

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- *Your Local Voice* -

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Established 1991

Minutes

Monthly Meeting

7.45pm 23rd February 2005

Welcome

The WCCC Chairperson, Mr Jeff Carl welcomed the guest speakers, the Committee and residents. Mr Carl advised that there were three topics which would be covered.

The speakers are:

- Trina Stiff and Jyoti Pradhan from Urban Design and Projects Team ACTPLA speaking on Duffy Shops
- Russell Watkinson the Director of Canberra Urban Parks and Places and Stephen Hughes, Manager of Asset Maintenance, Canberra Urban Parks and Places
- Barbara Barrett, Marketing Manager of ACTION Buses

Mr Carl advised that there would be the opportunity for questions in a Q&A session after each of the speakers. As per normal procedures other business would be after the guest speakers.

Apologies

Cheryl Nekvapil, Senator Gary Humphries, Heather Hughes, Noel Tregoning, Deb Foskey MLA, Jane Smyth, Elizabeth Whinney, Richard Mulchay MLA, Pat McGinn.

Duffy Shops - Urban Design and Projects Team – Trina Stiff

Ms Stiff indicated that the current work at Duffy Shops was to put in place a *Guideline* as to the future progress and possible development of the shopping centre and its surrounds. The *Guideline* would be a useful instrument to assist current owners and tenants as well as prospective developers on the types of activities and facilities which could be considered. In addition the *Guideline* would assist other Government agencies such as the Dept of Urban Services and Canberra Urban Parkes and Places in their long term management of the centre. This would ensure that capital works were not undertaken which could become redundant or superfluous.

The shops at present are not attractive and the open spaces surrounding the shops are not properly utilised. Consultation so far has been a meeting with shop owners and lessees. In addition a site analysis has been undertaken identifying opportunities and constraints.

Some of the major issues identified to date have been: pedestrian access; pedestrian/ vehicle conflict; safety and use of large open spaces; the large carpark and the service area. The centre also has a poor street 'address', ie orientation to the street and visibility from the street is not ideal. The lack of out-of-hours activity may also be contributing to its run-down appearance.

The issues which are being addressed are: to enhance the street 'address'; upgrade access and circulation; possible development opportunities; improve public amenity; improve safety and visibility; improve legibility and encourage appropriate day and night activities. These key issues will be addressed in the *Guideline*. This is not a process or a plan of reconstruction or any building activity. It is a *Guideline* to direct and steer possible future work at the shopping centre.

Residents can contribute and there are survey forms at the meeting tonight. Other suggestions are welcome by contacting us at ACTPLA. There will be continuing consultation with stakeholders as the *Guideline* is progressed. Other strategies are liaison with Dept of Urban Services and Canberra Urban Parkes and Places as well as the possibilities under the ACT Territory Plan.

Mr Carl called for Q&A.

Q&A

- A resident indicated that the future sounded good and attractive and different uses were to be commended however a café at Holder didn't work, why should it work at Duffy? Ms Stiff indicated that the *Guideline* was not approving particular uses; it was identifying a range of possible uses. A business owner would need to consider the financials. The *Guideline* was to consider future uses as a guide to prospective shop owners and perhaps open up a range of new possibilities.
- What happens if a developer wants to change a lease purpose? -- We are not making any business decisions but are attempting to put in place a mechanism to assist in progressing the rejuvenation of the shopping centre.
- I notice that the shops are called 'Duffy Village Shops'. Is there a preference from the residents that it is called a 'village' – That issue has not arisen in our consultations to date but it may possibly arise in the consultations with the community.
- What can be done to improve line marking, red curbs graffiti and rubbish? - All those which you mention are related to the current state of the shops, and the work we are concentrating on is the future use of the area. However it is important that what can be done to tidy the shops is actioned. The Dept of Urban Services and Canberra Urban Parkes and Places are responsible for the range of issues raised; Stephen Hughes indicated that he would contact ACT Roads and the graffiti hotline on behalf of the resident.

