

# WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- *Your Local Voice* -

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## **Minutes Monthly Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2003**

### **Welcome**

Ms Pat McGinn, Deputy Chair, WCCC welcomed residents to the meeting. Pat advised that Jeff Carl was on holidays with his family in Queensland and she would attempt to be as effective as Jeff in managing the meeting.

Pat also welcomed from the ACT Legislative Assembly Brendan Smyth MLA, Leader of the Opposition and Jacqui Burke MLA.

### **Apologies**

Jeff Carl, Chris Young-Wright and Gary Caitcheon.

### **Minutes of Last Meeting**

Pat asked if there were any questions, issues or business arising from the last minutes. Mr Sutherland asked of the request of residents for a special meeting on the Stromlo Forest Review. Ms McGinn indicated that this was indeed arranged for 14<sup>th</sup> May and it was an agenda item for tonight's meeting. Motion that the minutes be accepted; Pat McGinn, seconded Juanita Kerec.

### **Tree Clearing**

Pat advised the meeting that the control of tree clearing in Weston Creek was raised by a resident who asked that it be put on the agenda for discussion. Jeff had provided information on the approaches of Environment ACT and Canberra Urban Parks and Places (CUPP's) to the issue. A handout with details and phone numbers was distributed. [This is on the WCCC website - RECENT ISSUES].

Pat read the main points from the handout. The issue of the removal of trees in the district had been discussed several times at the Community & Expert Reference Group (CERG) meetings.

Environment ACT (EA) is very sensitive to the wishes of a large proportion of our local residents that the maximum number of trees should be preserved in our residential areas.

Where the trees are on individual leases, if they are dead, then the leaseholder can remove them without the intervention of EA personnel, but EA are encouraging people to have them checked by an arborist before their removal to ensure that the tree can not be saved.

Where the trees are still alive, then EA is involved in their assessment and they will remove them if they are dangerous. Of course, in the fire-damaged areas, there are some residents who are still traumatised by the fires and EA personnel are sensitive to the fears and worries of these people. Some healthy trees have been removed in this situation where the leaseholder has been insistent that this should happen.

Information is that EA personnel are not so obliging in the areas that were not affected by the January 18 fires and our tree preservation policies are strictly enforced in these areas now that the interim grace period is well and truly finished.

In the public areas of Weston Creek, for example on road verges, parks and nature strips Canberra Urban Parks and Places are assessing the condition and viability of trees and shrubs in conjunction with arborists and EA personnel and viable trees and shrubs are being left wherever possible.

CERG will be discussing this issue with particular regard to the Streeton Drive/Dixon Drive areas at its next meeting.

Mary Sexton advised that she was the resident with concerns on tree clearing indicating that some trees which may shoot in the next 6 months should remain, Pat replied that although only being a very amateur horticulturist she could concede the view that some residents who lost homes or had devastated yards may wish to have the burnt trees and shrubs removed as they were painful reminders.

Another resident indicated that after the Mount Macedon fires some trees showed regrowth 6 months after the fires. It was also raised by another resident that driving to work through Holder, Streeton Drive and Cotter Road was a traumatic reminder on a daily basis and the removal of shrubs and trees was part of the healing process for people.

Mary Sexton commented that the treatment of Duffy in respect of the removal of trees and shrubs appeared to be different to that being applied to parts of Chapman. In the general discussion it was considered whether or not one suburb and greater area of nature strips, walkways and parks compared to the other? had more residents requested trees and shrubs be removed? had trees and shrubs sustained greater damage in one location than the other? Mary Sexton advised that she was not so confident about the processes compared to what was actually happening.

It was advised that Jeff Carl was, as indicated in the handout, raising the issue again at the next CERG meeting.

## **Recreation Strategy for the Bushfire Affected areas.**

Pat McGinn advised the meeting that the WCCC had received an invitation, probably along with a number of other organisations, to lodge a submission on **issues and options** for the recreational strategy for the bushfire affected areas. Pat advised the letter was dated 7<sup>th</sup> April and received on 10<sup>th</sup> April. The closing date was 22<sup>nd</sup> April. The period covered Easter and the School holidays. Photocopies of the invite to submit were distributed to all at the meeting [for additional copies phone the WCCC].

