

## DRAFT Minutes

### Monthly Public Meeting – 30 May 2007

#### Weston Creek Community Council

#### ATTENDING

John Hargreaves  
Eddie Irvine  
Bob Sutherland  
Sandra Campbell  
Don Campbell  
Wendy Groves  
Rosemary Drabsch  
Jony Jurd  
Martin Miller  
Heather Hughes  
Rose Jurd  
Kristen O'Conner

Hilary Shelton  
Mike van Moort  
Chris Wilson  
Trevor Wilson  
Tim Walshaw  
Vicki Dunne  
Bob Campbell  
Tricia Hoad  
Juanita Kerec  
Jeff Carl  
Jim Mallott

*(apologies for incorrect spelling of any names)*

#### PROCEEDINGS

##### Meeting open 7.49 PM

1. Minutes 28 March meeting passed.
2. **Future of Closed School Sites – John Hargreaves, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Housing and Multicultural Affairs,**

Minister Hargreaves addressed the meeting on the future use of closed school sites at Weston and Rivett.

- The government does not have any existing plans for the closed school sites (site includes school buildings, ovals and the land surrounding the schools), except for Rivett and Mt Neighbour.
- Rivett and Mt Neighbour school sites will be sold as a building audit undertaken since the closure of the schools, found the buildings to be unfit for use. In regard to the Rivett site, the groups currently using the building will be relocated.
- The Government will engage a consultant, through an open tender process, to **conduct a two phase public consultation process on what the closed school sites will be used for**, (Phase 1 – consultation on all closed school sites, between July and August 2007, Phase 2 - site specific meetings, during September and December). Note that there will only be one phase for the Rivett and Mt Neighbor sites and two phases for the remaining sites). The Community Council's will be included in the consultation process.

- The consultant will begin the consultation process by **suggesting the four options below**, however these are **not exhaustive**:
  1. Retain school for community use (probably involving the external building structures remaining but with some modification to the inside);
  2. Retain the school buildings but develop the surrounding ovals/land e.g. for aged care accommodation.
  3. Demolish/eliminate all the school buildings and the whole site including ovals etc be developed for residential or commercial etc use; or
  4. Demolish half the school buildings and redevelop the site but retain some of the old buildings.
- After the consultations, the Minister will take a recommendation on the future use of the school sites to cabinet. The decision on what to do with the sites will be based on the communities' desire and practicality. The sites will need to be self-sustaining.
- After the decision, some re-zoning of land use may be required.
- After this there will be a handover period.
- No action on the school sites is expected till the second half of 2008.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **Public Question: Will new schools be built in the Molonglo development?**

Minister's Answer: This hasn't yet been discussed. Infrastructure/services planning haven't yet been completed. The decision to close the school sites was based on the population and that the number of existing schools were deemed to not be sustainable, even including forecasting for population growth in the new suburbs.

### **Q: How could schools that were in use 6 months ago now be deemed unfit for re-use?**

A: Don't know. When the schools were shut they were transferred into my portfolio at which time an audit was undertaken. The issues at Rivett and Mt Neighbour appear to be about asbestos and white ants.

### **Q: Residents of Rivett are concerned about the closed school being an eye sore. The closed petrol station is already an eye sore.**

A: Hopefully the school won't be an eye sore. Security will be put in place to protect against vandalism. The windows that have already been broken will be boarded up, but not replaced. In regards to the petrol station, this is outside my portfolio, I suggest you write to the Minister responsible.

### **Q: I thought that Minister Barr had given a commitment that the schools would remain as community land?**

A: That isn't the case. The community will have a say as to the future use. Money from the sale of any of the land will go back into education.

### **Q: The old Holder High school on Mulley St, which was closed many years ago, is a significant eye sore and safety hazard, specifically the oval and the surrounding fencing. What can be done about this and to ensure that the newly closed school sites, don't go the same way?**

A: The old schools are looked after by Property Group. Property Group is currently looking into the situation at the old Holder High school. The cost of the upkeep of the buildings needs to be met by the revenue raised through rent. Usually the buildings only just break even.

**Q: The people developing the ‘Virtual Retirement Village’ concept will need an office and the University of the Third Age would like to use one of the school sites.**

A: The Government supports people staying at home. Suggest the University of the Third Age looks into buying one of the closed schools.

**Q: Is Rivett Primary School and pre-school the same site?**

A; Unsure, believe that the closure just involves the Primary School.

