

Your local voice



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Minutes of General Meeting Wednesday, 29 April 2015

Opening of Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7.35pm. The Chair welcomed members and guests

Apologies: Pat McGinn Kimberley Granger, Chronicle

Guests: Alistair Coe, MLA, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Planning and Infrastructure, Transport and Heritage

Hamish Horne and Peter Gordon Canberra Cemeteries

25 people attended the meeting.

PRESENTATION

Expansion of Woden Cemetery – Hamish Horne and Peter Gordon

- a small extension is being planned and ACT Cemeteries is seeking feedback
- the cemetery has been open for 16 years after a 20 year closure
- there are only a couple of years of graves left and the extension will extend the life of the cemetery by 15-20 years
- a site for the Southern Memorial Park in Tuggeranong (Mugga Lane) has been approved but it will be sometime before it is developed
- the extension is being planned in two stages – one immediately that is expected to last 10 years and the second as required
- there is a survey available:
 - ACT government website
 - Woden cemetery
 - Woden library
 - tonight
- tonight is the first round of consultation

Q. How many plots will be available?

A. It depends on how it is developed.

Q. Are there plans for after 10 years?

A. The southern Memorial Park will last approximately 100 years.

Q. Why isn't the Southern Memorial Park going ahead now?

A. It is not a government priority.

Q. Do the developers want it?

A. No, it will cost a lot of money.

Q. Has Mugga Lane be zoned and is it owned by the government?

A. Yes it has been zoned appropriately and it is owned by the government.

Q. How much for a plot?

A. A lawn grave is \$7000 for the first burial and a plaque. It is \$1800 for the next person.

Q What is the current zoning of the Woden extension?

A. Parkland.

Q Will it be controversial?

A. We are not expecting it to be.

Q. At \$7000 why isn't the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority making money?

A. We look after the site in perpetuity.

Q. Have you considered vertical or natural burials?

A. Vertical burials:

- there are no operating cemeteries in Australia
- they don't save space because three people going across takes up the same room as three going down
- it is a gimmick

Natural burials:

- these will be offered in Gungahlin in 2015
- everything is biodegradable
- green burials
- rock on grave or a tree at the head of the grave
- no plaques so GPS will be used to locate the grave

Alistair Coe – Capital Metro and Action Buses

Capital Metro

Capital Metro costs

- Cost - \$783 million
- Operational costs - \$37 million per annum
- Procurement – public-private partnership (if available)
- Annual payment - \$100 million (estimate)
- Revenue - \$5.5 million (by 2021)

Capital Metro features

- Route – Gungahlin to the City via Flemington Road and Northbourne Avenue
- Length – 12 km
- Passengers (by 2021) 3,946
- Bus passengers (current) 3,500
- Travel time – 25 minutes
- Stops - 13 including 2 stations
- Express trams – nil

Capital Metro issues

- Cost
 - Construction costs - \$5,400 per household (\$54 million in Weston Creek)
 - Operational costs - \$710 per household per year (\$7.1 million in Weston Creek)
 - Other light rail projects have had significant cost overruns e.g. Gold Coast 40%, Edinburgh 200% and Sydney 7% and it is not yet finished)
- Patronage
 - The business case says 15,120 per day by 2021
 - Only 7% of Gungahlin residents live within 400 metres of a light rail stop
 - Only 4% of Canberrans live within 400 metres of a light rail stop
- Economic Benefit
 - Benefit Cost ratio is 2.34 (2012 ACT Government submission to Infrastructure Australia)
 - Liberal Party assessment shows 0.57
- Other routes
 - No analysis since 2003
 - The 2003 assessment shows Belconnen to Civic, Woden - Tuggeranong to Civic and Kingston-Manuka Loop as better options.
 - Liberals prefer Belconnen – Civic – Airport
- Other transport options
 - Buses have a better Benefit Cost ratio 4.78 (2012 ACT Government submission to Infrastructure Australia)
 - Gungahlin to City 6am – 9am
 - Buses 74 services Tram 30 services
 - 4 non-stop buses 0 non-stop trams
 - 10 suburbs serviced by direct bus to the city
 - 3 suburbs serviced by a direct tram to the city
 - Buses 20-25 min (peak)
 - Tram 25 min (peak)
 - Construction of bus priority measures across Canberra including Northbourne Avenue
 - Increase frequency and reliability of suburban bus services
 - Make routes more direct and introduce additional non-stop bus services
 - Make frequency of suburban bus services 30 minutes or better
- Other issues
 - The Chief Minister and Shane Rattenbury signed a Parliamentary Agreement to “Progress a light rail network for Canberra”
 - Canberra doesn’t have sufficient density for a light rail network.

