

Your local voice



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Minutes of General Meeting Wednesday, 28 November 2012

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7.35pm by Chair Tom Anderson. Tom welcomed members and guests, including John Dietz, Kate Swift, John Tait, Bec Lollback and Tom Cummins, representing Defence Housing Australia (DHA), and Tim Tait, Kathryn Wilson and Silvie Pappas from BUPA.

Tom congratulated the candidates who were successful in the recent elections for the ACT Legislative Assembly; Giulia Jones (Liberal Party) was the only new MLA for Molonglo electorate.

Tom also thanked former Greens MLA Caroline Le Couteur for her work on behalf of Molonglo residents over the last four years, and especially for her regular attendance at WCCC meetings and her interest in Weston Creek issues.

Approximately sixty persons attended the meeting.

2. Presentation: DHA development in North Weston

Kate Swift, National Manager Marketing Communication for DHA introduced Bec Lollback of consultants Sweett Australia, who spoke about the construction phase of the new development.

- In 2013, roads and surfaces infrastructure will be constructed, and in 2014, dwellings will be built.
- DHA will take 50 dwellings, and the rest will be sold to private buyers.
- Tenders for the infrastructure work are being put out now.
- A management plan for dealing with noise, dust and other similar matters associated with this sort of development will be drawn up, also a traffic management plan.
- Notice-boards with contact details for DHA, the project manager and contractors will be erected on site, for the information of anyone wanting to make a complaint or report a problem.

John Tait, a local planner, architect and urban designer, spoke about the site and what is planned. He said that part of the site is zoned RZ1 (for residential building) and part is RZ3 (which allows multi-storey buildings up to 3 storeys). In this site, multi-storey buildings will be limited to 2 storeys.

- The main entry to the site will be at the junction of Hilder St and Heysen St. There will be another entry from Unwin Place. DHA aims to discourage traffic from using the estate as a 'rat run' to go between Heysen St and John Gorton Drive. There will be a major raised

pedestrian crossing, to discourage speeding, and the layout of roads within the estate will mean there is no direct route through from one side to the other.

- The DHA dwellings will be high-quality buildings, with 3 or 4 bedrooms. In the RZ3 zone, the dwellings will probably be townhouse style, because apartments are not attractive to developers.
- A path that will be 2.5 metres will connect north and south sides of the estate, and will have two wetlands meadows alongside. These meadows will be very well landscaped, using in particular sedges and rushes), and at some point the path will take the form of an elevated board-walk. It will give access to Fetherston Gardens. There will be a 15-space carpark for visitors to the Gardens.
- Dwellings will be designed to give good solar access for each to the north.
- Medium-density housing will be located at the southern end of the estate, which will be closer to Cooleman Court and to buses on Heysen St.
- The linear park along the Tuggeranong Parkway will be maintained, consolidated and stabilised. New markers will be placed along the trail to make it easy for walkers or riders to know where they are and where the paths lead. More trees will be planted. The linear park will be connected to Fetherston Gardens by a new road with footpaths. The only trees to be removed will be trees that are of poor quality or in bad shape. DHA will also do more under-planting along the interface.
- The level of water in the wetlands area will rise and fall depending on rainfall, and on water use within the estate.
- It has been estimated that Fetherston Gardens will need roughly 1 million litres of water per year. DHA will provide one underground tank; Fetherston Gardens will have to supply an irrigation pump.
- There will be provision for an emergency exit for the Islamic School. There will also be maintenance access provided for Fetherston Gardens.
- Access for disabled people will be provided.

Tom Cummins, project manager for the development, and other DHA representatives answered questions.

Q: Will DHA develop Unwin St down to Streeton Dve?

A: No, but will coordinate with the ACT government works.

Q: Will Unwin Pl be wide enough for large, interstate coaches?

A: Yes, it will be designed for buses, and there will be a bus turning-circle.

Q: Does that mean that the equestrian trail (which runs through the linear park above the DHA estate) will have to go through a bus turning-circle in order to go down Unwin Pl?

A: The horse trail will connect on to a dirt area or verge, not on to the road.

Q: What about the ponds and children? Will there be safety measures to prevent children getting into danger near or at the ponds?

Also, there is real potential for a 'rat run' to develop, as people will find it attractive to try to miss the traffic lights on Streeton Drive and John Gorton Drive.

A: DHA will try to make it difficult for a rat run to develop, with speed humps and no straight access through the estate.

Q: What will be the dimension or size of the access to the medium-density area?

