

Chatswood West Ward Progress Association
MINUTES - Monthly Meeting
Thursday 16th October 2014
7:30 PM Dougherty Centre – 7 Victor Street – Chatswood

Acting Chairman's welcome: Terry Fogarty (VP & Secretary)

Attendance: 14 persons as recorded in the attendance register

Apologies: Jim McCredie, Bob Lawrence, John Clayton plus belted apologies from Clr. Saville.

Declarations of Interest: Nil

Any matters for General Business? Coal Seam Gas

Minutes of the September meeting were accepted with the correction that the MOU and Lease for Chatswood Golf Club had only in the past week been given to the Club.

Matters arising from minutes – treated below. Actions resulting from the meeting are *shown in bold italic*.

Treasurer's report: Balance at 15th October of \$6,190.23. The outstanding payment for yje last WW News advertisement now received. Three new members in the past month. Bank interest of \$5.67 credited.

Councillor's Report: Clr. Saville provided a report that was received after the meeting. *Her comments will be included in the minutes in italic*.

OPEN SPACE REPORT

Golf Club Lands: Club now has Lease and MOU. Hoping for a speedy resolution.

Tree removal: Revisions to legislation to discussed. It appears that Council's may have the opportunity to redefine affected land. Concern expressed about the ongoing loss of trees.

Hawthorne Avenue Footpath: Petition against proposal has been forwarded to Council. Awaiting Council response.

Chatswood High School Oval: Full inspection by Council.

MOTION by Clr. Saville

1. That the Officer's recommendation be adopted; 2. That the floodlights be turned off by 9:00pm each night; 3. A Management Plan be put in place to manage the users of the playing fields; 4. Investigate the option of removing the concrete gutter around the existing field; 5. After 12 months of operation consult with the local community on the operation of the playfields. **The Motion lapsed for want of a seconder.**

AMENDMENT (Passed)

That the application be approved in accordance with the Officer's recommendation, subject to the following additional conditions:

- 2.1.i. That the stormwater management system for the sports field be designed to incorporate the removal of the concrete gutter surrounding the oval.
- 34.A. A Management Plan for the use of the sports fields and car park outside of school hours (similar to that prepared for Northbridge Oval) is to be prepared

prior to release of the Occupation Certificate and implemented in associated with the use of the facilities.

Clr. Saville also expressed concern at the decision to permanently convert the school's old tennis courts to staff parking.

TRAFFIC REPORT

Western Mowbray Precinct: Consultant's Reports available for comment. Some Residents were to be letterbox dropped. It is assumed that the promised public meeting has been deferred until after comments and further investigation completed.

Wyvern/Anglo/Dulwich/View Rat run: No update at hand.;

Mowbray Rd at St Peters Green. Issues with safety islands and bus stop. Clr. Saville to investigate.

Reduce parking in units – Clr Saville is moving the following motion:

That Willoughby City Council approaches the Premier, local MPs, Leader of the Opposition, Shooters and Fishers and Greens to support the state government proposal to reduce parking requirements in multi-unit developments near transport hubs on condition that:

- A) there is substantial increase in provision of public transport across the Sydney region.
- Increased public transport would include expansion of existing transport services, routes and modes (rail, bus, tram, ferry), with longer hours of operation;
- B) provision be made in legislation for car share spaces in multi-unit developments;
- C) provision be made for plug ins for electric cars in all new multi-unit developments;
- D) adequate numbers of disabled car spaces and bikes be maintained.

The majority of those present at the meeting support improved public transport options but did not support further reduction in parking provision within multi-unit developments. It was also felt that this matter should form part of considerations of the Parking Strategy rather than a standalone motion.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Thomas St carpark site: New modifications (13,14,15) have been submitted. It is a complex build and difficult for normal person to be able to understand changes and their implications. There is a proposal for a bright sign at the top of the building facing Chatswood Oval.