Q. If the signing of the light rail contract is rushed through what can be done to get out of it?

A. We are trying to stop the contract being signed before the election. There is a concern that with the contract being signed hastily that there may be some clauses that

are not favourable and that the price of getting out of the contract will be high. There may be some negligence. If there is a change of government then there is an issue. People could be penalized by changing government by way of cancellation costs. We would try to get out of it without paying a penalty or paying a small penalty.

Q. Can the federal government overturn it?

A. I don't think so. The project could stall. Over 450 trees need to be cut down and even light rail advocates may object to this.

Q. The project is a vote changer. I would like to think the Liberal policy of cancelling it is cast iron.

A. It will not go ahead under a Liberal government. The media spoke about sovereign risk but any contract can be canceled with reasonable penalties. If the penalties are not reasonable you go to court.

Q. The ALP had a mandate to establish a project office not put tracks down. Something needs to be done before the next election. There should be a moratorium on building it because of the cost.

A. Many Canberrans would like a plebiscite but this has to go through the Assembly which won't agree. We will try and stall it.

Q. How do we get a referendum? The government doesn't have a mandate.

A. We will support it. People like the concept of light rail but they don't like the cost.

Q. ACT is covered by the Commonwealth procurement laws. Can the contracts be looked at?

A. The Expressions of Interest have gone out. Under ACT procurement laws contracts don't have to be published. I would expect that anything on the register would be significantly blacked out because of being Commercial-in-Confidence. Many things will be subcontracted out so those details won't be shown. If the contract is published retrospectively this will be an issue for people signing it in good faith. Clayton Utz are working on the contracts for the government.

Q. If there are 14 stops people will park in the suburbs to get close to the stops.

A. There are many unintended consequences. The Inner North residents won't have a bus to the city.

Q. At a community council meeting on the northside there were concerns about getting to the tramline in the middle of the road. It will be difficult for older people.

A. The tram is running down the middle of the road. The consultants suggested kerbside because then you only have to cross the road once.

Q. Arising out of the many failures of the ACT government to deliver projects I don't believe they can deliver this on time and within specifications. Why aren't you calling them on this?

A. The GDE and the enlarged cotter Dam prove that this is a risk. The companies involved in the consortia are massive global companies. They have a huge amount of experience (including their lawyers).

Q. Two of the consortia are deliberately seeking to sub-contract and will have a non-unionised, cheap workforce. This is a Workplace Health and Safety issue. These companies can run rings around a government like ours as shown in Victoria.

A. We are skeptical about the job generation figures. Much of the work will be highly specialised and will be brought in from outside. The penalty in Victoria was 3%. This will potentially be the same in Canberra.

Q. What is a reasonable penalty?

A. We haven't seen the contracts. The government is now saying that it will pay half up front and borrow the rest. It is hard to say what is reasonable. If there is some improved infrastructure such as improved drains, electrical connections etc then we will pay for that.

Q. Regardless of how it is funded the taxpayers will have to pay for it.

A. The interest rate will be considerably higher than the mortgage rate due to the risk.

Q. Is there any legal action that can be taken to stall the project?

A. There are one or two avenues but we can't reveal them yet. The Capital Metro bill was rammed through but they were not able to get the more extensive bill through. Any development within 1km of the light rail is exempt from appeal. For example, you could get an electrical substation in your front yard and you can't do anything about it.

Action Buses

Bus Services to Weston Creek

- The Network 12 had eight suburban routes. The Network 14 has four suburban routes including one through Molonglo.
- The Network 12 had three Xpresso routes the Network 14 has four.
- The Network 14 removed the direct service to the Parliamentary Triangle.
- Network 14 has earlier departure times.

Q. Anzac Dawn Service – the buses were run for the benefit of the employees rather than passengers. Even normal days the buses don't turn up or they go a different route. The organisation should be attacked (rather than the employees).

A. The network is iterative. The EB for drivers needs to be changed. The five day roster is scandalous – it should be a seven day roster. This would have avoided the issues of Anzac Day and 27 April 2015. Weekends are an issue as well. The next EB is due in 2017.

We are looking at releasing a transport policy soon.