A: The main entry will have a central median, with verges on each side planted with oaks. It will be an attractive landscaped area, with no big sign-board. The three blocks of medium-density housing will have a maximum of 12, 14 and 6 units each.

Q: What is the width of the interface with Heysen St?

A: The width will be between 54 and 60 metres, but the houses will be set back 6 metres as well.

Q: What about in the middle of the development?

A: The width will be about 45 metres, but is urban open space.

Q: The house at 62 Heysen St will be overlooked, which is very distressing to the owners. The owners have tried to ask about this issue at a previous consultation, but were not satisfied that their concerns were going to be considered. They would like to have some tree-plantings to give them more privacy that present plans appear to give them.

A: There will be trees planted along the verge of Heysen St, particularly of eucalypts, and there will be understory planting.

Q: As the main entry will open on to Hilder St, does that mean that Hilder St will become a main route to Cooleman Court?

A: Yes, Hilder St will have more traffic.

Q: In 2003, a plantation of poplars and pinoaks at the bottom of Hilder St stopped the fire from going further up Hilder St. If you plant eucalypts, that will make the whole area more vulnerable to bushfires.

A: DHA has included bushfire considerations in its planning, and has had expert advice.

Q: It looks like access to Tuggeranong Parkway from the estate by people on foot will be easy, because there is no natural barrier to prevent this. Will there be some measure to prevent children from getting on to the Parkway?

A: It is a possibility that children could stray on to the parkway, but it would be very expensive to fence the area in order to stop access altogether.

Q: What will be the dimensions of the roundabout (at the junction of Hilder and Heysen Streets)

A: At a guess it might be around 50 metres. It will be single lane.

Q: Who will design it?

A: AECOM will design it, DHA will build it.

Q: What parking will be provided for residents? How wide are the streets?

A: There will be 2 parking spaces for each residential block. The roads are wide enough, but generally there will be indent parking/ The carriage-way will be 7 metres wide, and in addition indented parking spaces will be 2.8 metres deep.

Q: What is the average size of blocks? Size of dwellings? Will there be a variety in design, so not all dwellings look exactly the same? Will blocks for public sale be scattered through out the site, or will all the DHA dwellings be in one area, and all blocks for private sale be in a separate area?

A: Average block size will be 450 square metres.

- The size of dwellings will be proportionate, and not too huge for the blocks. Three bedrooms will be the standard. DHA wants a high standard for this estate, and has applied additional requirements, such as for the amount of open space, and the amount of light into each rooms. Details of these requirements can be found on the DHA website.
- With regard to uniformity of appearance, DHA aims not to have every house looking the same, because it devalues the final product. The minimum set-back on side boundaries will be 1.5 metres.
- It has not yet been decided if private dwellings will be scattered through the site. That will be decided in 2014.
- In all, there will be 75 houses, of which DHA will have 50.

Q: Who owns the land?

A: DHA holds the lease from the ACT Government.

Q: The three blocks for commercial development will have the biggest impact on Weston Creek. What will be the requirements for those three blocks?

A: There is no requirement for affordable housing on this estate. DHA will do all the civil works and infrastructure. Then those three blocks will be sold. The only requirement on the developer is the limit that the blocks must only be 2-storey. The developer will not want to build low-quality housing.

DHA will be active in the estate for up to twenty years, and will be a major stakeholder in what happens at the site, even after the sale of the multi-storey blocks.

Q: To clarify, that means that once those three blocks have been sold, DHA will have not control over what is built?

A: Yes, that is so. However, DHA does not expect that any developer will put up poor-quality housing. The developer will have to submit a Development Application, and that will have to show there has been community consultation.

Q: Are road-works specified in the DA for the site?

A: Yes. No internal roads will be done by DHA, only the outer roads. The blocks marked with yellow (on the diagram) will be sold as grassed lots.

Q: Can DHA impose a condition on the developer to come back and consult with the community? WCCC would ask DHA to do that.

A: DHA cannot impose any legal requirement like that on a developer. The maximum yield for the multi-storey blocks is 47 dwellings. The design maximum for the whole site is 120 lots; of these, DHA will have 73, leaving 47 for developers.

Q: Will DHA fence the site, the whole site? Will that cut the equestrian trail? At present, the only access for horse riders is this way, while the Cotter Road is being done. If a fence were to cut the equestrian trail, it would cut the Bicentennial National Trail.

A: We will have to take that on notice.

Q: What about the kangaroos?

A: The ACT Government has responsibility for kangaroo control. DHA has no control in the situation.