The WCCC had lodged a formal complaint with the BushFire Recovery TaskForce Secretariat and advised that the WCCC would not lodge until after the Stromlo Forest Review meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May with PALM.

It was indicated that it would be very difficult to prepare one submission in isolation from other submissions on the Review on the Non Urban Areas affected by Bushfires, the Stromlo Forest Review and the Recreation Strategy as all were so interlinked.

Pat encouraged all interested residents to read the document and prepare their own submission, however if they wished they could contribute ideas and suggestions to the WCCC, preferably by email and these would be used in preparing the WCCC submission.

## **Stromlo Forest Review**

Ms McGinn advised the meeting that as an outcome of the last regular monthly meeting the WCCC will host an information session on the Stromlo Forest Review. This will be at 7.30pm on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May in the Auditorium here at Royals Football Club.

Speakers would be from PALM and we hope to have others from Urban Services and the Bushfire Recovery TaskForce Secretariat. It was indicated that publicity was commenced about the night and it had been advertised in the "Community Bushfire Update" newsletter. It was asked of other possible advertising avenues, responses included:

- ABC 666
- Cooleman Court noticeboard
- Chapman & Duffy residents groups assisting in fire recovery
- Church Parish Bulletins
- The Fridge Door
- School Newsletter Bulletins
- Letter to the Newspapers

Pat advised the meeting that the Stromlo Forest Review would be a critical component in the consideration of the Canberra Spatial Plan. The Spatial Plan is one of three major works being undertaken by PALM. The **Canberra Spatial Plan** takes a broad view of what we as a community expect from planning. It will take account of transport, population growth, employment location, and land availability. The **Canberra Economic White Paper** explores the economic impacts of our planning and the **Social Plan** will be looking at issues associated with social equity within our community including housing, public transport, education and health.

In the consideration of options there were five possibilities being considered:

- Leave it as it is;
- Cap the new 'greenfield' developments and focus on higher density in existing residential areas;
- Develop Stromlo Forest and Bulgar Creek (which are the largest areas);
- Develop Kowen, Tralee and Googong
- Develop Gooromon-Jeir which is adjacent to Gungahlin in NSW.

Pat advised that when she and Jeff Carl attended the Spatial Plan meeting in PALM maps of the ACT were used with constraints overlaid. Constraints included slope, water catchment, sensitive environment areas etc and with each overlay the area available for development was significantly reduced. A resident indicated that he believed the Bulgar Creek area past Stromlo Forest was over the catchment divide and directly flowed into the Murrumbidgee catchment, Pat concurred that this was her understanding that the areas would indeed impact directly on the Murrumbidgee near the National Equestrian facility.

Pat advised that she believed that PALM had received approximately 1500 responses from the community to their survey. The WCCC had close to 700 personal one-on-one interviews with residents at shopping centres in Weston Creek over the past six Saturday mornings, not a bad comparison for a voluntary community lobby group. The material was being collated and would be on the website as soon as possible.

### **Transport Update**

Ms McGinn called on Mr Bob Sutherland to report back to the meeting on the Transport Futures meeting that he had recently attended. [The WCCC has managed to secure 'community representatives' on some ACT Government advisory committees and Bob attends the Transport Reform Advisory Group (TRAG) convened by the Dept of Urban Services. Bob has a background in Transport Economics and as a retired resident can attend daytime meetings called by Urban Services].

Bob advised that the Transport Futures meeting considered the cost-benefit study, which is currently being commissioned to investigate the cost of providing public transport to the community in Canberra. He advised that he personally believed that the study was fundamentally flawed in its underlying assumptions because the cost of traffic congestion is not being considered. Also the cost of land for transport routes rather than income producing uses of land is not addressed -some routes on the PowerPoint overheads did show dotted lines into the Stromlo area.

