

Your local voice



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**Minutes of General Meeting
Wednesday, 29 November 2017
Raiders Weston Club, Liardet St, Weston**

1. Opening of Meeting

Tom Anderson opened the meeting at 7.40pm. He welcomed David Matthews, Executive Director, Transport Operations, Transport Canberra and City Services, and Gus Meijer, Healthy Waterways.

25 people were present.

2. MLA Corner

1. Caroline Le Couteur said first that next Wednesday Minister Gordon Ramsay would speak to the public meeting of Woden Valley Community Council.

2. The Government is to introduce a new process called "Housing Choices". Potentially they government will look at all residential zones, RZ1 to RZ4. Canberra residents and interested parties can put in submissions. There will be consultations with Community Councils. There has been a motion in the Legislative Assembly to showcase housing development. The Government wants to do some innovative housing that is not possible at present.

You can go to the Your Say website/Housing Choices to put in your ideas.

Fiona Carrick (WVCC) asked if it was worth putting in ideas about very small dwellings. She is concerned that where there is a mixture of residential and commercial premises in the same building there may be some problems, such as water metering. Fiona emphasised that if we want better housing, we need to make sure the Government knows our ideas.

3. Caroline noted that Victoria has passed legislation to allow voluntary assisted dying (VAD). The ACT Legislative Assembly cannot pass any laws for VAD or euthanasia because ACT and the Northern Territory are constrained by the Euthanasia Laws Act of 1997 ("the Kevin Andrews bill") enacted by the federal government. This means that ACT residents do not have the same rights as other Australian citizens.

Tom pointed out to WCCC members that Caroline is the chair of the Planning Committee in the Legislative Assembly. Their enquiry into housing has been stopped. Issues of concern include: the matter of separate title for dual occupancy dwellings in RZ1 zones; the number of car parking spaces required in apartment buildings.

3. Presentation on New Bus Routes, Transport Options for Canberra

David Matthews, Executive Director, Transport Operations, Transport Canberra and City

Services, said Transport Canberra is a new agency for public transport in the ACT, and will be responsible for buses and light rail. The agency is also interested in other kinds of transport technology. He said that the light rail is expected to commence operations in the second half of 2018.

In addition, there will be a new bus timetable in operation from mid-2018, with a 7-day network - that is, buses will operate on the same schedules and the same routes each day of the week and weekend. It is hoped that this will increase patronage of the buses by making it easier for people to know when and where the buses are going - same time, same place, every day. The aim is to make it easier to use public transport, to provide services all day and into the evening. Transport Canberra particularly wants to have more options for young people, to bring closer parity with big cities.

Ticketing will be the same for both light rail and buses.

There will be 9 Rapid bus services, including:

- Blue Rapid: Belconnen via City to Tuggeranong
- Red Rapid: Gungahlin through city to Fyshwick
- Green Rapid
- Black Rapid
- Orange Rapid: Molonglo and Weston Creek

Transport Canberra wants these to run at least every 15 minutes during the day, but they will be less frequent at night, and every half hour at weekends.

By mid-2018, 52% of the population will be able to walk to a bus stop within 750 metres of their home.

With the Integrated Transport Network, there will be more and more blue buses in future. They want to incorporate all forms of public transport:

- Trunk services: between town centres
- Local services: within the local suburbs
- Micro network: connections to closer areas

Phase 1 Consultation will involve presentations, meetings with stakeholders all over the ACT, shopping centre drop-ins. All information will be on the Your Say website. Next year a Transport Canberra representative will come back to WCCC to talk about individual bus services.

Where to go from here? What infrastructure is needed? Will need more bus shelters; smart phone apps; routes; best ways to access information; will also need hard copy information and people available to give information; more Park N Ride places for both cars and bikes. Aim is to give people more choice.

Active Travel is also part of the overall scheme, to encourage people to cycle and walk more.

Transport Canberra is developing a new model for transport in Canberra.

- Current model: allows very good access to bus stops but service takes a long time, there are fewer services, and they are less reliable/
- Rapid model: Opposite of the Current model, with very straight/direct routes, high frequency and good services, BUT bus stops not very close to dwellings.
- Integrated model: Will be a mix of Rapid services with complementary local and micro services; will have links to bus interchanges; also encouragement of cycling and walking.

Service Improvements: There are opportunities with Molonglo to improve the network as a whole. Transport Canberra is considering how to provide best connection points to the Orange Rapid service for Weston Creek. As roads are constructed, Weston Creek will have a direct connection to Belconnen.

