

**BEFORE INDEPENDENT HEARING COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED BY
WAIPA DISTRICT COUNCIL**

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991 (Act)

AND

IN THE MATTER of an application for resource consent under section 88
of the Act for the establishment and operation of a sand
quarry and cleanfill operation located at 928 Kaipaki
Road, Cambridge

BETWEEN **SHAW'S PROPERTY HOLDINGS LIMITED**

Applicant

AND **WAIPA DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Consent Authority

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF RACHEL MASTERS FOR THE
SUBMITTERS: AMANDA AND KEITH WALKER**

(Equine)

Dated 10 November 2020

INTRODUCTION

- 1 My full name is Rachel Masters.
- 2 I own and manage a boutique racehorse training and pre-training yard on Golf Road, Te Awamutu as well as riding trackwork at Te Awamutu track and Rivermonte Park and producing sports horses.
- 3 I have held a B Class Trainers Licence since 2005 and I have also ridden as a jockey.
- 4 I have been involved in horses all my life as my father is a farrier and I would consider myself an expert witness.
- 5 I have had a two serious falls (being knocked out), I take rider health and safety issues in the horse industry very seriously.
- 6 I know the canter track and its location at 899 Kaipaki Road very well as I have ridden on it over the last 4 years. I now use the hill canter track at Rivermonte Park to help with my horses fitness work (hills are good for getting horses fitter just like they are good for people that run).
- 7 I visited Rivermonte Park on Saturday 17 October 2020 to look at the proposed quarry entrance site, the proposed roading plan and the possible implications on the Walker's uphill canter track.

Code of Conduct

- 8 I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court of New Zealand Practice Note 2014 and that I have complied with it when preparing my evidence. This evidence is entirely within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

The Walker's Equine Concerns

- 9 The Walker's produce their own sports horses and do horse rehabilitation work for other people's horses.
- 10 The work with these types of horses necessitates the use of the uphill canter track for slow steady work, unlike racehorses in training who do most of their work at speed.

- 11 The Walker's are obviously very concerned that when the road is widened to accommodate the new quarry entrance that the edge of the tar-seal will end up 1.5m from their hedge and only 2.5m from the edge of their canter track.
- 12 The Walkers consider there is a need to move their existing canter track further into the farm should this quarry go ahead in order to take the horses and riders away from what will be a very busy HCV junction and avoid the associated risk of any horses being spooked by the HCVs entering and exiting the quarry entrance should the track stay where it is.

Horse Behaviour

- 13 The Walkers do a great deal to protect their horses and riders from things that will frighten a horse. (Horses are flight animals which means that if they think they are going to be attacked or are scarred by something large coming towards them they will spin round and move off as fast as they can, this can lead to a rider falling and getting injured.) The Walkers mow all the grass around the edges of the arenas, canter track, farm tracks and grass paddocks where the horses get worked in order avoid things like birds and rabbits from popping up out of the grass. They have trees and banners around their arena and lunge pen to help the horses get used to some sudden noises when the wind blows whilst being in a controlled safe space.
They also use large farm machinery such as tractors, telehandlers, diggers whilst the horses are being worked nearby to help desensitize the horses ready for competition as well as working the horses head on towards the traffic on the other side of the hedge on Kaipaki Road. However it is not always possible to completely remove the spook from a horse especially when we spend a great deal of time training a sports horse to think for him/herself so that they can compete on the cross country course.
- 14 When the construction of the new roading on Kaipaki Road is going on, the large heavy plant and machinery for this will end up

against the Walker hedge, making it impossible to work horses on the track due to the increase in risk of the horses being frightened.

- 15 Once the new road layout is complete, the road will be 1.5m of the Walker's hedge and 2.5m of their track, I cannot think of anywhere else in the area where you would have horses working that close to a very fast busy road and with heavy trucks turning in and out of the adjacent intersection I cannot see anyway of mitigating the situation to help keep everyone safe.
- 16 I take horse to Cambridge track occasionally and whilst some of the roads are reasonable, close to the track 3 of the roads are 80kph and only have light traffic. The fourth road is State Highway 1 which is a good 20m away behind a sound barrier. None of these roads have an intersection which have HCV movements directly opposite at track.

Further Important Items

- 17 Horses have a range of vision of about 350°, with approximately 65° of this being binocular vision and the remaining 285° monocular vision. Therefore, the horse has a smaller field of depth perception than a human. Whilst this provides a horse with the best chance to spot predators it leaves them some small blind spots in certain circumstances, eg if they are being ridden forwards and something goes bang behind them they will try to spin and take off in a blind panic often leaving the rider behind on the floor.
- 18 Horse are also dichromatic which means they see colours differently – they do not have a full range of colour and mainly see things in shades of blues and yellows which means they can see something is there but not clear so again this can trigger their flight.
- 19 When HCVs are turning right out of the quarry entrance they will, if possible, come all the way across Kaipaki Road towards the gate on to the Walker's track in order to, make the turn easier. This will appear to a horse coming up the track that it is being asked to run into a solid object which will cause them to go into flight mode

potentially depositing the rider. A frightened runaway horse is a dangerous horse to both itself and the people trying to catch it.

20 If the proposal for the entrance to the quarry and the necessary alterations to Kaipaki Road go ahead, the Walker's will have no alternative but to stop using the canter track adjacent to Kaipaki Road as the potential for a serious incident and its consequences are far too high.

21 It seems unfair for the Walker's to have to stop using the top part of their track because of neighbouring activities, everyone has the right in law to have full enjoyment of their property.

22 I understand that the Walker's have put forward a proposal to the applicant to relocate part of the canter track, this would mean that the track is considerable shorter but I believe it would be a safer option for all concerned.

23 I have recently been led to believe that the applicant has refused to fund this proposal.

Conclusion

24 It is my view that the proposed application for the alterations to Kaipaki Road and the construction of a new quarry entrance opposite the Walker's property will result in a significantly increased risk of a horse related incident occurring with the potential serious risk of injury to both the rider and horse. The only practicable solution will be to relocate a portion of the Walker's canter track away from Kaipaki Road.

Rachel Masters 

10 November 2020