- Would it be possible to have the charity bins relocated or cleaned? - There is an issue with charity bins in that the material dumped around the bin needs to be removed by the owner of the bin. Mr Carl indicated that there was a move towards removing these bins from shopping centres in Canberra.
- A resident asked if the ACT Chamber of Commerce has been involved in the stakeholder consultation. Ms Stiff indicated that the initial consultations were with tenants and leaseholders however the wider process could take in the Chamber.
- The playground is in the wrong place, it is open to the hot wind and has no shade, and it needs to be moved. The playground is very new and although not in an ideal location it does need some type of shade structure. It is unlikely to be moved.
- The garage site needs attention as it looks depressing. -- The garage site is the subject of on-going discussion. The lease purpose affects what can be undertaken and perhaps this needs to be addressed in this new *Guideline*. We await community input as to potential options. Mr Carl advised that the WCCC would contact the appropriate lease people to determine the current status.

Mr Carl called an end to the questions and thanked Trina for presentation. While Canberra Urban Parkes and Places were setting up their equipment Mr Carl continued.

Taking it to the Streets

The Committee of the WCCC would again be visiting local shopping centres from 10.00am to 12 noon on Saturday mornings to speak with residents. The schedule is:

26 Feb 05 Fisher
 05 Mar 05 Waramanga
 12 Mar 05 Chapman
 19 Mar 05 Rivett
 02 Apr 05 Holder
 09 Apr 05 Duffy
 16 Apr 05 Cooleman Court

This is an opportunity for people who cannot make it to evening meetings to raise issues of concern. It is hoped that these visit will be advertised in *The Chronicle* shortly.

Recent Submissions

Mr Carl advised the meeting that the WCCC has made several submissions over the Christmas break. These are available on the website of the WCCC at www.wccc.com.au The major work has been a submission on the ACT Government draft 2005-2006 Budget. That submission is also on the website.

Recent Meetings

Mr Carl indicated that the WCCC had assisted the ACT Emergency Services Authority convene an onsite meeting in Lincoln Close, Chapman, three days before Christmas to discuss the fire hazard reduction on Coleman Ridge. In addition members for the Executive have attended meetings on the Asbestos Task Force and the Canberra Airport Noise Forum. The WCCC is involved with the airport group so as to be aware of the potential impact if noise sharing arrangements are introduced in Canberra. A member of the Executive also attends the ACT Government meetings which are preparing a Community Engagement manual which will assist ACT Government agencies in their dealings with community organisations.

Russell Watkinson, Director Canberra Urban Parks and Places

Mr Watkinson gave a visual overview of the work of Canberra Urban Parks and Places (CUPP). CUPP is responsible for the open spaces and park management. A recent addition to tasks has been the mowing of rural roads. There are different districts for the management plans and contractors' areas and Weston Creek is in the Woden/ Weston district.

The budget of CUPP is \$38M with approximately \$23.5M used for maintenance and cleaning. CUPP uses in-house and external contracts to undertake a large proportion of the work.

The key responsibilities are to maintain and clean public assets, tree management, maintain and manage the use of the sportsgrounds, management of swimming pools and fire fuel management.

In addition graffiti management is a role of CUPP and this cost \$967,000 last financial year. Obscene graffiti is removed in 24hrs and other material is scheduled for removal in 3 days.

Activities underway at present focus on asset creation, also called capital works, and greening after the fires. Events Management to encourage use of parks and places is also increasing and the current event is 'Round Town'. Brochures are available at this meeting tonight.

A new initiative being considered is the revamp of the Adopt-A-Road to encompass more than just litter, perhaps tree watering.

The methods used to prioritise the use of resources include community surveys and monitoring on-going community feedback. The challenges of CUPP are now focussed on working with the community to meet their needs, maximising water efficiency, balance the presentation of Canberra in terms of fire safety and the attractiveness of landscapes, managing an ageing urban forest and restoring degraded parks and sportsgrounds post drought.

These need to be achieved to ensure the vibrancy of Parks and Places as well as ensuring optimal services and value for money. The Canberra community is very articulate and demand high levels of service. To achieve the service levels an approach of minimising bureaucracy to work efficiently and effectively is being pursued.

