

Your local voice



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Minutes of the WCCC General Meeting Wednesday, 24 November 2010

1. Meeting opened

WCCC Deputy Chair Tom Anderson opened the meeting at 7.40pm and welcomed Dr Jenny Stewart, President Woden Valley Community Council.

2. Apologies

Christine Wilson, Lance Williamson, Maisie Griffith, Caroline Le Couteur, Jeremy Hanson.

3. Minutes of the previous public meeting on 27 October 2010 were accepted as circulated (moved M Ferguson/H Hughes).

4. Presentation

- Dr Stewart then addressed the meeting and made the following points:
- Recent years have been challenging for all community councils.
- Woden Valley has been particularly affected by many changes.
- Urban infill has been evident in several areas, eg Chifley, where multi-unit developments have been established on blocks formerly occupied by 2 or 3 houses. A Government Reference Group has been established to review such developments.
- Dr Stewart is critical of high rise buildings in Woden Town Centre, especially the MLC Tower (Lovatt Tower) Canberra's tallest building, which causes wind tunnel effects in the immediate vicinity.
- The new Sky Plaza has also been the subject of considerable criticism, although comment by residents has been generally favourable.
- Another development that has drawn criticism is the low level medium density replacement of Burnie Court. There is apparently a 9 storey block still to come in this development.
- Of more concern, is the proposed developments on the eastern side of Callam Street, comprising:
 - Woden Green (35 storeys)
 - Three towers (up to 20 storeys)
 - Woden Green Southern Tower (20 storeys)
- Dr Stewart advised that some parking (lower levels of towers) was proposed and some commercial occupancy would accompany the residential units.
- Woden Valley Community Council is particularly concerned about the social implications of these massive developments.
- Dr Stewart expressed concern about the challenges facing the WVCC, particularly the

amount of effort required to respond meaningfully to development applications, and how to satisfactorily ascertain the view of the general public to such developments.

In the general discussion that followed, it was agreed that more extensive use of websites should lead to a better-informed public. The Deputy Chair suggested that the WCCC Webmaster may be able to assist the WVCC in this endeavour.

It was pointed out that the new residential accommodation was mainly intended for low to middle income residents.

Dr Stewart reported that there are currently NO height limits on buildings in Woden.

It was also noted that clearer and well publicised planning guidelines would make the task facing community councils easier.

In responding to a comment from the audience, Dr Stewart said that consultation was frequently left to developers, but principals were often restricted by their lawyers in what they should reveal.

Dr Stewart said that 30% - 40% of residents of the new towers were not expected to use cars for travel to work. She also mentioned that the Chief Architect for the Woden Green Development will be the WVCC Guest Speaker at their meeting next meeting on Wednesday 1 December at the Hellenic Club – attendance was welcome.

5. General Business

The Deputy Chairman reported that he had attended the joint meeting of community councils recently. The Chief Minister addressed the meeting, Opposition Leader, Zed Seselza spoke at the working lunch and Greens Member, Caroline De Couteur made some concluding remarks. The meeting was considered a success and it was agreed that further combined meetings would be held 3 times a year.

The Deputy Chair also drew the meeting's attention to an article in the *Southside Chronicle* of 23 November regarding the demand for a master plan for the Weston Creek Group Area by the Liberal Member for Molongo, Jeremy Hanson, strongly supported by Deputy Chair WCCC.

The lack of government action in Weston Creek for the past 20 or 30 years was also noted. In particular, a swimming pool for the young and old was a requirement, with 10 schools in the area and an increasing number of older people in the Weston Creek area.

Deputy Chair, advised that formal advice of the acceptance of "Fetherston Gardens" as the official name for the CIT Arboretum had yet to be received (although approval was expected).. Heritage listing of the gardens had also been recommended. There will be another working bee at the gardens on Sunday 28 November.

The meeting closed at 8:45pm.

NEXT MEETING

March 2011 (advice on website)