**Q: What will happen to the playground equipment?**

A: Don’t know. Will find out from Property Group. At another school, discussions about the playground have been linked to what the school will be used for in the future.

**Q: What is the cut off date for submissions to the consultation process?**

A: Unsure. The first part will occur in July to August and the second from September to December.

**Q: If half a school site is sold off, could the funds from the sale be used to improve, landscape and maintain the remaining part which might be for community use? Would this help to overcome the problems currently facing Property Group in maintaining sites such as the old Holder High?**

A: Theoretically, yes, but really, maintenance is about annual government budget allocation.

**Q: We already have a lot of aged care accommodation in the area, perhaps there isn’t a need for an other major retirement village.**

A: It is up to the community. The community might decide that it’s better to have town houses which could meet an assortment of accommodation needs.

**Q: There is a fear that our green spaces are being lost, which will be exacerbated by any development of the school sites.**

A: That’s why we’re suggesting that the consultant includes investigation into option 4, where the school building is demolished but the ovals and green space remain or better still are developed as urban open space and trees planted etc.

**Q: Given that some 25,000 houses are planned as part of the Molonglo Development, shouldn’t we be thinking about establishing the services in Weston Creek to meet the future demand created by these new homes?**

A: Yes. I’m not involved with this as its outside my portfolio. I believe that Weston Creek needs a library. I’ve told cabinet that we need to think about what hasn’t been given to Weston Creek.

**Q: The number of houses planned to be built in Molonglo keeps going up. It started at 12,000, then 20,000 and now you are saying its 25,000.**

A: Real Estate people and planners tell us that people want different type of houses. People used to want their quarter acre block but now some people want 1200 square meters for their

pool and tennis courts but others want more affordable houses on smaller blocks. Smaller blocks costing \$100,000-\$150000 will be available. ACTPLA are talking about a blend of these types. The denser housing areas will require adequate open space around the town houses.

**Q: We're facing stage 4 water restriction, so how will there be enough water?**

A: Water availability will determine the release of blocks. We had intended to release blocks by now but have held off.

**Q: Are you implying that the ACT Government doesn't intend to place government services on the closed schools sites?**

A: There are no plans to do so. I am unaware of requests for government accommodation. The Government does not have any preconceived ideas about the use of the closed school sites, except that Rivett and Mt Neighbour will be sold.

**Q. Just to emphasise that we don't want the school sites to degrade into slums. On an other matter, has anyone considered co-locating aged care accommodation and child care?**

A: We also don't want to see the sites become slums. We will make the sites secure during the transition phase. As for combining child care and accommodation for the elderly, it would be great to hear the community asking for this. There is evidence that people's life is prolonged through hearing children laugh. Can't see why it couldn't happen.

**Q: In regards to the consultation process, I wouldn't like to see all the meetings being held in the evening as people can't always make them.**

A: I will take this on board.

**Q: How much is it costing to secure the school sites?**

A: I'm unsure, but an allocation has been made in the budget to provide for this.

**Q: The CIT horticulture facilities in Weston Creek are closing down. Will the gardens be lost? If so, that would be a great shame, especially as they are open to the public.**

A: Don't know.

### **3. Minister Hargreaves on public Transport**

The Minister noted:

- The government is currently revisiting the public transport network.
- A consultant is talking to the traveling public, bus drivers (unlike previous consultation processes) and others.
- There is a need to reduce the cost as the system is too expensive, far more expensive than other states.
- There is a need to improve the bus routes.
- ACT has the cheapest bus fares in the country but they probably should be raised.

Members of the public mentioned that two buses follow each other through Duffy and Holder in the mornings which seems inefficient and there is only one direct bus to and from Civic to Weston Creek.

#### **4. OTHER**

**Question from the public: The Weston Creek Community Council has been trying to get some assistance in erecting shade cloths over key playgrounds but has been told that shade cloths isn't currently a government priority.**

Minister's answer: The government's priority is currently to bring existing playgrounds up to safety standards, and after this we will tackle shade cloths.

**Q: Why is it taking so long for the government to develop a playground safety policy? So far it has taken 12 months. Design standards exist in other states, why can't the ACT simply adopt one of those?**

A: The government only has limited resources but I will look into why this is taking so long.

**Next meeting**

**7.45 PM 27 June 2007**

**Weston Club**

**Canberra Off Road Cyclists group to talk about trails in Weston Creek.**

Meeting close 9.24 PM