There will be a new bus depot at Woden by 2019

Phase 2 Consultation: They want to have an Outcomes Report to present to residents. Transport Canberra will prepare a draft plan for a new network perhaps by February 2018. They

want to finalise the network by the end of March 2018, and deliver the new network by 23 July 2018 for the beginning of Term 3 for schools. The buses that at present provide services along routes where the light rail will take over, will be freed up to improve the overall bus network.

Q: Would it be useful to have more mini buses instead of so many big busses?

A: There is an advantage in having a mixed fleet. There are certain fixed costs, including driver salaries, so this has to be taken into account.

Q: What about the width of streets in new suburbs?

A: Sometimes the narrowness of suburban streets is a problem. It might mean that shuttle services become useful.

Q: Route 182 has become very slow, sometimes it takes 45 minutes to get into Civic. What is the break-even point to make buses attractive for potential users?

A: At present we have an interim solution. One possibility is for a Rapid service to go straight to Civic without going through Molonglo.

Q: The Park N Ride at Fitzpatrick Street has 45 spaces, and the bus takes only 12 minutes into Civic. If Rapid services are increased, we might need more parking spaces. The Park N Ride at Cooleman Court is not so useful.

A: There are no immediate plans to increase that car park, but it could be looked at if necessary.

Q: One resident said that recently she had gone to the bus stop and there was a sign saying “Your bus route is changing” but there were no details and everyone missed the bus that day. If there are changes to the timetable, details should be given if possible, and at least the website MUST be changed accordingly.

A: Will check out what happened.

Q: Park N Rides are very good, but the locations are important, and more than one park N Ride may be needed in each area, depending on where the bus is going.

Q: What about co-locating park N Rides with schools or childcare centres, in order to help parents. Also, fix timetables so there are reliable services for parents to take kids by bus.

A: One challenge in Canberra is that many kids go to out-of-area schools, and parents find it easier to drive.

Q: People need to be able to get to their children in an emergency.

David Matthews finished his presentation at 8.21pm.

4. Presentation on Healthy Waterways

Gus Meijer said that the Healthy Waterways project had started three years ago with investigations, which resulted in preparation of a business case in 2015. The Commonwealth Government approved the business case and construction started in February 2017.

The aim in improving water quality is to remove nitrogen and suspended solids in the water, which will reduce levels of blue-green algae.

The ACT has 18 water quality assets in the form of rain gardens, wetlands, ponds and research projects. Isabella Wetlands is halfway complete.

Dixon Drive Wetlands will start next week, and fences have gone up around the construction site. It is one of the bigger sites in the program, and will hold approximately 2.4 megalitres of water. The water will be moving, not standing still. Fish will NOT be stocked.

Q: What about snakes, particularly brown snakes and tiger snakes? (Black snakes keep the others away.)

A: Environment professionals say there are already multiple food sources in suburban areas, which means that it is unlikely there will be any increase in snake numbers.

Q: Will there be any monitoring of snakes, mosquitoes?

A: Assets will be maintained.

Q: It will need a monitoring program for at least 12 months, to see what changes happen. Need signs around the wetlands to indicate what does exist there so people know.

A: We will monitor the wetlands from a water quality perspective. Will also monitor from the

perspective of local users and residents.

Q: There is only one seat at Weston Ponds. Are there going to be any seats at the Dixon Wetlands?

A: The main objective is to improve water quality, which is in itself an amenity. There is no money for additional features such as BBQs, playgrounds, parking areas etc. The focus is on water quality.

Q: Are gross pollutant traps part of the wetlands system, or will the wetlands process only what is in the present creek?

A: The gross pollutant traps will stay because the greater part of normal flows will flow down the old creek bed, not into the wetlands, which will only take small amounts of water from extra flows.

Q: Will the permanent fence that is there now be removed?

A: People will be able to go into the wetlands.

Q: Will it be designated as a recreation area?

A: No, but people will be allowed to ride bicycles through.

Q: There is a huge amount of plastic and rubbish in the Molonglo River below Scrivener Dam. Why does NCA allow rubbish in Lake Burley-Griffin? Why is it not cleaned up?

A: Part of this program aims to educate the community not to throw away rubbish.

Q: What is being done to educate children, who might then educate their parents?

A: The education program is happening.

Q: People from Molonglo used to be able to walk to Coleman Court but now, with the construction, that is not feasible.

Q: Are there any point-of-view pictures of what it will look like?

A: No.

Q: Will there be signage when the wetlands are finished?

A: Yes. In north Canberra, a number of schools use the wetlands.

Q: Could we have a mix of native and non-native trees?

Q: What is the completion date?

A: Mid-2018 for actual construction. We have a two-year plan for plantings, so the final hand-over will be 2020.