Q&A

Mr Carl called for questions:

- There are numerous dead trees on Hindmarsh Drive in Weston Creek, and also on Namitijira Drive, are they to be removed? - The priority with dead trees is to remove those considered to be dangerous to the public. The inspection of dead trees is normal on the same day as reported. However the scheduling of the removal of non-dangerous dead trees can be several months.
- A resident indicated that there a significant number of new trees in Duffy, can the community look after them, by watering and weeding? - Yes, by all means look after them while observing current water restrictions. Some simple guidelines of watering street trees will be issued shortly.
- The entry to Duffy along Eucumbene Drive between Warragamba Ave and Cotter Road is in serious need of attention, could we have some tidying of the area even if a long-term solution cannot be started? - Yes we will look at the problem.
- My comments have three parts, Could graffiti on exposed fence lines be reduced by planting appropriate shrubs, even if the leaseholder waters over the back fence, for example houses backing onto Hindmarsh Drive. Secondly, Weston Creek is an autonomous region and not part of Woden as indicated in your introduction and thirdly you did mention management of parks and sportsgrounds, what is the proportion of those impacted in Weston Creek? Graffiti can be reduced by plantings and Hindmarsh Drive is a good example, we will look at the Holder fence line, the politics of the local districts is an issue I am learning about, as for the sportsgrounds not being watered the Canberra-wide figures are 80% of parks are not watered and 30% of sportsgrounds are not watered.
- How will you engage the community, what is the framework being used to reconcile the difference in streetscape, which is strong in Canberra, and the community expectations of their suburb? The approach proposed is a broad community engagement, an example being this type of meeting. There would need to be more detailed work at the suburb level and yet further detailed consultations at the street level. The aim is to use the current structure in place to contact the community. There have been examples where we have had street meetings to assist in reconciling differences on streetscape and tree plantings. In addition there will need to be some major work in the medium term on the means of replacing ageing trees in suburbs. This may well be a contentious issue.
- A question on laneway maintenance. We live adjacent to a laneway for 19 years and probably for the last 4 years it has not been looked after and we have done it ourselves with mulch and weeding. Can we get some maintenance; the laneway is in Stirling. - There are inspections of the work of contractors and breaches are reported. We can look at the laneway of concern.

- There appears to be an approach to replace gum trees on nature strips with the same gum tree species but this is not always appropriate as there is overhang on the footpath and broken concrete? - There has been a review of the types and size of street trees used in Canberra following the 2003 bushfires and guidelines have been developed to assist in replanting. As street trees are replaced this should be less of a problem.
- The entry to Weston Creek at Cotter Road and Streeton Drive looks like it will develop into a well-treed entrance, could we ask that the area is weeded and the trees watered? - Yes it will be looked at.
- Some nature strips in Weston Creek are very narrow and after the bushfire the same gum trees have been replanted. The nature strip cannot cope with the width of some of the trees when they grow full size? The trees being replanted are variants of gum trees and as juveniles may look like the same but will not grown to the same size. In addition the type of bark and the shedding of bark have been taken into account with new trees. In the surveys for replanting which the Council assisted with 50% of respondents wanted natives, 25% exotics and 25% wanted a mix of exotics and natives. There is an approach to try to complement existing street trees with those being replanted.

Mr Carl called an end to the questions and thanked Russell for the presentation.

Barbara Barrett Marketing Manager ACTION Buses

Barbara Barrett thanked Mr Carl for the opportunity to again visit the Council and share information on the progress of the night services to Weston Creek and general changes to the ACTION network. The Weston Creek community were the pilot for the night services and much was learned from the community through the development of the routes, timetables and processes.

ACTION are introducing 64 buses over a period of time and 20 of the new buses were air-conditioned, accessible, Diesel buses and ACTION have at the moment 24 new CNG powered, air-conditioned accessible buses. ACTION will be getting 20 more of these CNG buses by the end of the 2005 - 2006 financial year. This will then make it a total of 64 new buses. The fleet will be compatible with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) by 2022

A new service which is being prototyped is SMS system for bus timetables. An SMS can be sent to your mobile phone indicating the next departure times based on your query. This approach is being supported by the Deafness Hearing and Resource Centre

Other new initiatives include a bus way from Belconnen to Civic with the potential to be converted to light rail in the future; real time bus departure times in high use locations, for example shopping centres; smart card ticketing systems; upgrading of Woden and Belconnen interchanges and bike racks on buses, which is waiting for approval prior to commencing a pilot.

The Weston Creek night service has been refined several times and continues to evolve based on feedback from users and drivers. The driver chooses the route best suited to those travelling to Weston Creek. The service is now at a 40-minute frequency and weeknights averages 5 people per trip. On Friday night around 10 people travel per trip.