654 – 666 Pacific Highway, 2A Oliver Road and 1 Freeman Road, Chatswood. The Planning Proposal involves demolition of all existing buildings and construction of a mixed use development comprising retail / office premises in the basement and ground floor and two residential towers above a podium, the northern tower being 10 storeys and the southern tower being 7 storeys.

Out-of-hours work in the CBD: "Out of hours construction work is taking place on the Hutchinson Builders high-rise site atop Chatswood Station. Yesterday (Sunday Sept 21) the operation of heavy machinery (high-rise cranes and associated works) commenced at 7am, waking and disturbing residents, and continued until (after dark) 6.30pm. This is not an unusual occurrence and follows more than a week of illegal 5.50am starts involving the operation of both heavy cranes on this site.

This site has been subject of frequent and on-going illegal hours-of-work activity over a long period. The concerns of residents living in the vicinity of the site (including those in Albert, Victor, Parkside and Johnson Streets) are seemingly ignored by Council and trampled by this developer/builder". It was noted that developers are often granted leave by Council to work outside of normal hours. However, developers should not be causing 'nuisance'. Residents may have a remedy at law to take the developer to court (however this would be expensive). Residents should continue to complain to Council when they are adversely affected by building work.

Chelsea Apartments: The external cladding of the building deteriorated after a number of years. Owners attempted to seek recourse from the original builder. This can be difficult as the builder was retained by the developer. The owners formed two groups: resident owners and investors. The builder settled with the resident owners but not the investors who took the builder to court. The judge found for the builder on the basis that the investors were intelligent people who should have understood the risk. As an aside there was a discussion about Body Corporates. It was generally agreed that medium sized apartment blocks (around 30-50 units) seem to have less problems than blocks with less than 20 units. Blocks with 100s of units pose other complexities.

GENERAL BUSINESS

New Deputy Mayor: Clr. Tony Mustaca elected for next year.

General Manager: *Clr. Saville advised that the GM had resigned.*

Interchange fit-out: A number of shops have opened. *Clr. Saville - does anyone know when Woolworths will open?*

Coal Seam Gas: A number of members had attended meetings regarding the potential problems of harvesting Coal Seam Gas. Those that had attended were very concerned.

Neighborhood Watch BBQ – Well attended

Amalgamations: There was discussion regarding the pros and cons of amalgamation. Most present saw it as probable that Willoughby would be ultimately forced to amalgamate and shared the view that it would be better for Council to engage with the issue earlier rather than later. There was discussion regarding preferred amalgamates; no of Councilors; potential cost savings and the like. (*Subsequent to the meeting, Clr. Saville advised that the Mayor had recently successfully moved a Mayor Minute that Council enter into discussion regarding amalgamation.*)

Emergency safe places: Clr Saville has asked question and received answer.

Questions

Previously the bushfire refuge for West Ward was the Chatswood High School Oval. Is it safe to have a safety zone on synthetic turf (increased heat would cause toxic emissions)? Can you please advise the location of the Bushfire Safety Zone for West Ward residents? How is that communicated to residents? Would it be possible to provide a feature article on the emergency refuges, e.g. for bushfires in Willoughby Ward News?

Answer

The following advice has been received from Council's Infrastructure Services Division: A Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP) is a place of last resort for people to shelter during a bushfire when other protection measures cannot be implemented or have failed. The NSW Rural Fire Services (RFS) developed guidelines for the identification of NSP's across the State of NSW. A NSP is an identified building or space that can provide a higher level of protection from the immediate life threatening effects of a bushfire.

