

Grafton Residents Association

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Chair's report to the members of the Grafton Residents Association for the year ended March 2020.

The new committee started its year with the question posed at last year's AGM – what exactly is GRA for, and can it continue in its advocacy for Grafton? While the jury is still out on the first part of the question, I can say for certain that GRA has indeed continued as an active advocate for Grafton. This is the same paragraph I reported at the 2018 and 2019 AGMs!

Grafton Vision

We received a \$10K grant from the Waitemata Local Board to undertake a community consultation project to better identify our stakeholders and to provide council with guidelines of the community's aspirations and concerns. Very little actual progress has been made on this project this year, after a number of false starts. One glimmer of hope was our connection with the Health Precinct Working Group. This is a big group of community stakeholders in search of a purpose, one of which we would like to expand to reach out to all the primary stakeholders in Grafton. This group failed to gain any traction either.

Submissions

Over the financial year we have submitted on the 2020 Annual Council Budget and ancillary Local Board priorities and the parking changes to Grafton Mews. There have also been a few isolated consultations from Auckland Transport. This advocacy work is no small feat, so thank you to all who helped shape our submissions!

We have also taken part in numerous Domain Committee activities both at regular meetings and when requested, site visits to discuss actions related to the Domain Master Plan. The Grafton Mews consultation was a direct result of work we did last year in concert with the Domain Committee and Parnell Residents.

While we managed to hold Grafton together within the Waitemata Local Board and Orakei Ward in last year's consultations, Grafton is now split between Epsom and Auckland Central Electorates after those boundaries were reviewed. This is less important than maintaining coherence at the local government level.

Finances

Kathryn has kept the books in good order and made adjusted to accumulated funds where recipients have not presented cheques. Our current financial position may look good at the moment but the funds are allocated to the Grafton Vision project. We need to look at a more sustainable financial plan going forward.

General

Although 2019 has been relatively quiet for GRA, your committee has been working faithfully all year, and for that I am truly grateful. GRA's 2020 year has started with big disruptions due to covid-19 and these will no doubt continue as Auckland struggles with the economic ramifications. Our covid block meeting was a success.

After three years in the role, I rate my success as middling. We have rewritten and updated the rules of our society, which turns 58 years old this year. I have kept the meetings chaired and the submissions flowing. However, I did step in at a time when spirits were flagging and there was even a proposal to disband GRA or merge it into Parnell. At that time we all agreed that the Chair should rotate to keep things fresh. I am still of that opinion and have not put myself forward for renewal as Chair. I am happy to continue on the committee.

I want to thank the Waitematā Local Board for their contributions to GRA and the Liberal Catholic Church for making their rooms available to GRA for our meetings. I want to thank Dianne Northcott and Krista Ferguson for organising the Pest Free Grafton training and I hope it bears fruit now that we are coming out of lockdown. Finally I want to thank the whole committee for their work.

Richard Leckinger
Chair
May 2020