Q&A

Mr Carl called for questions:

- The Woden Valley Hospital visiting hours don't appear to align with the night services to Weston Creek, can they be used? - Yes the night services start at 7.24pm from Woden.
- Why are the numbers of the night services different from day services? - The night services start with 9 and are in the 900 series 925 is north Weston Creek and 927 is South Weston Creek. The 300 series are to Interchanges; the 700 series are express routes. The 925 has had 268 passengers and the 927 has had 488 passengers since commencing the current trial period in late January 2005.
- Why are the night services continually changing? - The night service is an evolving pilot and the aim is to have less empty buses at night on fixed routes. The efficiency is in travel time and fuel use. Parents like the system because they know their child is on a bus. People can ring the 131710 to contact the night service. There are about 4,000 calls a week but most are for timetable information.
- A neighbour used the night service and it took 40 minutes from Woden to Duffy as the driver tried to satisfy all passengers' needs. He now does not use the bus. - If that was some time ago it may have been early in the pilot when all of Weston Creek was one area. Now that it is spilt in half there would not be any travel time like 40 minutes. I encourage him to try again.
- Under the ACT sustainable transport plan what is being done to improve daytime services in Weston Creek? The aim is to make the routes more efficient and run buses in high demand periods. The straightening of bus routes, so that they are on main or arterial roads, has helped.
- Is there a possibility to reduce the use of Interchange for Weston Creek passengers? There is a route 29 from Duffy and Holder into the City which avoids Woden Interchange.
- How are changes being communicated to the community? We have undertaken a letterbox drop of 8,000 houses in Weston Creek. In addition, attendance at Council meetings, adverts in the *Southside Chronicle* as well as laminated posters at bus stops in Weston Creek. There are 7 different ways to communicate with people and we are trying those that are the most efficient.
- Has there been an increase in patronage from Weston Creek? ACTION buses exceeded 20,000 adult passengers per day on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for the last 3 weeks.
- Is it possible to have direct service straight down Hindmarsh Drive? That would be a novel approach but stopping on Hindmarsh Drive may be a challenge in some locations. Mr Carl indicated that he would be concerned with this approach and bus / on-road cycle path conflict.

- I'm from Waramanga and the Route 27 through Rivett, Stirling, Fisher and Waramanga is always over-crowded and some times does not stop because it is full. Can this be improved with larger buses or extra services in the morning? There are lots of schools kids travelling on these buses? Route 27 was not raised as a problem in the past but it will be followed up.

Mr Carl called an end to the questions and thanked Barbara for the presentation. Mr Carl thanked all the speakers for their attendance. The speakers would be available for informal questions after the meeting. Mr Carl called for other business.

Other Business

Royals Football Club

A resident asked of the rumour that this club is to be demolished for flats, is there any knowledge of this? Mr Carl responded advising that there was an amendment to the lease which required the Development Application process to be invoked. This information is that it is a concessional lease; the leaseholder was being changed from Canberra Royals Rugby Football Club to the Canberra Raiders Sports Club. No other speculative information was known of other possible plans.

Corporate Governance

Mr Carl indicated that the WCCC Committee was revisiting the Constitution with the aim of improving some of the administrative workings of the Council. This would require agreement from members and this was expected to be progressed in the first half of the year. Members would receive a mail out.

Future Meetings

Mr Carl advised that the March meeting would have guest speakers from the Asbestos Task Force Assessment Team, the April meeting would have Minister Simon Corbell, Minister for Planning discussing DV200, the June meeting was tentative for a local Business meeting and the AGM is in August.

Current Venue

A resident asked of the poor venue supplied by the Club this evening. Mr Carl indicated that *The Weston Club* donates a room for the use of the WCCC. The present room was not our preferred room but was the only room available tonight. The Auditorium was in use for a larger function this evening. The interruptions from the PA system were unavoidable as staff have not been able to isolate this room. The PA had been switched off in the Club at 8.30pm. Mr Carl indicated that he would discuss these issues with the Club tomorrow and suggest that they enable disconnection of the PA system to the room.

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

Meeting closed 9.45pm

Next Regular Meeting Wednesday 23rd March 2005