

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

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Established 1991

Minutes Monthly Meeting

7.45pm 27th April 2005

Minister Simon Corbell MLA

Variation 200

Welcome

The WCCC Chairperson, Mr Jeff Carl welcomed the guest speaker Mr Simon Corbell MLA, the Committee and residents. Mr Carl advised that Minister Corbell would address the issue of Variation 200 of the Territory Plan; then move to other planning issues.

Mr Carl explained that Variation 200 is a residential building code, which among other impacts, affects building density in areas adjacent to local shopping centres called A10 areas. Weston Creek residents have raised concerns on the use of these A10 areas. Variation 200 is scheduled to be formally reviewed by the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) early in the 2005/2006 Financial Year.

As per normal procedures other business would be discussed after the guest speaker.

Mr Carl acknowledged the attendance of other members of the Legislative Assembly, Dr Deb Foskey MLA and Mrs Jacqui Burke MLA.

Apologies

Karen MacDonald MLA, Richard Mulchay MLA, Mick Gentlemen MLA, Rosemary Drabsch, Mrs Zelnik.

Simon Corbell

Mr Corbell thanked Mr Carl for the opportunity to address the WCCC and discuss Variation 200 of the Territory Plan.

Mr Corbell indicated that the Variation had its genesis in the year and months leading up to the 2001 ACT Election. There was extensive community debate on redevelopment especially dual and triple occupancy in North Canberra, Inner-South Canberra and Belconnen. Labor was

elected and the Variation proceeded. Prior to Variation 200 dual and triple occupancy as well as block amalgamation could occur anywhere in a suburb and there was ad-hoc residential development. Variation 200 had the effect of limiting such redevelopment to around Local Centres and Group Centres. There were no new laws allowing more redevelopments. The general area is about 250m around local shops which is called the A10 area.

The rationale for the changes is twofold. Firstly, a need to provide for a range of housing types to meet the changing demands of the Canberra community, and secondly to focus re-development in areas where there were services, shops, transport corridors and public transport.

The intention was a reduction in the dual occupancies in residential suburbs with, however, a potential for a greater residential concentration near shops. It was expected that there would be some changes in Weston Creek through re-development however the 2003 Bushfire accentuated the impact of redevelopments. Generally suburbs have 70-80% residential areas and from 14-20% medium to higher density areas with dual and triple occupancy.

In 2003 the Variation was approved by the Legislative Assembly and at that time it was intended to have a review on the effectiveness after 2 years. This review is scheduled for mid 2005. Everyone will be welcome to comment and the review will be presented to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Carl thanked Mr Corbell and called for Q&A.

Q&A

- The 200m and 300m distances are all distances of inclusion; it appears rather fluid in Holder since areas beyond these distances appear to be included. This is shown in the maps based on street by street analysis. - The 250m is a guide. It is recognised as a short walking distance of say 5 minutes. This is the radius that is used. The maps can be checked online at the ACTPLA website. There is also the way that a block is treated if some sections are in the radius and others are outside. The complete section is in or out. This may have the effect that a section more that 250m is in the A10 area. This avoids a potential problem where blocks side-by-side in the same section are in and out respectively. Sometimes it is difficult to communicate the exact maps, but they are available online.
- Where local shops are not viable, like Aranda, can they be refurbished for retail and housing? Is it possible under the plan? - Where local shops are struggling it is possible to have residential above shops but some element of a local shop needs to be provided. The ground floor could be retail, grocery or professional office. Planning control is tighter for shops and shops are not actually considered part of the A10 area, they have different guidelines.
- What happens in an A10 area with a re-development of two storeys and an attic, it could be a very large building? - The building envelope part of Variation 200 addresses height, building area, open space and other measures. The absolute height limit is 8.5m above natural ground level.
- Is the review to be limited to parts of the Variation 200? The terms of reference have not been submitted to me, however I would anticipate the review to be broad, looking at the consequences of Variation 200. Where there have been problems and issues with

individual DA's , where there are loopholes and if there is a lack of clarity. There is wide community interest in planning and development in Canberra and the community as well as industry groups will be involved.

