

Your local voice



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Minutes of the WCCC General Meeting Wednesday, 27 July 2011

1. Meeting opened

Acting Chair Tom Anderson opened the meeting at 7.36pm.

About twenty persons were present.

Tom welcomed the guest speaker, Bruce Frazer, from ACT Government's Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate (formerly ACTPLA).

2. Apologies

Jeremy Hansen, Shane Rattenbury, Simon Corbell, Rosemary Jurd, Simon Hearder, Tim Dalton, Lance Williamson, Caroline Le Couteur, Maisie Griffiths, Mal Ferguson

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous public meeting (June 2011) were accepted as circulated. (Moved: Trevor Wilson; Seconded: Pat McGinn)

4. Treasurer's Report

The Acting Treasurer reported that WCCC has \$8809.16 in the bank, and has commitments amounting to \$3250. The Treasurer's report was accepted. (Moved: Chris Wilson; Seconded: Heather Hughes)

5. Presentation on Draft Variation 306 (DV306)

Bruce Frazer, from the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate (formerly ACTPLA), said that DV306 will replace DV301 and DV303, which were presented in 2010 but were strongly criticised and have been withdrawn. Proposed changes under DV306 that will affect Weston Creek most are those that relate to residential zones RZ1 (ordinary residential zone) and RZ2 (areas close to shops and transport), and it is hoped the changes will ease tensions about development in these zones.

The text of DV306 is available on ESDD's website. The document is over 200 pages long, but 10 Fact Sheets that explain the changes are also available.

DV301 dealt with green-fields subdivision, while DV303 dealt with residential components. The government received 127 submissions on these two Draft Variations, of which 97 related to DV303 and 30 to DV301.

DV 306 was release early in June 2011, and incorporates five codes and other variations. In particular, it provides for better solar orientation and solar access for blocks; it provides for secondary residences on blocks in RZ1 zones; and revises residential zone objectives.

Solar orientation. The key principles are that in new estates there will be a bias against blocks that are narrow, oriented at 45 degrees to north-south, and/or slope to the south.

It is usually easy to orientate a house toward the sun on bigger blocks, but for small blocks (e.g., around 250sq. metres) where there is little choice for where to put the house, solar orientation is very important. A house may not over-shadow its neighbours by more than the shadow cast by a fence on the boundary that is 1.8 m high.

Q: What about tall trees or 'spite' hedges (say, those 8 to 10 metres tall)?

A: Under the Territory Plan, the height of hedges is not subject to planning control. This is sometimes a vexed question, but it is not easy to answer.

Q: What about two-storey buildings?

A: If the design of the block is OK, two storeys should not be a problem.

Secondary residences. A secondary residence, such as a granny flat or a student apartment, may now be built on a residential block, subject to certain conditions.

- The secondary residence can be either attached to the original dwelling or separate.
- A secondary residence can only be built on a block that is greater than 500 sq. metres.
- Floor area must be between 40 and 75 sq. metres.
- Total maximum plot ratio is 50 percent.
- It must be adaptable.
- No restriction on occupants.
- Cannot be sub-divided.

Q: Do such residences have to conform to the housing code?

A: Yes.

What's New?

- Multi-unit redevelopment in RZ2
- New policies for integrated housing development
- New dwelling replacement policy in established areas
- Refinements to building height limits in RZ 3-5
- Re-formatted estate development code, to differentiate more clearly between planning matters and agency endorsements.

Changes

- Density control - there must be a certain site area per dwelling. Before, on a block of 1300 sq. metres there could be three or more dwellings. Now there is a standard 50 percent plot ratio - that is, if a block is 1400 sq. metres, the maximum gross floor area of a dwelling is 700 sq. metres.

Size of block (sq.m.)	No. of residences
< 700	1 *not incl. secondary residence, but not less than 250 sq.m. for each dwelling
700 - 1050	2
1050 - 1400	3
1400 - 1750	4
1750 - 2100	5
2100 - 2350	6
over 2350	6 + 1 for every 250 sq.m. over 1350 sq.m. site area

- No building can contain more than four dwellings.
- Buildings with two or more dwellings must be separated by 4 metres from other buildings on the same site.
- Dwellings adjacent to the street must address the street.
- Consolidation must have continuous street frontage.
- There must only be four parking spaces in one block.

There is no change to controls on building heights for RZ1 and RZ2.

