

Your local voice



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Minutes of the WCCC General Meeting Wednesday, 26 May 2010

Parking at Coleman Court

1. Meeting opened

Chairman Tim Dalton opened the meeting at 7.35. Thirty-three (33) persons were present.

2. Apologies

Katy Gallagher, Andrew Barr, Tom Anderson, Marion Kossatz.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes as distributed were approved. (Moved: Simon Hearder; Seconded: Mal Ferguson)

4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that the current bank balance is \$7797.46. One invoice for an amount of around \$350, for distribution of flyers, has been received.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was passed (Moved: Rosemary Drabsch; Seconded John Burke).

5. Short presentation: Communities at Work

Maureen Cane, CEO of Communities at Work, spoke about a proposal to establish a new community facility in Weston Creek. She said the Tuggeranong and Weston Creek Communities at Work groups had merged successfully and were running a number of programs, including the Centre for Seniors at Weston Creek Community Centre. She said that in 2008 the organisation decided to contribute more to the social fabric of Canberra, and focused on the need for services for seniors and respite services. Communities at Work had applied to the ACT Government for a direct sale of land in Weston Creek, in order to build a community facility that would be a Centre of Excellence, to offer all-day respite services for 10-15 people at any one time, with options such as art, music, cooking being made available for participants. The facility would also have space for training in up-to-date technology, and space for community meetings – their aim is “To foster neighbourly cooperation, community well-being and community social development”.

The application was considered favourably by the ACT Government, with the suggestion that a block on Dixon Drive in Holder—the one between the veterinary clinic and the Buddhist temple—might be suitable. Part of that block has a car park and there are some services already in place.

Establishment of such a facility is a staged process, and requires community consultation. This presentation to WCCC is part of that consultation.

Q: Would the facility use the existing car park?

A: Yes.

Q: When will this happen?

A: Communities at Work could fund the first stage, so it might go ahead quite soon.

Q: Why is the facility not being set up at the former Weston School?

A: Communities at Work was offered space there but it was not suitable, because we wanted the building to deliver services.

Q: How will people access that location?

A: Communities at Work runs a community transport service with a mini-bus. There is also a public bus service, but that may not be very useful for many of the clients that are expected to use the facility.

Q: Wouldn't it be better to have a block in the Molonglo development?

A: The block in Holder has been offered, and Communities at Work thinks it is a good offer. The organisation wants to expand and provide more services, not just to re-locate. It wants a multi-purpose facility, not just for older people but for disabled people of all ages. For this reason, a purpose-built facility, not one that has to be retro-fitted, would be best.

Tim Dalton reminded WCCC members that Communities at Work had resurrected the Weston Creek Festival after the 2003 fires and had run it successfully for several years.

6. Discussion on Parking at Cooleman Court

Tim Dalton explained that the WCCC has been concerned for some time that parking at Cooleman Court has become difficult in the last two years or so and has raised the issue with the ACT Government. With infill in North Weston (more than 100 houses to be built over the next 18 months), new suburbs in Molonglo, extra building for the aged, and new affordable housing in Rivett and Chapman, the problem is likely to get worse. WCCC wants to find out what Weston Creek residents think about this issue and what improvements would they like.

Q: Parking usage at Cooleman Court has changed dramatically in the last three years. The parking area is full every day, but there seem to be too many cars for the number of people shopping in Cooleman Court. Any idea why this is so?

A: There are now two gyms, and a number of people who come to the Community Centre for various activities stay on to have coffee or do their shopping afterwards, so their cars are parked for several hours instead of just a short period.

Comment: The coffee shops are all well patronised and people tend to linger over coffee and/or lunch.

Comment: In addition, parking at Woden has become so difficult that some people prefer to shop at Cooleman Court precisely because one can park much closer to the shops.

Comment: ALDI has brought in more shoppers.

Q: What about using the space in Liardet Street better, perhaps by converting parallel parking to angle parking? An extra 47 spots could be created there, and behind the garden shop another 15 or so spots could be created.

Comment: An extra 50-60 spots in Liardet St would not make much of a difference.