- The answer on final height of 8.5m was interesting but did not address the issue of a sloping site. - The 'finished' floor height is 8.5m but slope is an issue. Also of concern is the definition of 'what is the natural ground level'. This is an area of on-going debate.
- All single residential houses have a building envelope, what about dual and triple occupancies, what protection is there? - The building envelope applies as well; this protects side boundaries, front setback, overshadowing of neighbours, prevention of building on the entire block and the amount of private open space on the block.
- Have the side boundaries changed? Some appear to be very close to the fence line? Variation 200 actually increased the setback from the front boundary and the side boundary.
- There have been a few AAT appeals which have dealt with the type of streetscape in the burnt areas of Weston Creek, and particularly with the streetscape that existed before the 2003 bushfires. The outcome of these appeals was that there is no streetscape. Why has this occurred? - A number of applications were in the system and no retrospective enforcement was possible, they were lodged under the previous rules and built after the bushfire.
- Is it possible to have different building envelopes for different blocks? There is a minimum of 700sq m for a dual occupancy. It would be very difficult to manage a system with a different building envelope for every different block.
- Is it possible to have block amalgamation of small blocks in Weston Creek? - Yes, but only in A10 areas, not in residential areas.
- A query by a phone call was read to the meeting. A resident from Waramanga was concerned about multi storey developments near single residences and was concerned that communal living increased noise and irresponsible behaviour. This also decreased the care of the environment with fewer gardens.
- Holder appears to be more impacted by A10 areas because of Cooleman Court, it looks like 25%? Yes, other examples in addition to Holder are Lyons and Chifley on the Southside, with more examples on the north side. These were in the Territory Plan since 1991 but now less of Holder is affected, there is less re-development potential.
- Can something be done to help Holder? Can this matter be addressed? Yes, this can be addressed as part of the review process. This can be raised by individuals or groups; there is some capacity to adapt A10 areas. In some suburbs A10 boundaries have been adjusted to meet unusual circumstances.
- The A10 area in Holder is high at 25% and there are already a lot of apartments, but the open space opposite the shops around the old primary school is with the 250m which is a concern? Any DA submitted to ACTPLA would need to identify the open space elements and greater protection is needed. The space around a school is normally zoned

community facilities not open space. There is a variation with the Legislative Assembly dealing with the Open Space Network which is designed to better protect green space around schools.

- Can the school be on one lease and the open space on another? -- Yes perhaps, this would give greater protection to the green space.
- Mirinjani and Araluen Aged Care facilities are both in A10 areas, there needs to be some respect for the space around these facilities so they are not crowded out. --- Yes, both probably have a higher population density than A10 areas. A higher residential density closer to shops is not inappropriate.
- We don't want another Burnie Court near aged facilities! Burnie Court was one bedroom and bed-sit accommodation which did not operate well. ACT Housing is moving to an approach of only 25% public housing tenants in any one complex so as to have a mix of private and public tenants.

Mr Carl called an end to the questions on Variation 200 and Mr Corbell agreed to take other general planning questions.

- Are there plans to better use the old Holder Primary School? The building currently houses Therapy ACT. There are no plans at present to change this arrangement but the school buildings are getting old and they may be re-developed at some time in the future.
- Is there going to be an increase in the number of aged care beds and dementia beds available through the planning process because of increasing demand? -There are about 70-80% of people over 65 not living in an aged care complex or a retirement village. In the over 65 age group the bulk of people live at home. There are examples where retirement villages have grown and planning decisions will monitor the need for beds.
- People like to live in the same surrounds but not necessarily in the same house, the two storey buildings are difficult to cope with and the preference is single story. --- There are an increasing number of two storey buildings because of the value and the land costs. There are however an increasing number of two storey buildings with lifts. The market demand is for lift access and developers are responding to this. Planning controls do not dictate developer's responses to the market place. Your example may be a 'walk-up' which does not sell. An example of the response is Goodwin Aged Care building 3 storey buildings, there is a lift for 6 apartments, and this is a market response.
- A question about the moonscape surrounding Weston Creek, will there be action before 2010? - Yes the entry to Weston Creek along Warragamba / Eucumbene Drives and Cotter Road is stark. The ACT Budget is out soon and will address some of these issues, including Narrabundah Hill and Mount Stromlo. Work needs to be undertaken behind the RSPCA, and where no residential development is planned; Duffy and Cotter Road regeneration could start.
- My question is about the proposed Molonglo Valley area. It appears the Government and planning authority are changing their collective minds and the effect is to reduce options for the future. The Molonglo Valley district was, in previous incarnations of plans, a discrete area, now it looks like a few extra suburbs hugging existing suburbs on the

western fringe? - Yes thinking has been refined since the Spatial Plan. Areas of the valley which were residential-capable were identified through a joint National Capital Authority (NCA) and ACTPLA study. Three areas have been identified as most suitable and these are the basis of the diagrams recently published in the press. NCA did have some concerns on the vista from Anzac Parade to the western skyline. The areas identified can also use existing infrastructure. There are many more steps in the process, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), electricity, sewerage, transport connections and changes to the Territory Plan and the National Capital Plan. This will be a couple of years work. We are doing this because the population is decreasing and the only development front is North Gungahlin and West Belconnen. People don't want that and many young people are going to Jerrabomberra and other nearby areas in NSW. The aim is to attract the population growth back to the city. Parts of the Molonglo Valley are within 7.5kms of the city centre. This approach opens new options so that the only choice is not out on the 'edge' of Canberra.

