

Your local voice



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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Wednesday, 29 August 2012

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7.35pm by Chair Tom Anderson, who welcomed members and guests. Approximately twenty-five persons attended.

2. Presentation by Petra Oswald and Katharine Campbell (Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate) on the **Draft Weston Group Centre Master Plan**

Petra outlined previous stages in the development of the Master Plan, including the release of a Preliminary Plan and a Report covering the input from Weston Creek residents and other stakeholders. She noted several matters that had become clear during the consultation process and were included in the Report:

- The community is very active
- Facilities and services need to be updated
- Service delivery is a problem
- Residents have expressed the wish to have a swimming pool and a library. Such details, however, will not be decided by the planners at this stage; an inter-agency group will decide details later.

[Kath Campbell commented that the Draft Master Plan is a high-level, strategic plan, which will set guidelines for the character of the Group Centre and what can be included in a precinct, including matters such as set-backs, zones, and number of square metres in a building. These guidelines will influence what sort of buildings can be constructed at a later stage.]

- There is a lack of meeting space, both indoor and outdoor
- Co-location of the community centre with the commercial centre
- Concern about the impact of Molonglo, particularly in terms of parking and traffic management
- Disconnect between the northern area of the Group Centre, where the former primary school is located, and the commercial centre at Cooleman Court.

Kath Campbell emphasised several matters:

- The Master Plan needs to address community concerns, but also has to implement ACT Government policies
- The demographic of the population in Weston Creek is changing, and the proportion of older residents is growing
- Government policy is to provide more housing choice and greater housing diversity
- There is a need to improve the public realm in the Group Centre

- Sustainability remains a Government priority.

Kath said principles on which the Master Plan is based include: Amenity; Accessibility (also referred to as “Legibility”); Diversity and Community; Sustainability; Prosperity and Resilience.

Urban design principles include:

- Enhance the public realm, and the character of the streets and landscape
- Improve linkages and connectivity through the Centre
- Enhance the urban form and character

In terms of action, the Draft Master Plan proposes that Brierley Street would be made more people-friendly; bus stops would be moved to Parkinson St; and the government would identify opportunities for partnerships between community, private and government sectors.

Mirvac has indicated its interest in extending the commercial centre. It is proposed that the present Community Centre will be relocated to where the Independent Living Centre now is, and Mirvac will build an extension of the present commercial centre on the site where the present Community Centre now is.

It is proposed that a new 4-storey building (of roughly 4000 sq. metres) be constructed where the Independent Living Centre now is, to house both health and community facilities. A feasibility study will be done in parallel with the Master Plan. One problem with Weston Group Centre is that there is not enough space for everything that needs to be there. This is why a 4-storey building is being proposed, although no other community centres are 4 storeys.

- There will be community space in front of the new community centre, for facilities such as a coffee shop, children’s playground, etc. The new centre might have doctors or other health professionals, but that is not decided yet
- The East-West corridor will be improved
- One option could be to pedestrianise Brierley St or make it a shared zone
- Another option could be to close access to Trenerry Place from Brierley St
- Moving the bus stops to Parkinson St will mean that later on bus services can be improved. Parkinson St may be widened later on to accommodate buses.
- Parking: There will be space for 250 cars underneath the new commercial building, while under the new health/community building there will be 120 spaces. The general guideline for parking to floor space ratio for supermarkets is 5 spaces per 100sq.m. floor space, and for community buildings it is 3 spaces per 100sq.m.
- In 10-20 years, it is proposed there will be mixed commercial/residential buildings on what is now the northern (Woollies) car park.

Comments and questions from the audience

1. Brierley St needs much more careful thought. It is a wind-swept area at present, and it would be difficult to create a “vibrant” cafe/coffee shop area without measures to reduce the “wind tunnel” effect. Furthermore, the street is already quite narrow but carries a lot of traffic, especially with the cars that have to wait to enter the petrol station. It is not enough for arm-chair bureaucratic planners to just look at the map and prescribe a range of standard “vibrancy-producing” measures for the street.

2. It is already difficult for commercial vehicles, caravans or cars with trailers to go through Brierley St or enter the petrol station, while access to Trenerry Court for such vehicles is well nigh impossible.

3. The present bus service is poor. Weston Group Centre is the only group centre in Canberra with no direct service to Civic. If bus services are not improved, people will continue not to use them.

