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## **Minutes of the General Meeting Wednesday, 4 June 2008, 7.45pm**

1. Tim Dalton opened the meeting at 7.45, and welcomed all participants.
2. Apologies were received from: Zed Seselja, Dorothy and David Jones.
3. Tim said that since the last meeting on 30 April, WCCC had had some discussions with the Minister for Planning, Mr Andrew Barr, and with the ACT Land and Planning Agency (ACTPLA), and with the National Capital Authority (NCA), and as a result there had been some changes in what ACTPLA was now proposing for North Weston and the southern part of the Molonglo Valley. ACTPLA had agreed to give a presentation tonight to WCCC members about these proposed changes. Tim introduced representatives from ACTPLA: Ms Jaqui Lavis, Mr Paul Lewis, and Mr Bruce Frazer.

### **1. ACTPLA presentation on North Weston and Molonglo**

The presentation was given by Mr Paul Lewis, who said that it would be shown to the Minister afterwards and he would judge if the changes met the community's concerns.

- Hilder Street will be extended as one do three major roads into the North Weston area. It will have a roundabout at the junction with Heyson St. Gruner St will not be extended.
- The average street width in Weston is 18 metres (6m verge + 6 m road + 6 m verge).
- Around Orana School, and the Sikh and Bahai sites, the verges would be wider than that.
- ACTPLA had agreed with the Defence Department on a land swap: land around the Defence Staff College would be swapped for the parcel of land along Eucumbene Drive between Warragamba Drive and Cotter Road that is at present owned by the Commonwealth government. This would enable Defence housing to be built around the Defence Staff College.
- A new pond just west of the Defence Staff college will be created for managing storm water. This pond will be usable for recreation activities. It will be roughly the same size as Circular Quay.
- The Caretaker's Cottage will be retained for community use.
- There will be a major arterial road through the Molonglo Valley from the Cotter Road.
- Underpasses will be built big enough to accommodate horses.

- Dixon Drive will be realigned to meet Unwin Place, and a roundabout will be installed at the junction. Traffic lights would not work, given the proximity of lights at the junction of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive.
- Access from Hilder Street will relieve pressure on the Dixon Drive/Unwin Place intersection.
- At the intersection of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive a double lane into Streeton Drive will be added.
- Significant trees in the woodland garden in the CIT Arboretum would be identified for conservation.
- The present Police College site at the corner of Streeton Drive and Heyson Street is to be redeveloped into an aged care village.

## 2. Questions and comments to ACTPLA from the audience

Q. In relation to the Arboretum at the CIT horticulture college site, could ACTPLA clarify exactly what area is proposed for keeping, as it may need to include more than just the woodland garden.

Q. Will there be 4-storey buildings on Unwin Place?

A. Higher density building is best close to amenities such as shops, doctors and public transport, but is not so good in open areas.

Q. Why is residential housing proposed in the area above Orana School when other schools in Canberra are not surrounded by houses in the same way?

Tim Dalton emphasised that the WCCC has proposed that the area above Orana be kept as public open space, NOT as broadacre land.

Q. Mr Paul Khan from the Sikh community spoke about their wish to have a peaceful environment around their temple in which to hold their religious ceremonies, and their desire not to have housing too close so that their activities would not disturb residents. He expressed the hopes of the Sikh community that in Weston they would be free from the kind of discrimination that had driven them from Mawson.

Mr Khan said the Sikhs are particularly concerned about the possibility that five houses could be built above the temple site. other houses would not bother them so much.

Q. One person asked if ACTPLA had taken into account the fact that the area bounded by Cotter Road, Streeton Drive and Unwin Place had been hit by tornado-like winds in 1981 and again in 2003.

A. ACTPLA has worked with the Emergency Services Agency and a threat assessment for the Molonglo Valley and North Weston has been done. This assessment focussed more on minimising the threat from bushfires than on winds.

Q. Why is there to be another aged care facility? There are three already, and the Rivett school site is to be developed also. At the police College site, an aged care village will be too far from shops and amenities.

A. The lessee leases the site to the AFP at present, but when they move to Majura Valley, ACTPLA understands the lessee is proposing to develop an aged care home. ACTPLA will keep a watching brief, and some aspects of the development will need planning approval.

