. As an airport, the opportunities seem limited, with few commercial flights, no support from Air New Zealand and significant ongoing costs. As a developed piece of land linked to the rest of Paraparaumu, there are exciting opportunities which include further accommodation, a functions centre, additional houses and more green space. This should be an exciting opportunity if such a large piece of our community is developed in a harmonious manner.

Future thinking

- 10. What actions should KCDC be taking to support businesses to become climate friendly?** KCDC is investigating a further climate action fund to support businesses, organisations and communities to take practical steps. Most importantly council should be providing the leadership with actions, building public education and

creating a desire by the public to want to engage with operators that are climate friendly.

11. How do you envision the relationship between local iwi and KCDC operating in the future? Iwi are not sitting around the council table. By better resourcing them and having them engaged at the start of projects we can ensure better decisions are made that avoid costly workarounds later, and that our environment and community is treasured. Many of these relationships were at breaking point and there is hope that a reset will see our region operating in a forward thinking manner, as opposed to fixing costly planning mistakes.

12. Summarise your understanding of the following reforms: Three Waters Reform and Local Government Reform. How do you plan to keep Kāpiti's voice strong throughout these changes and advocate for our business community? While there is a problem in NZ with our water, the government has NOT come to the right solution. They are proposing a debt funded model, that is centralised, relies on sharing infrastructure and size to create savings. None of this looks likely and the ability to adequately plan could be seriously compromised. The local government review should have been the starting point for reform. It seems clear the government believes in larger organisations. I believe in effective representation, not faceless entities where there is no accountability. Bigger is not necessarily better and one of the key issues with Three Waters or the Representation Review is the possibility of larger organisations or even amalgamation. I do not believe Kapiti's voice will be heard in either of those scenarios, but should they progress, it's about keeping strong local organisations that work with whoever the elected representative is to forcefully and effectively represent our region.

13. What is your vision for Kāpiti, and how do you intend to implement it? Name three visionary actions you aspire to implement? I want our council to be an enabler, ending the closed-door meeting and secretive behaviour. I want to use our community boards as our eyes and ears and consult with communities before we locked down all the ideas. Secondly, we need to ensure all our expenditure is fit for purpose and I will be instructing our CE to conduct a line-by-line financial review. Thirdly, we need to ensure we are adequately planning for the future, and that includes the reality that Paraparaumu will become a city. Well planned growth affords huge opportunities. Poorly planned growth creates bottlenecks and a myriad of issues which is why when we have an opportunity to influence the development of the airport we should be engaging with that potential future, not harking back to a past that is no longer relevant

14. How do you plan on being a visible and accessible leader for our council and community? As Mayor I will be fully committed to the role. I will continue to engage on social media, make myself available to the community, business and interest groups and listen. Being engaged doesn't always mean agreeing, but it does mean being open to ideas, and I want council to stop being the people that say no and get in the way of good ideas. Council has to become the enabler. I'm a communication specialist and I'll use those skills, and commit to remaining far more accessible both in person and online than my predecessors. It's how I've conducted myself as a first term councillor and that will not change if I'm elected Mayor.

