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President hailed for solving Norachcholai coal plant issue

Negombo special correspondent

A motion tabled at the monthly meeting of the Negombo Municipal Council by Neville Rodrigo (PA) thanking President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, for solving the Norachcholai coal-powered thermal plant issue said, her action signifies the respect she has for the Catholic community. The motion was unanimously passed. Municipal Councillor Vincent Fernando (PA) seconded it.

Negombo Mayor Ananda Munasinghe presided at the meeting.

Councillor Rodrigo further said that the proposed coal-powered thermal plant, was to generate electricity to supplement the national grid for the new millennium. However its construction would have led to environmental pollution, sea erosion and effected the livelihood of fishermen and farmers in the area. As a result of the protests, and the request made to the President, the proposed plant was abandoned.

Mayor Munasinghe said, in view of the vast development projects undertaken by the Government an alternate place had to be sought in the near future soon, as the setting up of Norachcholai coal-powered plant had been suspended. The alternative could be Kalpitiya or Puttalam. At present

there are 10, 20 and 30 megawatt turbine functions which are inadequate.

W. Christie Fernando (UNP) said that the farmers and fishermen of Talawila in the Norachcholai area would have lost their livelihood due to the proposed coal-power plant, which would have caused environmental-pollution sea-erosion, in the area surrounding the most venerated Catholic shrine at Talawila which is next to Madhu church which had been out of bounds for the Catholics for several years, due to terrorists infiltration of the area. Under the guidance of Bishop of Chilaw Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Frank Marcus Fernando along with the Catholic members of Parliament was able to come to a settlement.

Another motion by Councillor Rodrigo on developing housing and the pre-school at Udappuwatte Ettukala, and a motion by Sepala Morawake, to acquire the unused and abandoned land 1 1/2 acres in extent at Pallenchchenai Farm Road Dalupotha, Negombo, for a playground for the youth of the area were unanimously passed.

Opposition Leader W. Nicholas Fernando (UNP), Jude Lantry Fernando, Mohamed Alaudeen, Nandana Sulochana Perera, Vincent Fernando also spoke on the motions.