Q: Is there other parking for Fetherston Gardens?

A: There will be the carpark mentioned before, with 15 dedicated spaces. In addition there will be some on-road parking. Each residential block will have 2 parking spaces.

A: There will be several new entrances for the Gardens eventually, and there will be new parking on the western side of the Gardens, near where the present entrance to the Islamic School is located.

Q: Will houses be sold off the plan?

A: Yes.

A short break followed.

After the break, representatives of BUPA gave a short presentation about a new residential aged care facility that is to be built in Stirling, between Stirling College and the Labor Club.

Tim Tait said that the facility will be for the care of the frail aged and people with dementia, and will offer respite care and day care for such people as well. He emphasised that this will not be a place for retirement living.

- BUPA has bought the site and is about to lodge a Development Application.
- The facility will employ local workers.
- There will be two buildings, placed at the back of the site. The buildings will be 2-storey and will have 144 beds. All rooms are single, with ensuite bathroom. The buildings will be surrounded by gardens, and as many trees as possible will be retained. It is planned to be a low-impact development.
- Access will be from Fremantle Drive.
- Cost will be approximately \$25 million, and the facility will have roughly 140 staff, with 3 shifts.
- BUPA has about 50 homes altogether in Australia, and there is one in Aranda.
- Many of the homes have their own bus for outings.

Q: How do you get in to the home?

A: Aged care is funded by the Federal Government, and each person needs to be referred by a doctor.

Q: What is the timing?

A: Construction will start in the first quarter of 2013 and is expected to finish in the third quarter of 2014. Each of the two buildings will be more or less the same. There will be care units of 36 beds, but the dementia unit will have 18 beds. Each care unit is self-contained, with its own sitting rooms, dining room, courtyard, etc.

Q: Will there be development in future in the open spaces at the front of the site?

A: Yes.

Q: Stirling College uses the site at present for parking. This may be a problem in the future.

A: Residents are not expected to need parking space. There will be 52 parking spaces, some of which will be used by staff. The biggest shift is the morning shift, which will be 33 people. Most visitors come in the afternoon, but there are not usually as many as 30 visitors.

Q: What about frail aged coupled who want to share a room?

A: This is always a challenge. Sometimes there are adjoining rooms with a connecting door. There are not many couples in this category, and if necessary, a door can be put in retrospectively.

Q: Where are the kitchen and laundry, etc?

A: Each care unit has its own dining room, which will be enough for all residents in the unit. There are spaces for all residents to attend functions together, such as Christmas.

Q: Will residents have access to open spaces?

A; there are open courtyards, as well as sitting areas outside. Every bedroom has an aspect to some bit of landscaping, and some rooms have their own terrace.

Q: Is there a fence?

A: There will be palisade fencing 2100mm high, like pool fencing. It will not be a solid fence, and will allow residents to look through to scenery outside the fence.

Q: Will the home be pet-friendly?

A: Yes, depending on the manager.

The business meeting began at 9.30pm.

General Business

1. Tom Anderson reported on his meeting this afternoon with Tony Gill, Roads ACT.
 - Cooleman Court parking areas will be resurfaced next year, probably in March 2013.
 - The options for extra parking spaces (as promised in the Government's election campaign) will be in Dillon Place, beside the tennis courts (probably for all-day parking), and on the east side of Liardet St, where nose-in parking spaces (instead of parallel parking) would be created. Roads ACT has also looked at areas of vacant land.
 - Tony Gill will come to talk to WCCC early in 2013.
 - Roads ACT needs to talk to Mirvac about shorter-term parking in the Cooleman Court parking areas.
 - There is a proposal for ParkNRide on the Cotter Road, near the Defence Staff College.
 - Works on the Cotter road should be finished in December 2012. however, then Roads ACT will do the Streeton Dve/Cotter Rd junction, and also the re-alignment of Dixon Dve with Unwin Place.
 - In 2014, the Cotter Rd from Tuggeranong Parkway to Yarralumla Creek will be done.
 - There is a community consultation to be held on Thursday, 6 December, about traffic on Streeton Drive between Hindmarsh Drive and Namatjira Drive.

- Roads ACT will talk to the owner of the petrol station at Weston to see what can be done to reduce the line-up of cars on Brierley St.
- 2. Tom attended the consultation on the new design for Chapman shops that was held last Saturday.
- 3. One member asked if parking inspectors patrolled the Cooleman Court parking areas. Several WCCC members told him that inspectors were there quite regularly.

The meeting closed at 9.45.