

Final Report to the PRFC Management Committee from the Sportsville Sub Committee.

24 March 2017

The Sportsville subcommittee Grahame Delaney, Gary Lewis, Zinny McCormick and Richard Te One want to thank the management committee for giving us the opportunity to liaise with the Sportsville organisation regarding the PRFC becoming a member of the proposed sports hub.

The negotiations have now reached a very critical stage and we are a little disappointed that our role in attempting to get the best possible outcome for the Club has ended.

You will be aware that the latest news is that any work will be delayed until 2024. We have also been told that if the PRFC are not going to commit, the Sports hub will not proceed and in the words of the Sportsville supporters “we will be responsible for derailing the entire project” and will be the nemesis of all the other clubs.

The wrath of the other sports groups is not something we would factor into the argument of whether to join, as they have more to gain than we have and nothing to lose.

We have always had the view that the decision to join Sportsville is a choice that the wider membership should make after considering the pros and cons and that it is the Management Committee’s responsibility to convey that to the Sportsville executive.

Accordingly, we strongly advise that the risks should be carefully examined and evaluated prior to making any decision and that the pressures from those who might have a conflict of interest are resisted. Whatever decision is made will be the most important in the 135 years of the Club’s history and will have a major impact on its future.

During the 8 months of the sub committee’s deliberations we have been subject to enormous pressure by Sportsville and some of our own club members who also have an interest in other camps, to agree unequivocally to their proposals and to fall in line and join with the other sports groups. We have also been urged to take a balanced view of things.

Our view on defaulting to the wishes of other clubs has already been stated and unfortunately, we have not received information from Sportsville that has allowed us to balance our viewpoint. We await that time.

Throughout our tenure, our goal was to get the best possible outcome for the Club we have remained committed to the principles that we stated in our first correspondence to Sportsville and have reiterated these at every opportunity.

We list those again for your information:

No building on the green field of the Petone Recreation Ground

No less in the way of indoor or outdoor facilities as we currently have

The governance, management and business plans, including the financial implications, will need to have the approval of the PRFC.

We consider the second and third items to be of equal importance and at every opportunity asked Sportsville for details and a business plan so that we could understand the initial and ongoing financial burden that our Club would be committing to. We received nothing except a vague promise that it is not yet ready but we will be able to have an input into it later.

We received the same response to our feedback on the many iterations of the plans, to which we responded as requested, by listing items that were not included or needed further consideration.

Each revision, including the last set of plans was reviewed by the sub-committee and all had omissions and planning errors that did not meet the condition that, ***we would not accept less than what we have.***

It is our opinion that whatever process the Management Committee decides to follow these principles should be in the forefront of any future negotiations. Frankly, if this was a business proposition we could not complete due diligence and as far as this Club is concerned we cannot see how any agreement can be made to join Sportsville until these issues have been resolved.

Currently the Sportsville plan is to utilise the PRFC building, modify it and use it as the Sportsville Hub. In effect the PRFC pass the ownership on to another organisation and get to rent it back. We have asked whether the Club will be compensated for giving to Sportsville our hard-earned asset which has a valuation of more than one million dollars and we have received no response.

It is interesting to note that Gymn Sports, the Cricket Club and Harriers have no assets to bring to the table and the Tennis Club has a minor asset in their building which could be picked up and on-sold.

It is not difficult to see why these clubs are fully in favour of Sportsville and have been critical of our approach.

The Petone Central Bowling Club is in a similar position to the PRFC in that they will give up their building which under the latest scheme will be demolished and their independence lost.

Over the period of our involvement we have heard many rumours about the condition of our clubrooms and that we need this and we need to have that, renewed or replaced. The fact is that the clubrooms need repairs and maintenance and if we give the building to Sportsville we may not have that burden to carry. The reality is that rumours get exaggerated and it is our suggestion that repairs and maintenance issues are properly costed and prioritised, then the club can determine how to fund-raise or otherwise finance the essential repairs.

It is our recommendation that the lack of attention to repairs and maintenance over the years is not a good enough reason to give away the entire building.

We have always stated that we believe in the principle of Sportsville, providing it is well run and the facilities are appropriate. The information that we currently have does not give us confidence that joining Sportsville will be the best path for the PRFC and we believe that we should stay as we are. However, we do not deny that, if our concerns are met that position might very well change.

We have not reached that stage yet and we do have concerns about whether North Park is big enough to accommodate all that is planned and warn that pictorial views are presented to enhance a planning proposal and should not be the basis for making a decision in place of the principles of structure, aesthetics, function and financial considerations.

It must also be recorded that one of the assumptions put before this sub-committee was the possibility that rugby may not be around in 10 years (or perhaps exist in a different form than it is

now.) To commit to a Sportsville model may not give PRFC the flexibility to move and morph with the changes likely to come – something we can very easily do, right now. Sportsville will not be the saviour of rugby nor any other sport.

It must be remembered that once we join, there is no turning back there will be nothing for us to turn back to. If we do join, we strongly recommend that an exit plan be worked through as part of our conditions.

In conclusion, we believe that the Petone Rugby Football Club has nothing to gain by joining Sportsville. We will be the conduit for the other clubs to benefit, we will lose our autonomy, contribute financially an amount that none of the other clubs can match and have little say in the management processes. Our indoor and outdoor facilities will be less than what we have and our financial position will be in uncertain.

Once we commit there is no turning the clock back.

We wish the Management well, you have the future of the PRFC in your hands.

Grahame, Zinny, Gary and Dick

Footnote:

The Club Secretary has kindly typed up our correspondence to Sportsville and this and any other communications are available for all Committee Members to view. We have received no written responses from Sportsville.