Q. When are they going to survey those who don't catch the bus not the ones who do? People have to go through Woden so they won't do it.

A. This is a good parallel to what the government is doing in Gungahlin.

Q. There are huge problems with ACTION not just the EB. There is a problem with management. Often drivers don't know what is happening.

A. One of the problems with ACTION 14 is that services run across several shifts. Drivers have one minute to hot seat. One minute to change over or they are running late. If services are already delayed then this becomes a huge problem, this even delays maintenance. I feel sorry for the drivers.

BUSINESS MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting of 25 March 2015

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 25 March 2015

Survey on what Weston Creek community would like:

- We will use the results to ask candidates at the next election.
- This will be put up on the website when it gets upgraded for Tablets and Smart phones (40% of people use Tablets or SmartPhones to access the Website).

- This is in the process and should be done by the end of May.

Q. Is money an issue?

A. No. We get a good deal from our webmaster. It will probably cost less than \$500.00.

Q. Will android capability be included?

A. Yes.

Q. Did the people from EDD get back to us with more details about the service station?

A. The minutes, private sector assessment of the six sites and two other assessments are on the website. It will probably be 2017 before it is open.

Treasurer's Report

\$14,889.49

Main Account

\$14,338.74

Fetherston Gardens Account

General Business

Mr Fluffy

- A special meeting was held 19 March 2015.
- There were three main areas of discussion:
 - Those who have had assessments done and have agreed to sell – the bulk of home owners
 - Elderly people. There is no real solution. Currently there is an issue with children and care workers visiting.
 - Those who are unhappy or dissatisfied with the process and want to rebuild where they are. We won't know who they are until after 30 June 2015.
- Other issues include:
 - People are concerned about houses that sit vacant for up to five years. The government has said that they will maintain the blocks. Some houses that are vacant have had things like solar lights and fountains stolen before the owners could retrieve them.
 - Demolition – how will this affect the community? There are concerns about the amount of trucks and the capacity of the asbestos dump at West Belconnen.
 - Rezoning of 770 blocks that are 700m² or more in size. This could change the character of the area where you live particularly in small streets. There is a concern for neighbours if three or four houses in the street have multiple occupancy. Non Mr. Fluffy blocks have to be 800m² to enable rezoning.
 - Jim Corrigan from the ACT Asbestos Recovery Taskforce has advised that proper planning processes have to be undertaken so there will be opportunities to do a submission.
- In Rivett there is a street of six houses of which four are Mr. Fluffy houses.
- In Kambah there is a street where all houses but one are Mr. Fluffy houses. That owner would like the government to buy their house as well.
- Apparently one Mr. Fluffy owner sold their house and bought another only to find it was next door to a Mr Fluffy house because the addresses have not been published.
- The Taskforce has advised that they will come to a future meeting – perhaps in May.

Speakers for May

- No-one has been confirmed as yet. We are hoping that someone from the ACT Health Directorate will be available.
- We were going to have someone from the Centennial Trail come along but we have deferred them until the warmer weather.

Combined Community Council meeting 18 April 2015

- The Combined Community Councils (CCC) want to put together a public forum on light rail. The panel members would be interested parties but would not include politicians.
- There are concerns about the allocation of land for community use. Clubs are being allowed to change the use and they are getting large cash benefits.
- The draft electoral boundaries have been released. The CCC considers the proposed boundaries are as good as they can be given the constraints imposed.
- CCC participated in the Connect and Participate Expo held at the Bus Depot Markets on 28 March 2015.

Council on the Ageing will be holding a meeting about how to improve Weston on 2 May 2015 at the Uniting Church Hall in Liardet Street. Lunch will be included.

40kmh speed zones

- have been introduced around Coleman Court.

Change of venue

- WCCC is considering a change of venue for the meetings. The current venue is not easily accessible for the elderly or the disabled and we usually have to compete with the raffle draws.
- St Peter's Anglican Church Hall is being considered because it is level, accessible, has parking and tea and coffee facilities.
- We are considering July or August to be the first meetings held at a new venue.

Work of the WCCC

- We attend meetings and develop submissions on the community's behalf.
- In April we had 56 pieces of inwards correspondence and 27 pieces out.

Q. There was a body doing work, such as providing leaflets on Coleman Ridge. Are they still doing this?

A. They have a website and are still active.

The meeting closed at 9.36 pm.

Next Meeting Wednesday 27 May 2015
Weston Club, 1 Liardet St, Weston