For **integrated housing**, the building design will be approved at the subdivision stage (as for terrace houses).

Dwelling replacement policy for RZ 2-5. A multi-unit development must contain as many three-or-more-bedroom dwellings as the number of blocks consolidated. This policy seeks to retain accommodation suitable for families with children in redevelopment areas.

The deadline for public comments is 2 August 2011, but this may be extended to 9 September 2011.

Q: There was a letter in the *Canberra Times* expressing concern about changes leading to a loss of trees, such as reduction of the width of roads and verges. Landscape architects are concerned about the urban forest.

A: TAMS and the Government are looking at standards, such as having deciduous trees on one side of a street and evergreens on the other, to allow for sunlight to reach houses in the winter but shade them in the summer. The ACTPLA code reproduces TAMS standards.

Q: If a secondary residence were to be built on a large block in RZ2 for renting out, could the Government control it?

A: Probably not. The provisions could be exploited in such a way, but that is not a reason for not proceeding with these changes.

Q: On smaller blocks, especially in integrated developments, are services going to be underground?

A: Yes, services will be underground. There will be rear lanes, but services cannot be in those lanes.

Q: In some of those dwelling, residents can't get broadband because TransACT would not dig up the ground.

Q: Integrated housing is not good for the elderly or families. For example, they need lifts for dwellings not on the ground floor.

A: Work is being done in relation to this issue. For example, multi-storey units must have a bedroom on the ground floor. Lifts are expensive, but in apartment dwelling, lifts are efficient. This type of development is popular, and we need to have a diverse range of dwellings to suit different people. For some, this kind of dwelling can get them into the market until they move on.

A WCCC member mentioned that at aged persons accommodation behind the Hughes shops, there are ramps up to the first level.

Q: Has ACTPLA considered looking a mix of housing? Please don't leave all decisions in the hands of developers.

A: In Molonglo, 50 percent of blocks have to be greater than 500 sq. metres, and only 20 percent can be less than 250 sq. metres. Where there are more than 40 dwellings in a complex, then the developer must show that there is diversity in dwelling size in that complex.

Q: What stage is Molonglo at?

A; Blocks have been sold in Wright, while blocks in Coombs will soon be coming available. Development of blocks in the Group Centre will follow after.

Q: What is the difference between a secondary residence and dual occupancy?

A: One difference would be the cost for a lease change. Mr Frazer said he did not know whether a secondary residence would attract a change of lease fee, but these days dual occupancy (with separate title) has become very difficult.

Q: Would it be possible for ACT residents to get earlier notice of development applications?

A: ACTPLA encourages developers to consult with neighbours before putting in a development application, not after. At present there is no requirement for developers to consult early.

After the presentation, there was a short break for tea and coffee.

6. General Business

1. Wires Alert project. A member asked what happened about the pilot Wires Alert project. Tom Anderson replied that a fault had been found in the system, so the trial has been delayed. The group handling the trial will let WCCC know when the trial is to be done. A copy of the correspondence will be put on the WCCC website.

2. Fetherston Gardens

- The Islamic School is erecting a fence around the school property. The boundaries between the Gardens and the School had been agreed, but the fence seems to go beyond those boundaries in some places.
- Corrective Services brings groups regularly to work at the Gardens and that has helped with some of the big tasks that are beyond the volunteer group.
- There will be a public consultation on Wednesday, 3 August, from 6 to 8pm on plans for the Gardens.
- next Working Bee will be on Sunday, 31 July at the Gardens, from 10am.

3. Trees at Cooleman Court. Trees in the parking areas at Cooleman Court have been marked for replacement where necessary. However, replacement work has not yet been done.

4. Shirley Gourgaud, Chair of Belconnen Community Council, gave a brief report about community issues in Belconnen. A big issue is the extension of ACT residential building into NSW from West Belconnen. Another issue is the re-opening of Ginninderra Falls to the public, after the ACT Government reached agreement with the owner of the land where the Falls are located. the Falls may become a national park. The Council is also concerned about some of the changes made by Westfield at Belconnen Mall that have fallen short of what is needed and what was promised, such as roofing over the area between the Mall and the bus shelter. In addition, under the Belconnen Master Plan put forward by the Government, several large buildings are planned. Belconnen has a new Arts Centre, and former Chief Minister Jon Stanhope has agreed to be patron.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

NEXT MEETING

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, 31 August 2011, at 7.30pm