Wainuiomata District Council
Established 01 November 1988

Rear: Mrs P. McRae (committee clerk); Cr R. G. Moffatt; Mr B. J. Pohlen (Manager); Crs L. G. Boardman; L. C. Little; R. C. Moore; W. J. McCabe; D. L. Dransfield; A. J. J. London and Mr P. D. W. Kularatne (District Engineer). Front: Crs E. A. O’Connell, A. E. van Gaalen; Mayor H. J. Martin; Crs C. N. Eadie; B. R. Bain.

Valley News November 1988
Our Mayor, Harry Martin initiated the District Council meeting on November 1. Fellow councilors, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Inaugural Meeting of the Wainuiomata District Council. It has taken us a little longer than we had hoped to reach this milestone – about twenty years longer – but we finally made it and having arrived at our goal no one is going to remove our hard won independence without a fight, but more about that later.

Your new council is indeed new in name only. We will be operating with the same staff as the county with the exception of those who have moved to Upper Hutt City Council with the partition of the county. We will be operating from the same premises both in this building which is owned by Wainuiomata and from our depot. We have the same vehicles and equipment as before and the councillors around this table are indeed far from new. At this stage we will most probably retain our same committee structure.

You may well ask what then has changed? We have for many years been with the aid of the County preparing for this time by purchasing our own assets (buildings plant and equipment). We therefore expect there will be no sudden changes of direction but we will now be the arbiter of our own fate – or so far as the Government will allow us.
We knew from the beginning that it was never going to be easy to break away from the Hutt Council. At first our fight was with the County. One former chairman stated that Wainuiomata would become independent over his dead body – he was right! Another chairman came unwillingly to our full council meeting one evening a very long time ago and reluctantly agreed that – yes Wainuiomata should one day become a borough. The following morning he phoned the secretary of the day to make sure that his remarks did not appear in the minutes and I have kept those minutes all these years.

In those days the HCC operated from Wellington and seldom if ever did the councilors from the other ridings visit us. When we finally hived off the bulk of the county to Kapiti and various other local authorities, we had an ideal arrangement as the three remaining ridings formed a much closer County based in Wainuiomata. That occurred in 1974 and partition should then have been simple. All three ridings had survived Henry May’s requirement of a two thirds majority being necessary to overturn a Local Government Scheme, but successive Governments kept changing the rules. Finally, we convinced the Local Government Commissioner of our case and in 1986 he brought forward the scheme that today we celebrate.

Unfortunately even before our new district was established the cruelist blow yet saw the Government change the rules once more by suspending democracy for a period until it can institute its massive boundary changes.

There would be no territorial authority in New Zealand with the experience in fighting for independence that we have here in Wainuiomata and if our residents are behind us as we intend to find out by the current petition and public meeting on Thursday night we will win through even yet.

Valley News December 1988 Christmas Message from His Worship the Mayor

For your council and councilors 1988 has been a year of development and despair, of happiness and sadness, of elation and bitter disappointment. A typical year one might reflect but it does seem that the extremes have been more apparent and deeper this year.

This year we have seen many new developments brought to fruition, the opening by the Hon. Peter Tapsell of our new Police Station and the advent of the new Strand shopping complex which saw an extension to our retail area are but two of these. However, these signs of progress were countered by the alarming increase in unemployment and the resultant misery this brings.

The opening in September of Te Wharehui Pukeatua of Wainuiomata Marae after many years of endeavor by many people was perhaps one of the happiest events of the year but sadly one of its founders Barney Barclay passed away earlier in the year and was not to see the culmination of his years of effort.

On October 31, as you are aware, the Hutt County Council and the Wainuiomata District Community Council were laid to rest and the following day a new territorial local authority, the Wainuiomata District Council was born. The whole of council supported by the vast majority of residents had finally, we hoped attained the goal that had seemed so tantalizingly close for so many years. It is now history that even before our hard-won independence was celebrated the Local Government Commission at the insistence of a change of direction by Government had brought forth its Indicative Proposals which would see us along with Eastbourne, Petone and the Hutt Valley Drainage Board amalgamate with Lower Hutt City.
We are of course striving to maintain our hard-won independence and should have a clearer view when the “draft scheme” is released later in December. Whatever the outcome, please be assured your councilors will seek the best possible conditions for residents.

Along with my fellow councilors, their spouses and my wife Irene, I would like to thank the editor, Mr Harry Todd and his dedicated staff of the Valley News for the grand way they record for the future the happenings of our “District” and would wish one and all a Very Happy Christmas and a brighter and more prosperous New Year in 1989.

Valley News December 1988 The Opinion Poll
As many residents will be aware, Council has recently conducted an opinion survey regarding the compulsory amalgamation of Wainuiomata with Lower Hutt. This had to be organized very quickly because of time constraints but 4770 residents were questioned by volunteers. The final result was:

- For remaining independent: 86%
- For joining Lower Hutt: 6%
- No views: 8%

This petition was presented to our Member, Sonja Davies on November 29, who would present it in the House, hopefully for consideration by the Internal Affairs and Local Government Select Committee before Christmas.

Valley News December 1988
When the Hutt County came to the end of its life on October 31, the ultimate Chairman, our own Grant Moffat presented one of his own paintings to Wainuiomata. Mr Moffat emphasized that the picture was to be the property of Wainuiomata, not of any other local body to which Wainuiomata may be forcibly attached.

Valley News February 1989 The Mayor reports

Local Government Reform
After more than twenty years of sparring with Local Government Commissions it was not unreasonable to expect that when Wainuiomata finally gained its independent territorial status on November 1 last year, that that would be an end to it for some considerable time. However, it is now history that one month before that occurred the rules of democracy were changed yet again and our hard-won independence was earmarked for extinction when the Commission introduced its “Indicative Scheme” to amalgamate Petone, Eastbourne, Wainuiomata and Lower Hutt into one new city.

This action by the government through its Commission was of course not only for our region, it was being applied as part of a nationwide reform of local government. Rationalisation of local government in New Zealand is long overdue and there would be few who would argue against it. However, the wholesale destruction of the present system emanating from the phrase “in the opinion of the commission” which without measured qualification appears frequently in their proposals must be challenged.
Council’s Action So Far

In the Commission’s own words the case for reform is reduced to two clauses. I quote: “In the Commission’s opinion, improved local government requires that the system be built on (a) the regional community of interest and (b) the district or territorial community of interest.”

Your Council has therefore prepared its substantial case against amalgamation by maintaining that Wainuiomata has a more than adequate community of interest, indeed far in excess of most larger communities.

Council presented substantial submissions objecting to the “Indicative Scheme”, then later it presented the petition opposing amalgamation to a select committee of parliamentary members and following the issuing of the “Draft Scheme” presented further submissions to the Local Government Commission on February 1 this year.

Provision for submissions from the “public at large” will remain open until the end of February and should any Wainuiomata organization or individual resident require information or assistance in preparing submissions, any councilor will advise on who to contact or an inquiry to the council offices will be dealt with expeditiously.

A great amount of time and research by both councilors and council staff has been expended on this and previous similar submissions. On a national scale the cost to the ratepayer and the taxpayer must run to many millions of dollars and for what? Many would say reform of local government through an “opinion of the Local Government Commission.”

Harry Martin, Mayor, Wainuiomata District Council.