Bob reminded the meeting of the transport discussion papers on the WCCC website and would like feedback and comments. Mary Sexton asked if the papers had been submitted. Bob advised that the ACT Government review of public transport had not yet called for formal submissions and there was no announced closing date for submissions. Another resident asked how the WCCC took into account minority views in submissions. Pat McGinn replied advising that all concerns raised were included in submissions and examples were the transport discussion papers which were not yet formal submissions and reinforced Bob's invite for residents to comment on them. Pat also indicated that the Shopping Centre Visit report she was compiling had many views of residents and these would be included in the compilation.

A resident asked of how the WCCC manages responses to submissions. Pat advised that the WCCC finds out about reviews and studies through contacts in government departments, word of mouth, from residents and newspaper advertisements. At WCCC meetings we formally invite people to contribute ideas through phone calls but prefer written material by emails.

In addition LAPAC's cease to exist, although the Weston Creek area never had one and the new Neighbourhood Planning Groups are coming into being. Where there is no LAPAC's and no Neighbourhood Planning Groups the main method of disseminating information is a community council.

Pat advised the meeting and the MLA's present that the disparity of funding between Community Councils and that expected to be provided to Neighbourhood Planning Groups is an issue of major concern in the effort applied by residents groups.

A resident asked is there a consolidated list of reviews and studies underway? Pat replied that she was not aware of the existence of such a whole-of-government list, Jonathan Reynolds advised that planning issues and especially DA's (development applications) were listed on the PALM website at [www.palm.act.gov.au](http://www.palm.act.gov.au) but there is a need to check it regularly.

### **Broadacre Estate Plan, Weston**

Ms McGinn advised the meeting that the Land & Property Group, Dept of Urban Services has initiated a study on the area bounded by Cotter Road / Streton Drive / Unwin Place and Hickey Court in Weston.

The WCCC has been lobbying for sometime, along with current leaseholders, to have a traffic management plan for the area before any more leases are granted. The study appears, on the information provided to date, to satisfy that need.

The overview of the Consultants Brief, along with a map, was distributed to attendees and the meeting was advised that this was the major agenda item for the next regular monthly meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> May [for additional copies phone the WCCC].

A resident asked if the claim by the New Creations Church was for the whole empty block, Pat responded indicating that perhaps this could be a focus of the Consultants Study. A resident also asked if New Creation Ministries was going to be at the meeting, could the WCCC please invite David O'Keeffe from Madison Lifestyle Communities Pty Ltd who were considering an aged care facility for the site.

Pat informed the meeting, that based on her experience, that if a leaseholder was expected to have a significant impact on traffic in an area there was a need for them to contribute to off-site works to alleviate the impact of them having a lease. There was general discussion on the extent of the traffic impact of New Creation Ministries at their former Dixon Drive site and the impact at their temporary use of the Stromlo High School as well as the financial capacity of a potential leaseholder to pay for off-site capital works. Ms McGinn encouraged residents who had an interest to attend the 28<sup>th</sup> May meeting.

### **Any other Business**

Ms McGinn called for any other business, and as chair had the prerogative to raise three issues which needed to be followed up;

The Serbian Club in Weston, what is happening?

The petrol Station in Holder

The Canberra Montessorri School in Holder.

Mr John Logue advised the meeting that he had received, on the same day two flyers for apartments in Weston Creek and believed that they were indeed the sites of the Serbian Club and the Holder petrol station. He did not believe that public consultation had been undertaken for the DA for the Holder site. In addition if the material was correct and 14 apartments were planned for the site the access entry to the block on a corner on a hill would be a major problem.

Pat advised the meeting that the WCCC submission on the management options for *The Canberra College* Stirling site was now on the WCCC website.

Ms McGinn called for any other business or issues which people wished to raise, as there was none forthcoming she closed the meeting and thanked residents and MLA's for their attendance.

Meeting closed 8.45pm

Next monthly meeting:

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2003 - Land & Property Group – Broadacre Estate Plan, Weston.