Gus Meijer finished his presentation at 9.05pm.

5. General Business

Tom Anderson opened the business meeting.

Minutes of the last public meeting on 25 October 2017 were accepted as presented. (Moved and seconded Jenny Adams, Trevor Wilson)

Treasurer's Report: WCCC has \$21,649.29 in its main bank account, and \$5110.55 in the Fetherston Gardens account.

Master Plan Variation for Weston Group Centre

Tom reported to the meeting that he and Pat McGinn had appeared before the Planning Committee of the Legislative Assembly (chaired by Caroline Le Couteur) in relation to the Master Plan Variation for Weston Group Centre.

- The height of buildings will be limited to 15 metres.
- There were only three submissions, from Sceptre (Westfield), WCCC, and Fiona Carrick (WVCC). Sceptre do not want Coleman Court to compete with Woden Plaza.
- The Hansard record of the committee's proceedings will be up on the ACT Government website. The committee has to report to the minister by the end of January 2018. The minister may not accept the report although he will look at anything that is unanimous. Then it will become a Territory Plan Variation without further legislation, unless it is disallowed in the Assembly.
- Tom said he cannot get a feeling about whether Mirvac wants to expand.

- Caroline said that the Coombs shops are under construction. Shops at Denman Prospect will be completed in one more year, then the Molonglo Group Centre will be developed. It could be that in five years' time there will be no customers at Cooleman Court.
- Tom said one potential issue at Coombs could be that the owner might want rents that are too high. It is possible the Denman Prospect shops may open before the Coombs shops. The size of the supermarket at Coombs has been flagged as an issue, and it appears no one wants to operate such a small supermarket. This in turn means that smaller shops will not start until the supermarket has been decided.
- Tom said that some of the pop-ups from West Basin will go into Stromlo Forest Park.
- He said he had written to the minister about having a shop of some sort at a mixed development site in Wright, but has had no response so far.

Dog Park: Tenders went out for Stage 1, and construction should start soon. He has no information about the timeframe for completion but will put any information WCCC gets up on the WCCC website, www.westoncreek.org.au.

Public Housing: WCCC has put in submissions on the Development Applications for Wright and Chapman, which closed for comment on 24 November. The outcome for the Chapman site is good; for Wright the outcome is not so good although there are some improvements in the plans. The DA for the Holder site has not yet been lodged.

The year 2018 will mark the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of Weston Creek, as well as the 40th Anniversary of the building of Cooleman Court, and the beginning of the Weston Creek Community Centre. Date of the gazettal of Waramanga and Fisher is 6 June, and 28 April is the anniversary of the Community Centre.

WCCC is hoping to hold a series of events, including a BBQ, possibly to be held on 3 March.

Q: Have you had any talks about the NBN (National Broadband Network)?

A: No

Q: Dimensions of the node in Stirling are 1250mm x 1250 x 550. It will service 354 houses.

The public meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Addendum

Holder/Lower Molonglo Wetlands

Further to the WCCC minutes of 29 November 2017, a WCCC member received a further briefing from Gus Meijer and Justin Foley of the Environmental and Sustainable Development Directorate on 14 February, 2018. In this briefing, the following clarifications were received:

- There will be no fence around the perimeter of the wetlands, after the present construction site fencing is removed. (So it is still not clear how random access will be prevented.)
- Community access will be possible via the pre-existing dual-use pedestrian/cycling path (but this will not be widened or added to).
- Two Viewing Points will be established over the more northern (of the now two) settlement ponds, facing north-west, which will be made of compacted earth, not raised wooden decking. The officials said they could consider creating a third viewing point over the second pond, facing south.

- The only seating planned for the viewing points are large natural rocks, but the officials are now also considering using recycled timber from the old Tharwa Bridge for seating there.
- They did not specify any additional plantings around the wetlands, but at our request, promised to consider providing new shade trees near the viewing points. Any new plantings would be mixed exotic/native.
- The only formal entrance would be at the current informal entrance at Dixon Drive, Holder, but no car parking is envisaged there. However, the officials agreed to consider leaving a small area for car parking there.
- Education, monitoring, and signage plans are being developed, but no details were provided. We suggested maximum disclosure of all data collected, in order to generate public confidence in the project. We urged them to advertise clearly what procedures would apply to people entering the wetlands, possibly with pets (dogs), and also to fishing.
- The officials undertook to look into the feasibility of providing solar-powered drinking fountains as used by the Directorate in other remote sites. At the moment, no water will be available in the site area.
- They would welcome the creation of a volunteer “Friends of the Wetlands” group.