A: WCCC has spoken to the Government and suggested several ideas for more parking. Roads ACT did a survey in December 2009 and by dint of including all the private parking areas (such as at the churches and the clubs) determined that there is enough parking space in Cooleman Court. ACT Roads did concede that the parking areas directly around Cooleman Court were fully utilised during the day. As a result of the survey, the Government does not accept that there is a problem at Cooleman Court.

Q: As parking becomes tighter in Civic and the Parliamentary Triangle, the Government is encouraging Park and Ride options. These, however, simply displace the parking pressure from those areas to local areas.

Q: What about multi-storey parking?

A: Mirvac has been talking with the ACT Government about this possibility for the area between Woolies and McDonalds.

Comment: Several people expressed the opinion that it would not be desirable to have multi-storey parking.

Comment: If there were to be more parking spots created on Liardet St and other areas as suggested, signage to point out where people can park would need to be installed. Easy access for trolleys, a place to put empty trolleys, and good lighting would need to be provided.

Q: What about the site on the corner of Hindmarsh Dve and Brierley Street?

A: WCCC proposed to the Government that the block be made available for a new Community Centre, but has had no response to that proposal.

Q: Is underground parking feasible?

A: It is very expensive to provide underground parking, so developers try to avoid having to do it.

Q: There is no real Master Plan for the Cooleman Court area. Some footpaths just peter out, or don't meet up with other paths.

Q: Is there any indication that Woolies or ALDI is aware of the problem and has done anything about it?

Q: Could the entrance of Brierley St on to Hindmarsh Dve be moved 50 metres so they could put in traffic lights?

Comment: Jeremy Hansen (Liberal Party MLA) said that parking is a problem at all areas in Canberra. The population is growing but the number of car parks is decreasing.

- In this region, the long-term solution is to ensure that infrastructure for Molonglo goes in early.
- Realistically, eventually there will have to be multi-storey parking.
- He is not enthusiastic about having a Park and Ride facility here, because it just ties up local parking. However, we do need better public transport.
- Residents may have to accept that if they want adequate parking for cars, they may not be able to have a new community centre as well.
- The problem needs more than one solution.

Comment: Caroline Le Couteur (Greens MLA) said the Greens have been lobbying the Government on Molonglo to get facilities put in early.

- The REDEX service from Gungahlin to Civic and Barton has been very successful. It comes every 15 minutes, so you don't have to worry about missing the bus; and it is an express service and stops only at a limited number of stops.
- We need to have a reliable, flexible bus service.
- Paths and cycle paths could be improved. We need lots of big and little improvements.

Comment: Jeremy Hansen noted that the REDEX service has created a problem for the shopping centre in Gungahlin, because bus riders park their cars at the centre. This means that the parking problem has simply been displaced from Civic. The reality is that because of the way Canberra has been built, people will use cars.

Comment: If we have multi-storey parking, it will mean pay parking. If the first two hours is free, most people would be happy.

Comment: If parking gets further squeezed at Cooleman Court, it might mean people go to the local suburban shops instead, which would be good for them.

Q: What about using the empty area near the archery field for a Park and Ride facility?

Comment: Cooleman Court has become a leisure centre as well as a centre for shopping.

Probably about 100 people each morning do some kind of activity in the Community Centre hall, and then go for coffee and/or lunch. WCCC should push for the new Community Centre as

proposed with its own parking.

Comment: The new police station in Woden has no parking available. What little is provided is about 100 metres from the police station and far from the front door.

Closing the discussion, Tim Dalton said WCCC would do a survey to ask the community about parking and draw some attention to the issue. If we know what residents want, it might be possible to get some improvement.

7. General Business

1. Working Group on the Community Gardens: WCCC will organise another walk through the Gardens. Lions and Rotary have offered to help with work in the Gardens.

2. Weston Creek Community Festival: Communities at Work will not organise a festival this year. WCCC might try to organise an Autumn Festival in the new Community Gardens in 2011. WCCC will need to set up a Working Group to take charge of that. If anyone is interested to join, please let us know.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

NEXT MEETING
Wednesday, 30 June 2010, at 7.30pm