

Your local voice



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Minutes of General Meeting Wednesday, 24 September 2014

Opening of Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7.32pm. The Chair welcomed members and guests including Kimberley Granger from the Chronicle.

Apologies: Gai Brodtmann, John Milne, Bob Sutherland, Shelby Schofield,

Approximately 20 people attended the meeting.

PRESENTATION

BUSINESS MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting of 27 August 2014

Motion: That the Minutes of the previous meeting be approved as circulated.

Moved: Chris Wilson Seconded: Rosemary Drabsch Motion carried.

Business arising from the minutes of the meeting of 27 August 2014

- Nil

Treasurer's Report

- \$7033.98

Motion: That the Treasurer's report be approved.

Moved: Simon Hearder Seconded: Chris Wilson Motion Carried

General Business

ACT Budget Submission

The WCCC made a submission covering the following:

- A new Community Centre
- Improved parking

- A combined Health Centre (this was also raised by Tom Anderson and Pat McGinn with Gai Brodtmann)
- Collection of unwanted goods on a six-monthly basis
- Fetherston Gardens – a shed, toilets, display centre
- Weston Ponds – a proper path, barbecues and picnic areas

Light Rail

The WCCC would like to know if the Weston Creek community was in favour of Light Rail or not.

Comments included:

- A survey was published in the Canberra Times which indicated 52% of the population was in favour, but the question was whether people were in favour if the network spread across the whole City.
- There has been no addressing of the sustainability issue – the technology has already been overtaken. Mr Rattenbury should be asked why a fleet of electric buses would not be better.
- Current public transport is under utilised so why would light rail be any different
- How many people will be travelling from Northbourne Ave to Gungahlin outside of peak hour?

Chapman Shops

Jeremy Hanson and Guilia Jones will be at the Chapman shops on Friday 26 September 3.00-4.00pm if people would like to talk to them.

Tenders

The following tenders have been advertised:

- Additional parking at Cooleman Court
- Lights onto the Tuggeranong Parkway from Cotter Road. This was very poorly received by those at the meeting. People are concerned about how you get up to 100km per hour to merge in the short distance allowed.

Roadworks

The left hand lane from the Cotter Road onto Streeton Drive was discussed. The signage is very poor and the turn involves crossing a bus lane and a very wide bike lane before getting into the left turn lane.

COTA Grants

Tom Anderson advised that COTA has applied for a grant to trial traffic calming devices in Weston and to improve footpaths to enable safer passage for elderly people.

PRESENTATION

Minister Shane Rattenbury arrived at 8.00pm to discuss issues for Weston Creek residents. He brought James Ronkin and Ian McGlynn from Action Buses with him to answer any questions on the Action Network14 bus time table.

Tom Anderson provided details of the WCCC submission for the 2015-16 ACT budget. He advised that in 2008 WCCC asked for a new Community Centre. In 2009 it asked for more parking. In 2011 it asked for a new Community Centre, a library, an ACT shopfront, a swimming pool and a new Seniors Centre. Very little has changed. There is a view that the focus is on the City, the Inner North and Gungahlin and that this side of the Lake has been forgotten.

Parking

Mr Rattenbury advised that the parking had been funded in the budget and that a tender would be let soon.

Neglect of Weston Creek

This is not a conscious decision of the Government. 25 years ago huge money was poured into Tuggeranong. Gungahlin is growing at five times the rate of the rest of Canberra and money needs to be spent. The current population is 45,000 and that is expected to rise to 90,000 in the next couple of years.

TAMS spending across the City is very even. The upgrade of shopping centres has favoured this area with the upgrades to Waramanga and Chapman.

Q. The Chapman shops have lost six car parking spaces. Who does the design?

A. The first step is that TAMS asks residents what they want and they design it. The six car parking spaces were replaced by disabled parking spots.

The Government has committed to provide a pool. It is going in at Stromlo Forest Park.

Q. There are no facilities or public transport to get people there. Also will there be a hydrotherapy pool?

A. The pool is not yet designed so there will be an opportunity to include one.

Comment: We would like a Health Hub here like we had in the 1990s. We would like this to be considered in the budget.

Draft Masterplan for Weston Group Centre

This is currently with the planning department for finalisation. There will be bidding for some areas in the next budget.

Network 14

There was strong feedback from Weston Creek residents including Tom Anderson writing to the Chief Minister. The network was redesigned to improve efficiency, have more direct routes and stop duplication. Overall Weston Creek has had extra services added with extra Xpresso services (including a service from Belconnen to Tuggeranong through Weston Creek), more buses to Woden before 9.00am and double the number of services from Weston Creek to Woden.

Q. There has been a loss of direct routes to Barton and Russell. Given the implementation of paid parking isn't this a backward step?