Q. What about the road system?

A. Cotter Road will have two lanes in both directions, and pull-off lanes. There will be bike lanes on both sides. The intersection at the entrance to the Defence Staff College will have

traffic signals instead of a roundabout.

Q. Why is the existing xeriscape garden to be demolished? It was funded, and is maintained, by the Horticulture Society, not by the CIT.

A. ACTPLA will need to survey the garden, and the Arboretum, and identify key elements.

Q. What is the number of people to live in this area? Where will they come from?

What is the design water provision per person (i.e., litres per head per day)?

A. The original intention was to have 33,000 dwellings, with about 75,000 people. The ACT Government has decided to defer development of Central Molonglo, so now they expect there will be about 25,000 dwellings and 55,000 people.

Houses will need to be 40% more water efficient than houses built before 2003.

Q. Houses will be dense along Cotter and Uriarra roads. What about cyclists?

A. Along Cotter Road, there will be a buffer zone that will be 80 metres wide. This will provide room for cycle paths and equestrian trails.

Q. Will the widths of roads and verges in Wright and Coombs be the same as in Gunghalin, or wider?

A. The government has decided that North Weston roads and verges will be built to a wider standard than the normal standard, but in the Molonglo suburbs, the usual standards will apply, that is, street widths would be around 17 metres in total.

Q. There will potentially be a bottle-neck at the Cotter road/Streeeton Drive intersection. What will be the impact on Eucumbene Drive?

A. Modelling shows that there will need to be augmentation of some roads. The major road will be the arterial road that connects Cotter Road to Belconnen. Uriarra Road will be a minor road. If necessary, slowing devices will be put on Eucumbene Drive.

Q. The issue of allowing residential building around the Sikh site is a question of justice for the Sikh community. The Government has changed the goalposts, and where originally the Sikhs were told there would be no residential building allowed, now it will be allowed. That is not justice. The area of contention is just a small area that looks over the Sikh site. The Bahai have offered to buy it and turn it into a garden, and that request should be acceded to.

Q. What will be the density of new housing behind the present CIT campus?

A. A standard block used to be 650 square metres. In the new development, there will be a range of block sizes, especially to allow for affordable housing. Government guidelines allow for block sizes from 250 sq. m. to 800 sq. m.

Q. What sort of amenities are being planned in Wright and Coombs? Will new residents have to use facilities in Weston Creek and Woden?

A. Initially, new residents will use services in Weston Creek and Woden, but ultimately shopping centres, etc, will be built in the new suburbs.

Q. When does the land sale process begin?

A. The government will consider the final variation of the Territory Plan and the National Capital Plan later this year. Its land-use policy could be in place by October-November. This would mean the Land Development Agency would probably be ready to sell parcels of land early in 2009.

Q. What does "broadacre" mean?

A. Broadacre means that the land could be used for community facilities (such as churches, community recreation centres, etc). Proposals would be assessed on their merits at the time. Normally there could be caretaker-type residences, depending on the land-use, to support the primary use of the land.

### **3. Discussion among Weston Creek residents, Points raised**

- Concern about water supply. ACTPLA avoided giving answers to the questions about water.
- Preservation of North Weston ridge area is focus of WCCC submission. Zoning of that land needs to be clarified. WCCC and residents want it to be zoned OPEN SPACE.
- CIT Arboretum: Will ACTPLA preserve the right parts of the CIT site, not just “significant” trees? WCCC must follow up. Need to push harder to have whole arboretum area retained.
- Molonglo proposals represent a travesty of good environmental planning. Full Environmental Impact Assessment has not been done, only a preliminary impact statement. ACTPLA has not allayed concerns about impact on Canberra as a whole, on fauna and flora, on water resources. Sustainability has not been addressed. Make Molonglo Valley a showcase for environmental “best practice” design and planning, rather than just cram in the maximum number of houses.
- Residents are concerned that what ACTPLA showed was mostly “concepts”, that did not give any indication of detailed plans. “Englobo” system could mean that developers would have free rein to plan and design layout of blocks, streets, etc. What controls would there be on developers? How will development happen once it is approved?

The meeting was closed at 10.45pm