

Mt Eden Village Inc Chairperson's report for 2022/2023 year

To be delivered at the AGM, Tuesday 17 October 2023

Personnel changes

Mt Eden Village Inc. (MEV) has undergone significant change this year. In terms of personnel, we are very sad to acknowledge the unexpected passing of Maureen Keene in May 2023 after a brief illness. Maureen was instrumental in establishing a marketing and promotional programme for Mt Eden Village when she was still running the Solla Sollew cafe (which became Frasers). The Mt Eden Village Business Association achieved Mainstreet funding in 2000 and then became part of the Business Improvement District (BID) programme in 2012. Maureen has been on the Mt Eden Village executive committee since 1997 and she has served as chairperson for a number of those years including, most recently, 2020-2023. Maureen has been a highly valued committee member and she played a pivotal role in the ongoing development of Mt Eden Village for 26 years. She will be very sadly missed.

We also wish to acknowledge the valuable contribution of Tim Woolfield who served as our BID manager for more than 3 years, which included the very challenging COVID period. Tim has left Mt Eden Village Inc. in order to have more time to devote to his other business interests and we wish him all the very best in his future endeavours. We also pass on to Tim our deepest condolences on the passing of his wife Gay Woolfield in May 2023.

We welcome Ken Choe as our new BID manager. Ken's considerable business experience (business owner) and professional experience (banking and accountancy) combined with his years of involvement with the Dominion Road Business Association Executive Committee (treasurer) mean that he is uniquely qualified for our role and we welcome his experience, ideas and energy.

Business in the Village

It has been another busy year in Mt Eden Village in terms of business changes which include Colab Industry (was Newton + Co Real Estate), Dominique Healy (was Oh Deer), Frasers (reopened under new ownership), Gina's Italian Kitchen & Garden Bar, Harcourts Mt Eden, Jono's Village Eatery (was Superfly), Koreana Chicken (was Dumplings in Pan), Olafs (reopened under new ownership), Pistackio (was Gate and Garden) and Taste of India

(was Night Spice/Sitara). We warmly welcome our new businesses (as well as new owners at several of our other businesses) and we farewell I am Balanced, Karen's Diner and Tank Mt Eden.

The aftermath of Covid19 has been difficult for our businesses. With our membership mostly comprising hospitality, retail and services, these sectors have experienced ongoing staff shortages (resulting in reduced trading hours when compared to the pre-Covid19 era) as well as a rising cost/inflationary environment (eg, for labour, fresh produce, imported ingredients, debt financing, rates and insurance). In addition, the overall economy has been fairly stagnant and there is considerable pressure on consumers' discretionary spending due to the "cost of living crisis".

One bright spot was provided by the recent FIFA Womens' World Cup with an increase in visitors to Mt Eden Village being noticeable for the duration of the tournament.

The late January 2023 floods

Mt Eden Village was lucky to experience minimal direct negative consequences from the heavy flooding that occurred on Friday 27 January 2023. However, we cannot take this situation for granted on an ongoing basis, particularly at a time of climate change. While Auckland Council/Watercare will be investing more on flood preparedness, we do urge those of our businesses that have public drains nearby – please ensure that they are kept clear of rubbish/debris as much as possible.

Essex Road Car Park - Hourly Rate Decrease (for first Two Hours)

Since Auckland Transport introduced paid parking at the Essex Road car park in mid-2019, the car park's usage declined significantly due to both the cost and user difficulty. Mt Eden Village Inc. has therefore been lobbying hard for a number of changes to the paid parking in order to improve its usage/access.

While we were not successful with our requests, one change that AT has recently made is to lower the hourly rate for the first two hours to \$0.50/hour (from \$1.00/hour). After the first two hours, however, the hourly rate of \$2.00/hour is unchanged. Nonetheless, hopefully the fact that our customers can get two hours of paid parking for \$1.00 will improve the car park's utilisation. It is too valuable an asset for us to be satisfied otherwise. This is particularly the case because a number of our businesses (ie, hospitality businesses and redeveloped sites) have made substantial contributions towards the car park in the past.

General

Legislation. Recent changes to New Zealand's Incorporated Societies legislation required Mt Eden Village Inc. to update its constitution and this was achieved via a Special General Meeting in June 2023.

Security. We are conscious that some of our businesses have been repeatedly targeted by break-ins and we are aware that the economic backdrop also lends itself towards the potential for more shoplifting and scams. We urge members to be vigilant and to take advantage of some of the online resources that the NZ Police provides at <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/businesses-and-organisations/retail-crime-prevention-hub>. We also strongly encourage members to report any non-emergency crime to 105 (phone) or <https://www.police.govt.nz/use-105> (online). Mt Eden Village Inc. is rolling out a WhatsApp group that members can use for fast communication; we are also budgeting to make some lighting improvements to improve security at night.

Web site. Mt Eden Village Inc. recently completed its transition to a new web site (managed by Mint Ideas) and based on Squarespace (previously on Wordpress). Please visit www.mounteden.co.nz to check your business directory listing and please contact Kirralee Fisher kirralee@mintideas.co.nz if any updates to your listing are required.

Events and event sponsorship. We have resumed running our annual events, the most significant of which is Halloween in Mt Eden Village. This promotes Mt Eden Village Inc. and is a family-friendly event. We continue to sponsor Eden Arts with their signature Artists in Eden and Chamber Music Festival events and we are now sponsoring their Music in Eden programme (providing free live music on Friday lunchtimes). We see these strategic event sponsorships as low-cost ways of encouraging people to come to the village, thus providing the opportunity for local dining/shopping before and after such events.

Shopping competitions. We continue our regular shopping competitions centred on Mother's Day, Father's Day and Christmas. We see this as a way of promoting Mt Eden Village as well as thanking our customers for shopping and/or dining in the village. One change we are making is to use vouchers from our local businesses as the prizes (rather than Visa prezzy cards). We are also investigating how we can make the shopping competitions easier for businesses with limited counter space to promote. A big thank you to Georgia Jonas who delivers the posters/collects the entry forms/contacts the

winners for us and who also helped us recently to update the business database.

Social media. We have budgeted for increased social media activity, particularly on our facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/MtEdenVillage/>) in order to promote our business members and we have contracted Sallyann Hingston to manage this activity. Please let us know if you have any special offers/promotions/events etc. that you would like Sallyann to promote on the Mt Eden Village facebook page.

Environmental initiatives. We are constantly on the lookout for ways that Mt Eden Village Inc. and its members can improve its environmental footprint. We have good relationships with the other Auckland BIDs as well as with the Mt Eden Village People and the Mt Eden Village Centre – resulting in some suggestions for us. However, we would also warmly welcome ideas from our members.

Public toilets. We will be reviewing the public toilets on Stokes Road and putting together a “wish list” of improvements. While we have low expectations as to the outcome due to the difficult economic environment faced by Auckland Council, we hope that some low cost improvements might be achieved.

Executive committee. I would like to thank all of the existing committee members for their time and their participation. Your input and support for the village is very much appreciated. Ideally, we would like to have representation from each of the street blocks within our geographic boundary as well as from across a range of industry sectors. This will ensure that our representation is effective and so we do encourage our association members to consider joining the committee. You would be very welcome.

I would also like to thank our new BID manager Ken Choe who has faced a steep learning curve in his first few months, with so much change going on.

Acting Co-Chairperson

Frances Loo

26 September 2023