

Town Council Presentation Notes

- Since the 1930's, for more than 85 years, Scenic Caves has been drawing visitors to our area and employing local workers. The business and the facility have obviously grown and evolved since then. The pace of this evolution picked up considerably when it was purchased by the Thorburn family. There is one consistent element in the Caves business model that we would like to recognize here today and that is – we exist to provide experiences centered around our unique natural environment, we are very focused on preserving that environment and allowing guests to experience it but without the ability to park cars we would not exist.
- Today the adventure park business is very competitive. New operators are opening and existing operators, including our neighbours Blue Mountain, are adding activities every season. In this competitive situation, even a business that has been contributing tax dollars and employing local families for as long as we have, must evolve and grow in order to stay healthy and to continue to draw visitors to the region.
- Parking has been a barrier to our growth for more than 15 years now. On peak days we can not park all of our customers in our existing lot. Our ability to invest and expand our offerings, to keep pace with the marketplace, does not exist until we are able to safely and conveniently provide a place for our guests to park their vehicles.
- For a very long time now we have been exploring all options available to us – we have tried to buy properties when they became available, we entered into and invested in, a lot sharing arrangement with Blue many years ago that was then terminated by Blue after a short period of time. We have tried and tried again to find solutions to this challenge.
- We have finally found a property that will work and we have purchased the subject property at significant cost in order to find a permanent solution that we can control and manage. A solution that will allow us to invest, with confidence, in our business. The result will provide many positive benefits to the larger community.
- This property is an ideal location as it is immediately adjacent to the existing Scenic Caves land holdings and will allow a pedestrian connection to the main entrance that will keep our customers off of Scenic Caves Road.
- Recently, at the request of town staff we met with Blue Mountain and even in spite of our past challenges with shared parking, we openly explored sharing the new lot they have just received approvals to build and that has now been constructed. This lot sharing scenario has some issues, it is farther away and people are going to need to walk on Scenic Caves road, across the front of our neighbours property. We still would not have control over our business and would be dependent upon Blue, who's needs and strategies can change quickly. This will cost us money and could disappear at any time. And most importantly we would not control our own destiny and could not invest in our business with confidence. There would be a short period of time where Blue could commit to a sharing arrangement but I have been told that this was not of interest to our neighbours.

- We need this parking to be able to compete and protect a business that has been an iconic attraction in the region for 85 years.
- Having said that, we recognize that this is not a perfect solution, after years of trying to find one we can assure council that one does not exist. We understand that using this land for parking will impact our neighbours and we have worked hard with our partners to create a draft site plan that will provide significant buffers and appropriately manage the environmental and engineering responsibilities that we take very seriously.
- In particular, the land we own does extend behind our neighbours property and we have agreed to leave that portion out of our plans for the parking area. Additionally, our engineers have assured us that the properly managed storm water will not impact our neighbours well.
- We will not be using this lot at night and there will be no lights installed on the lot again unlike Blue Mountains lot which has already been approved and constructed.
- We would also like to assure council that we are open to working with our neighbours who border the lot to reasonably adjust the site plans to enhance their comfort.
- The pond on the property will be protected and signed with educational signage. We are in the nature business and view this as an opportunity to protect and educate.
- SCNA would like to thank council for their time and consideration and we respectfully request their support for this project. Support that will allow us to continue our long history of attracting visitors to the region, employing local families and contributing to the larger community.