Below is a list of the 'Safer Places' within Willoughby:

Facility Type Location

Gore Hill Oval Open Space Pacific Highway, St Leonards

Northbridge Plaza Car park Open Space Harden Avenue, Northbridge

Chatswood Park Open Space Orchard Road, Chatswood

Willoughby Park Open Space Warrane Road, Willoughby

Willoughby Leisure Centre Car park Open Space 2 Small Street, Willoughby

When they were first introduced by the RFS, Chatswood High School was approved as one of these locations. However, on future inspections by the RFS they deemed the school not to be suitable and relocated the Safer Place to Chatswood Park/Oval at Orchard Road Chatswood. The Neighbourhood Safer Places program at the moment does not apply to Chatswood High School and therefore the placement of synthetic turf at Chatswood High School would not have an impact on this program. Details of the above locations and other information are located on both the RFS and Council's website. These details could be made available to Ward news publications but as the RFS is responsible for the management and locations of these places it would be more appropriate to direct residents to the RFS website so that they are viewing the most up to date information.

Infrastructure Levy

There was extensive discussion of the issue of the proposed Infrastructure Levy/Rates Increase (see details below). The majority present felt that Scenario 3 could be acceptable (in that it require just over \$1.00 per week increase). Concerns were expressed about the lack of fine details of where and how future non-rate income would be achieved.

Planned rate increases

Recently you should have received a coloured 4 page brochure from Council titled 'Community Assets' containing '*important information about a proposed infrastructure levy*' An infrastructure levy is another name for a proposed rate increase.

It is common knowledge that over the past decades Councils have allowed their physical assets (buildings, roads, parks, footpaths, playgrounds and the like) to deteriorate whilst they increased the range of social services (often competing for clients against the State and Federal Government (as well as private enterprise). This situation has been exacerbated by the State Government's Rate Pegging which doubly hit Willoughby because that had traditionally low rate.

Now the rooster has come home to roost. Council is trying to rapidly address its deteriorating infrastructure. (This issue is also a driving force in the State Government's encouragement for Council's to amalgamate).

Just prior to the recent Mayoral election, the Council Officers had prepared a report on this issue. However, the Councillors deferred consideration of the report. In doing so, they directed the General Manager to investigate where internal saving could be made.

In Table 2 (p.3) **Increased efficiencies** and other income sources there is notation of a \$500,000 saving in year 1 with sequent year savings on \$1,000,000. However, there are not any details of how these savings are to be achieved. It looks like someone has picked a number out of the air and dumped it in the report. Later on, when finances become more dire and planned savings have not been achieved, we will likely be advised that this was a 'planning' figure only. We need to see the details of these proposed cost savings. (average \$1M pa)

It is planned to generate more revenue from **car parks**. That will probably mean more and higher costs to park in Chatswood. (Average \$150,000 p.a)

Advertising 'bollards' are slated to raise millions over the coming years (Average \$400,000). That sounds like a hell of a lot of advertising bollards.

It is claimed **that bus shelters** will bring in an average of \$800,000 p.a. However, this requires more explanation as Willoughby has always received revenue from bus shelter advertising. So is this truly new revenue?

Finally, the expectation is for another \$200,000 per annum from **Parking fees in the CBD**. An interesting thing about this specific proposal is that the figure is not even indexed – just a straight \$200,000 per annum.

In summary, what we have been presented in Table 2 is the classical mushroom room farming approach: *stick them in a dark space and feed them lots of*"

Levy Options

Council has prepared four different levy scenarios:

Scenario 1 is the 'crash & burn' one. Standard rate pegging but no money to fix decaying infrastructure.

Scenario 2 leaves a 20% shortfall in required funding.

Scenario 3 meets the renewal gap over the next 7 years and logically should be the one to consider if we can afford it.

Scenario 4 leaves a 5% required funding shortfall.

What would Scenario 3 entail?

Currently, the average residential rates & levies total \$1,417.50. Under Scenario 3, for next year, the average would be \$1,480.51 (**\$63.01 increase**). Both Scenarios 2 & 4 would incur an average **increase of \$67.45** next year.

Community feedback is open to 5pm on 21st October 2014

The City of Willoughby and Chatswood is a great place to live, however, like those before us, we may need to make some sacrifices to maintain our quality of life.

Correspondence OUT/IN – Nil of any significance

Meeting closed: 9:15 PM

The next meeting: Thursday 20th November 2014 at 7:30 PM – Dougherty Centre