4. **Q:** Will there be a pedestrian crossing installed in Parkinson St to allow bus passengers to cross the road safely? **A:** Yes.

5. We need a footbridge across the creek by the Presbyterian Church, because the present path floods when it rains.

6. **Q:** In summary, do the proposals embodied in this Draft Master Plan mean that because of the restrictions of the site, more parking can only be provided if there is an increase in the height of buildings? **A:** Yes. If a developer builds on a site that is currently a car park, the developer must replace all the parking spaces, plus include more spaces for building residents.

7. **Q:** What is going to happen with the block on the corner of Brierley St and Hindmarsh Drive? **A:** It is proposed that the block will be zoned for community use.

ESDD is trying to find another site for a petrol station.

Petra explained that the Weston Master Plan is being developed with consideration of the development in Molonglo. The suburb of Wright will have local shops but no supermarket. Coombs will have a local centre with a supermarket. The Molonglo Group Centre will have three supermarkets, but not until 7 to 10 years from now. The Government envisages that Molonglo residents will use the facilities at Cooleman Court for up to 10 years from now, and that use will be particularly heavy in the period 5 to 10 years from now. After that, usage by Molonglo residents will fall off.

What now?

- ESDD will do more discussion of transport issues.
- A Cost Plan will be developed.
- A new Draft Master Plan will be released early in 2013, and there will be further consultations, with a report containing more detail.
- ESDD is trying to get a Draft Precinct Plan done as well in 2013, and will do feasibility studies for buildings such as the new community/health centre.
- The timing of the Mirvac development and construction of the new community centre will be discussed at the next step. It is a complex process, and the Stakeholders Group will be reconvened to discuss details.
- ESDD is investigating private means of getting a swimming pool in Weston Creek.
- With regards to a library, there may be a Reading Room in the new community centre.

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

After the break, the Annual General Meeting was opened.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Noel Tregonning and Simon Hearder.

Minutes

Copies of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 31 August 2011, were provided to all present at the meeting, and have also been up on the WCCC website since November 2010. A motion to accept the minutes was put to the meeting.

Motion: That the minutes of the 2011 Annual General Meeting be accepted as presented.

(Moved: Pat McGinn; Seconded: Barry Sumner) Motion was passed.

Chairman's Report

Chair Tom Anderson read the Chairman's Report. The report is attached.

Highlights of the WCCC activities this past year include:

1. The starting of the draft Master Plan process for the Weston Group Complex
2. Funding from the ACT Government to enable Weston Creek to host a Festival
3. The granting by the ACT Government of \$500,000 for the development of the Fetherston Gardens
4. A survey of Weston Creek residents on matters of importance to them
5. A series of presentations to WCCC monthly Public Meetings
6. WCCC made a number of submissions to various government bodies, and WCCC representatives appeared at several hearings of the Legislative Assembly
7. WCCC represented the Weston Creek community at numerous Meetings, Committees and Working Parties during the past year, including:
 - Meetings with the Chief Minister
 - Meetings of the Combined Community Councils
 - Consultation on the ACT Strategic Cycle Plan
 - ACTPLA Planning and Development Forum
 - Molonglo Valley Stage 2-Community and Industry Reference Group and other Workshops
 - Stakeholder Reference Group meeting on the Weston Group Centre master plan

Motion: That the Chairman's Report be accepted. (Moved: Chris Wilson; Seconded: Mal Ferguson) Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report for the Financial Year 2011–2012 was read by Chair Tom Anderson, as the Treasurer was absent. The report, which was audited by GLR Accountants, Weston, is attached.

Motion: That the Treasurer's Report be accepted as read. (Moved: Chris Wilson; Seconded Mal Ferguson) Motion passed.

Election of New Committee

John Burke took the chair of the meeting and declared all committee positions vacant.

Seven nominations had been received:

- Chair: Tom Anderson
- Deputy Chair: Pat McGinn
- Secretary: Christine Wilson
- Treasurer: Simon Header
- Committee members: Mal Ferguson, Max Kwiatkowski, Jenny Adams

As these were the only nominations, all candidates were declared elected.

John Burke then handed the chair of the meeting back to Tom Anderson.

General Business

Petrol station: There was some discussion about the petrol station, which is the only one left in Weston Creek. It is a crucial matter in the whole Master Plan, and it was agreed that what has been proposed so far for the Master Plan does not seem to tackle the problems sufficiently.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm, and the chairman thanked all participants for attending and for their input.