- This puts an end to the green areas leading into the city and kills off a better longer term outcome for Molonglo and Uriarra? - The Spatial Plan started with the basics and if Canberra were to reach half a million people there was the need to know how to cope. There were options of no new Greenfield developments, new greenfield developments at Gooromon Ponds and even West Murrumbidgee. Building a town centre in Molonglo is not on, it is not an option. The vista, the river and the water quality problem precludes such an approach.
- The so-called Molonglo Valley development looks pre-ordained but will it have public consultation? - Yes there are a number of stages for public comment. Some decisions will need to go through both the ACT Legislative Assembly and the Commonwealth Government. There will be a range of opportunities for the public to comment on the proposal.
- Development within 7.5kms of the city centre will be intense, especially the eastern part of Molonglo. Will A10 areas be in place in Molonglo? -- At this stage that detail has not been worked through. There are possibly 3 sites for 20,000 houses and 44,000 residents. There has been work on the capacity but not the detail.
- Where is the water coming from for Molonglo? -- There are several approaches, better use of the water we have, greater water conservation and reuse, an example being the new suburb of Forde in Gungahlin where open space will be irrigated with grey water. There is a need to provide trees as it is hot and dusty in high winds. There needs to be a high standard of open space. The ACTEW proposal for pumping from Cotter to Googong will satisfy demand at Stage 2 restrictions. At higher than projected population growth rates the Tennant and Tantangara options are under debate.
- When will there be an open, wide ranging inquiry into the Canberra Fires? -- This depends on the outcome of the Supreme Court finding on the Coronial inquiry, has there been perceived bias and has the inquiry exceeded its brief? When the Supreme Court decision is known the next steps can be taken but there will be a wide ranging review. The McLeod review was different in that it was focussed on the operational response to the event.

- My question is on the land along Cotter Road near Holder and Duffy, is this open space? And who is the 'planner' is it the Non Urban Study people? -- The Commonwealth Dept of Finance owns the land at the top of the block, the western extreme. It is under NCA control. Only the Stromlo Village area is residential the rest is open space. It is difficult to make decisions on the whole block until the status of the Commonwealth land is known. A Defence Housing Authority residential development was considered as a possibility in that area of Commonwealth land. The ACT Government controlled land will stay open space. There will be revegetation of the ACT land down to Streeon Drive. The planner is ACTPLA not the Non Urban Study people.
- Will the development of Molonglo have an impact on A10 areas? -- It is too early to say; there is still a lot of work to be undertaken.

Mr Carl called an end to the questions and thanked Mr Corbell for his time to answer all of the questions. Mr Corbell will be available after the meeting for informal questions.

Other Business

WCCC Constitution

In late 2004, in response to amendments to the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* in August 2004, the Committee established a Governance Subcommittee. The Subcommittee reviewed the Constitution and has recommended changes which would improve the Constitution to assist in reducing the effort on the volunteer committee and streamline, where possible, some of the operations of the WCCC. Copies of the proposed Constitution will be available on the WCCC website. This announcement at this public meeting is greater than the 21 days required for calling a special general meeting to discuss and decide on an amended Constitution.

There needs to be 75 percent of the members vote in favour of adopting the proposed Constitution for the special resolution to be carried.

This special meeting will precede the regular monthly meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 25th May 2005 here at The Weston Club, and will commence at 7.45pm.

Neighbourhood Watch

Barbara Brinton advised the meeting that the Convenor of the Rivett Neighbourhood Watch was resigning and a new Convenor was needed. Volunteers are welcome. There will be a meeting at Rivett Primary School on Wednesday 4th May at 7.30pm.

Casuarina Trees at Weston Creek

Mr Sutherland asked Minister Corbell to make inquires of his colleague the Minister for Urban Services, Mr Hargraves on the removal of trees from the edge of Weston Creek near Holder prior to replanting commencing.

Building Rubble

Dr Deb Foskey MLA raised with the meeting the dumping of building rubble on Cooleman Ridge. Mr Carl indicated that this could be occurring however the Council had not been advised that this was a problem. The Council was aware that some building rubble had been dumped near Stromlo Village late last year and that this had been cleaned up soon after it was reported to ACT Housing.

Graffiti

A resident asked of the increased graffiti at Cooleman Court and the contacts to remove it. Mr Carl indicated that on private assets it was the building owner's responsibility to clean the graffiti. The ACT Government cleaners would clean public assets. Graffiti can be reported to the Graffiti hotline on 132281.

Walkway Ramp

Mrs Jacqui Burke MLA asked the meeting of concerns with the ramp at the entrance to Cooleman Court near Woolworths. The meeting had general concern regarding the ramp however Mr Carl indicated that the ramp was part of Cooleman Court and was not on public land. Hence the ramp was not able to be included in the refurbishment of the surrounds of Cooleman Court in which the Council was an active participant several years ago.

Bus stops in Brierly Street

Pat McGinn, Deputy Chair WCCC, advised the meeting of plans by Roads ACT to alter the bus stops in Brierly Street near the service station. The relocation of the bus stop to the other side of Brierly Street appeared sensible however the location of the bus waiting bay directly opposite the service station was of concern. Mr Carl indicated that the location was the subject of a letter to be written to Roads ACT.

Bushfire Memorial Workshop

Barbara Brinton advised the meeting that there was to be a workshop on the bushfire memorial at Orana School on Sat 30th April and Saturday 14th May from 10.00am to 4.00pm. All residents were invited to bring along bricks, photos and other memorabilia.

Mr Carl called for additional other business, as there was none forthcoming he thanked the Minister and residents for their attendance.

Meeting closed 9.55pm

Next Meeting

Special General Meeting Wednesday 25th May 2005 7.45pm

Followed by

Regular monthly meeting