

AMENDED ITEM



Item No: 5.3
Title: Notice of Motion - Saving the Mariners/Convening a crisis meeting
Department: Councillor

14 September 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting

Reference: F2020/00039 - D14165005
Author: Greg Best, Councillor
Bruce McLachlan, Councillor

Councillors Best and McLachlan have given notice that at the Ordinary Council Meeting to be held on 14 September 2020 they will move the following motion:

- 1 That Council notes with great concern that the owners of the Mariners are now taking expressions of interests up until 15 September 2020 for the sale of the club that may well result in the Mariners leaving their home base here on the Central Coast.**
- 2 That further Council recognises the significant economic, social, educational and public health contribution this organisation has provided over many years to our region.**
- 3 That Council notes it took strong support from the former Wyong and Gosford Councils over more than ten years to establish a national sporting team for this region. Further these Councils developed a strong partnership with the Mariners and their supporter base through sponsoring and actively supporting the Mariners over many years.**
- 4 That Council now urgently seek to convene a crisis meeting of the Mariner's executives, our federal and state representatives and key representatives of our regional business organisations with a view to identifying options moving forward to maintain the Mariners as our peak regional sporting organisations on a national stage**

Chief Executive Officer Response

The Chief Executive Officer considers that this Notice of Motion has legal, strategic, financial or policy implications which should be taken into consideration by the meeting. As a result, the Chief Executive Officer has provided a report in relation to the Notice of Motion. This report is provided as Attachment 1.

Attachments

- 1 CEO Response - Saving the Mariners / Convening a crisis meeting D14179149**

Title: CEO Response - Notice of Motion - Saving the Mariners / Convening a crisis meeting

Department: Roads Transport Drainage and Waste

14 September 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting

Reference: F2017/00116 - D14179149

Author: Janine McKenzie, Unit Manager, Business Enterprise

Executive: Boris Bolgoff, Director Roads Transport Drainage and Waste



Summary

This report provides a response to Item 5.3 - Notice of Motion – Saving the Mariners / Convening a crisis meeting.

Motion:

- 1 That Council notes with great concern that the owners of the Mariners are now taking expressions of interests up until 15 September 2020 for the sale of the club that may well result in the Mariners leaving their home base here on the Central Coast.**
- 2 That further Council recognises the significant economic, social, educational and public health contribution this organisation has provided over many years to our region.**
- 3 That Council notes it took strong support from the former Wyong and Gosford Councils over more than ten years to establish a national sporting team for this region. Further these Councils developed a strong partnership with the Mariners and their supporter base through sponsoring and actively supporting the Mariners over many years.**
- 4 That Council now urgently seek to convene a crisis meeting of the Mariner's executives, our federal and state representatives and key representatives of our regional business organisations with a view to identifying options moving forward to maintain the Mariners as our peak regional sporting organisations on a national stage**

Staff Comments:

The Mariners are the only professional football club of any code on the Central Coast and usual hosts around 13 A-League home games at Central Coast Stadium. The club was established in 2005 and since that time it has significantly contributed to the economic, social and sporting life of the Central Coast.

The club has enjoyed a supportive and productive relationship with Central Coast Council, including both the former Gosford and Wyong Councils over its 15-year presence on the Central Coast.

The Mariners also have strong relationships with NSW State and Federal Government representatives for the Central Coast.

The Mariners club and the A-League Licence has been sold in the past, with the club continuing to base themselves on the Central Coast.

The decision to sell the club is a commercial one and is entirely up to the Mariner's owner, Mike Charlesworth, who will make that decision after the expressions close on 15 September 2020. Information on interest from potential buyers is commercially confidential. However, Council is aware of public statements from potential buyers looking to relocate the club.

Since the announcement of the intention to sell, senior Council staff have had several meetings and discussions with Mike Charlesworth, Shaun Mielekamp, CEO, and other Mariners staff to provide any support possible to maintain the club on the Central Coast.

Senior staff have also had meetings with the Football Federation of Australia (FFA) and other stakeholders to discuss the impacts of potential Mariners sale and other opportunities for the Central Coast Stadium.

While there is always the possibility of the license being transferred to another location, both the Mariners and the FFA has expressed a preference to keep the club on the Central Coast. There are indications of potential bidders that would buy to keep the club on the Central Coast. Groups have also been established seeking support from members and supporters of the Central Coast Mariners to put forward a model to have a proportion of community ownership.

At this stage, there is little that a "crisis meeting" would achieve. Staff recommend that Council confirm its support to retain the club on the Central Coast and request the Council's CEO continue conversations with the club and other stakeholders to support this outcome, with regular updates to Council on progress.

Staff Recommendation:

- 1 That Council notes with that the owner of the Mariners are now taking expressions of interests up until 15 September 2020 for the sale of the club, which may result in the transfer of the License away from the Central Coast.
- 2 That Council recognises the significant economic, social, educational and public health wellbeing contribution this organisation has provided over its 15 years to our region.
- 3 That Council continue to support the Mariners remaining on the Central Coast.

- 4 That Council request the Chief Executive Officer to continue to meet with various stakeholders to support the continuation of the Mariners A-League License on the Central Coast.

Link to Community Strategic Plan

Theme 2: Smart

Goal C: A growing and competitive region

C3: Facilitate economic development to increase local employment opportunities and provide a range of jobs for all residents.