A. The Barton services go up Adelaide Avenue and then on to Commonwealth Avenue where people can get off.

It is not feasible to have services from all suburbs to Russell. You can now go through Woden and they are more frequent.

There are now 23 Xpresso services a day running past the Cotter Road Park n Ride.

There are 300 more bus services on weekdays across Canberra.

Q. 2 to 6 services sounds impressive but what is the time frame?

A. Since 2012

Q. It is hard to understand why there are five Xpresso services before 7.20am. The demand is 7.45-9.00am. What is the rationale? Changing buses at Woden is inconvenient especially in the afternoon. There are lots of new buses to Gungahlin, many of which are virtually empty. We need more buses to the City. It is hard to reconcile the rhetoric about getting people out of cars but making it harder to get to the City or the Parliamentary Triangle.

A. We are not claiming the service is perfect but Canberra is a big city which is spread out and we have to try to cover costs. The bus service is subsidised by \$120m per annum. The early extra Xpresso buses were to allow the buses to be available for school routes a bit later on.

Q. Other Xpresso routes across the ACT were evenly staggered. Why not ours?

A, (James Roncon) The removal of the 7.45am service was an error and has been put back.

The early buses have a low patronage and they are being reviewed. There are some pockets of the City that need tweaking including Weston Creek. Overall the service is better in Weston Creek. With limited resources we can only supply a certain number of services. There is significant growth in the north and we have had complaints from Gungahlin residents saying there are not enough services.

Patronage is growing and the on time figures are improving (across the ACT).

Q. Why can't we invest the Light Rail money into a more environmentally bus service?

A. For 25 years Canberra has debated the need for Light Rail. We can build a good bus network around it. Action costs \$120m per annum. \$800m is not many years of subsidising Action. Northbourne Avenue is the most congested road in the City. The average speed on Northbourne Avenue in the peak hour is 20kmph. The rest of Canberra doesn't have this problem.

Q. Wasn't Canberra supposed to be decentralised?

A. I would prefer more development in Town Centres. There is a private sector imperative to get people into the city.

Q. Buses need to compete with private transport but they take too long. They should go from Weston Creek to the City via the Parkway.

A. This is a great challenge for transport planners. The ACT was designed for cars. They are very convenient. It is hard for buses to compete. What is competitive is to go from the Park and Ride into the City.

Q. When will there be more regular buses from Weston Creek to the City during the day?

A. This is a long time away.

Tom Anderson commented that the bus from Tuggeranong to Belconnen is a really good move. It will be interesting to see the patronage. There is also a concern around Molonglo. The pattern of people driving up the Cotter Road is already set because going through Woden on the bus is not convenient. We need to develop the public transport habit now. The Park and Ride was put in early to encourage bus usage but there needs to be buses through Molonglo before too many people move in.

Light Rail

Q. You say that Northbourne Ave needs Light Rail. How many sets of traffic lights will be removed to make Light Rail work?

A. Light Rail will get priority at traffic lights like the buses do now. It will also trigger traffic lights as it approaches.

Q. Has Capital Metro considered overhead tracks (like the El in Chicago) or Sullivans Creek?

A. Above ground tracks pushes up costs enormously and Sullivans Creek floods.

Q. There is a rumour that to fund Light Rail the money for the crematorium at Mugga Lane has been put on hold.

A. This is not true but we are looking at more of Woden cemetery being used.

Q. What other projects are being put on hold for Light Rail?

A. The priorities are health, education, public transport and Mr. Fluffy issues.

Q. Has the Federal Government reneged on Mr. Fluffy?

A. We are still waiting to hear. We should know in the next couple of weeks.

Q. You could sue them?

A. We are waiting to see their answer. We are looking at the moral rather than the legal pathway.

Q. The problem with Light Rail is how it has been sold. It should be sold as coming from Mitchell then go to the Parliamentary Triangle and the Airport.

A. We are looking at going to Russell but it is too expensive to go over the bridge to the Parliamentary Triangle.

Q. Will the Light Rail need more funding as it will probably cost over \$1bn? Light Rail will slow both the traffic and buses. The Action bus network is very good.

A. On 31 October 2014 the full business case for Light Rail is being released. There has

been a rigorous process to cost it by the economic team. It will then go out for an Expression of Interest and people will tender. There is a price threshold and if the tenders are too much then maybe we can't afford it.

Roadworks

Commentary: There is a single lane turning from Cotter Road into Streeton Drive. There should be two lanes turning left. There are two lanes turning right from Molonglo into Streeton Drive and the left hand turn has to merge in with them.

The line marking for the left hand turn is terrible. You have to cross a bus lane and a very wide bike lane to get to the left turn lane. There is a bus lane immediately round the corner in the left hand lane with no bay for the bus to turn into so it blocks that lane.

