

From: Luc Bouchard
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 7:18 PM
To: Council Members
Subject: City Council Special Meeting to Discuss the Brisbane Baylands

Brisbane, 15 January 2018

Open letter to the Brisbane City Council

Honorable Mayor Conway, Honorable Council Members:

Our fair City is facing what is arguably the most consequential question of its history: what to do with the Baylands? The next step in the decision process is slated to occur on January 16th 2018 at the City Council Special Meeting to Discuss the Brisbane Baylands. As I will be unable to attend, I would like to offer the following for consideration by the City Council.

I think we must first think of the Baylands as an opportunity for Brisbane: if done well, a project combining residential and commercial components could bring benefits to all of us, including amenities such as soccer fields, baseball diamonds, an ice rink, a driving range, all connected to Brisbane village with pedestrian and bicycle paths.

The zoning changes required to allow this opportunity to become reality are (currently) under the purview of the City of Brisbane. No one expects our City team to simply issue a “blank check” to UPC to proceed. Rather, I for one expect that our team be able to structure a zoning change proposal, conditional on the satisfaction of certain pre-requisites by UPC, namely: committing to the full compliance to environmental requirements; securing the water rights and the financing required to execute the project; providing a guaranteed contribution level to City services, including infrastructure (roads and traffic considerations being a key focal point), first responders and school district; and not least, committing via financial guarantees to the execution of the scope, cost and schedule of the project. These criteria must be satisfied by UPC who has, to date, been delinquent in satisfying any of them. If we are to go forward, we must secure the full commitment of the land owner to make this a success, backed up with commensurate penalties should they continue to default on their obligations.

Should we fail to enable the execution of a viable project, the market and social forces clamoring for residential construction on the Baylands will continue to grow and will eventually wrestle control away from the City of Brisbane. We would lose a considerable existing tax base, as well as any of the future benefits that would come from what development occurs on the Baylands. We must act promptly and judiciously.

There are many great examples of Public-Private partnerships the world over, some having faced greater environmental challenges than those in the Baylands. I see no reason why our fair City could not be counted among them. We must act while we can, lest control be taken away from us.

With kind regards,

Luc Bouchard
Brisbane resident.