If you wish to turn right into Dixon Drive you have 200 metres to get across three lanes.

The WCCC spoke to ACT Roads (Tony Gill) saying it wouldn't work. The advice from people on the ground has been ignored. There are two lanes coming from Molonglo to Streeton Drive. Why? It may be needed in 30 years' time but not now. In the interim the Weston Creek residents have poor roads. The roads have been open for two days and there is already a problem.

A. I don't know the design history but I know the problem well. Roads will monitor the traffic lights for the next few weeks. I will look into it and have Tony Gill come to the next meeting.

Q. The bike lane disappears. Can you fix this?

A. I will look into it.

General topics

Q. Weston Ponds – they have been landscaped to a degree but there is no marked trail around. There is a need to have a proper path and maybe wetlands. This would make it attractive for families.

A. I don't know the answer but will get back to you. The wetland is designed for run off.

Q. What is happening with the house at Weston Ponds?

A. It is being renovated and will be available for a non-residential lease such as historical or environmental purposes. It is being considered for a museum for the bush fire brigade.

Q. If you have a tree to be saved there is a special way of doing it. It can be done within 8 days – now PT179.

A. Dangerous trees take 6-12 months to be removed.

Q. Mr. Fluffy, whilst terrible for those involved, means that it delays the City to the Lake and the new stadium (this is good). Why are you considering heating Lake Burley Griffin?

A. Heating the Lake is not a government plan. The stadium has had mixed reviews. Bruce Stadium has concrete cancer and needs to be replaced. The City has better public transport and people will go to bars and restaurants etc. – it will be a good entertainment experience.

Q. We already have a stadium at Manuka. Can't we use that?

A. Manuka doesn't service rectangular sports.

Q. Where do you park at the new stadium?

A. There will be some underground parking but people will use public transport.

Q. Can't you knockdown Bruce and rebuild it?

A. The Commonwealth owns Bruce Stadium.

Q. WCCC has requested some more facilities for Fetherston Gardens such as toilets, storage and a display.

A. Can I suggest a shipping container.

Q. TAMS said no.

A. We will have a more detailed discussion about it.

Q. Can the transport to and from major events be better managed? Buses should have priority getting in and out otherwise public transport doesn't work. Also the Arboretum only has one access point for buses.

A. Good point. There is also a new flexible bus transport model using mini buses. They are

free to the transport disadvantaged such as the elderly and disabled people. You book them 2 days in advance and they provide a door to door service.

The contact number is 6205 3555.

Q. What are the eligibility requirements?

A. Give them a call and find out. It is a new service that is being trialed.

Q. The proposed ramp metering (from Cotter Road on to the Parkway) will disadvantage this area. The ramp is not long enough to get up to speed. It is shorter than the standard for 100kph.

A. Have you seen the video? I will send the link to it. Ask Tony Gill when he comes next month. It is designed to minimise accidents. That spot is in the top 10 blackspots in the ACT. Comment by the Chair: WCCC spoke to ACT Roads for two years about it and lost the battle.

Q. The draft Masterplan for the Weston Group Centre is great but we need to do something now about a Community Centre. It doesn't say where it will be built.

A. I will look at it.

Q. There is no car parking at the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion. This makes it hard for the elderly and disabled to get there. Can something be done? It could be an NCA issue.

A. I will follow up.

Chapman Territory Plan Variation

WCCC has suggested the land be zoned RZ2.

Q. there is a bush fire problem, the block is in the ember zone. It is being offered for sale in December. Two options are being proposed – 60 aged care units and a four storey building or 45 retirement houses. This type of cluster development will mean there is a higher risk to getting out in a bushfire.

Q. If you live at the other end of Percey Street you will be blocked in if a bushfire comes because of the need to evacuate the nursing home. Also there are no facilities out there.

A. I know where the block is but I don't know the details. I will follow up.

The Chair thanked Minister Rattenbury for coming along tonight.

Other Business

Chapman Territory Plan Variation

Q. Has there been any word on the sale of the Equestrian Centre. There is a rumour that it has recently been sold?

A. Tom Anderson advised that he had not heard about it. The omnibus territory plan variation did not mention it. He will follow it up.

Roadworks

Q. Will the WCCC send a letter advising how unhappy the community is with how the new lanes are working?

A. We spoke to Minister Shane Rattenbury tonight. Mr Rattenbury advised that Tony Gill, ACT Roads, would attend a future meeting.

A suggestion was made that the left lane on Streeton Drive turning into Namatjira Drive should have the white stripes removed and make it a left turn lane only.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Next Meeting Wednesday 29 October, 2014
Weston Club, 1 Liardet St, Weston