

# WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

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*Established 1991*

(Weston Creek Citizens Council Inc. – Reg. No. A2637)

## **Record of Proceedings**

### **Regular Monthly Meeting**

**Wednesday 22 February 2006.**

**at The Weston Club, Liardet Street, Weston.**

#### **1. Welcome:**

The Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) Chairperson, Mr Jeff Carl, opened the meeting at 7:50 pm and welcomed those who came to the first monthly meeting of the WCCC for 2006. Mr Carl advised the meeting that the primary topic for tonight's meeting was the current review of Variation 200 (The Garden City Variation) which deals with the ACT's residential building code. Our guest speakers for tonight's meeting who will discuss Variation 200 were Mr Chris Gell and Ms Gay Williamson, both from the Urban Design and Projects Section, Strategic Planning and Land Services, within the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA).

One topic of interest over the Christmas period was the proposed Telstra 3G tower in Warragamba Avenue, Duffy, with residents unhappy with the proposed location. The WCCC had filed a written submission regarding the tower which reflected the concerns of the resident's who had contacted the WCCC. The WCCC had also emailed and telephoned Mr Ian Peters, Area Manager of Telstra Countrywide to invite him to this meeting to discuss the proposal. No response has been received to the WCCC invitation. However, there was a report received that a representative from Telstra and Mrs Jacqui Bourke MLA had met with some concerned Duffy residents on-site. The outcome of that meeting is not known to the WCCC.

#### **2. Apologies:**

Bob Sutherland, Juanita Kerec, Louise Alder

### **3. Review of Variation 200 (The Garden City Variation):**

Variation 200 was adopted on 21 August 2003 and introduced the concept of A10 zones to control development and to provide the community with a degree of certainty about residential planning. The A10 provision limits subdivision of leases and construction of multiple units to within "core areas", ie within 200 metres of local centres and within 300metres of group or town centres. Variation 200 also introduced changes to plot ratios within "suburban areas" (ie those areas not "core areas") and limited multi-unit development to blocks over 1400sq metres.

The intent of Variation 200 is to give people certainty about where multi-unit developments will take place and to provide the community with a wider range of accessible housing while still maintaining a sustainable city form. If local shops close, the A10 provision remains as there is a strong commitment to retaining local centres for community use. The A10 provision is to maintain vibrancy around "core areas", shops and transport routes. Where a development is over ten units, ten percent of the units must be designed as accessible and adaptable housing for people with special needs. The long term intention is to develop a Residential Sub-division Code.

The current review of Variation 200 is not a policy review but a commitment by the ACT Government to review the workings of Variation 200 after two years of use. The two year review period was introduced by the ACT Legislative Assembly during the process to approve the implementation of Variation 200. The WCCC was congratulated on its submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly's Planning Committee which viewed Draft Variation 200 positively but supported Strata-title, not Unit title (ie individual residential blocks cannot be split and sold as two) in "suburban areas". There are currently no active A10 developments in Weston Creek. The Tanjil Loop development in Duffy, (now Blue Rock Place) is commendable.

The review committee has conducted research into other council requirements around Australia. Common issues include minimum block frontages – especially for battle-axe blocks, width of blocks, on-site parking, visitor parking, and multi-unit development on laneways and cul-de-sacs. ACTPLA has audited the open-space in Canberra. There are no A10 zones in Gungahlin.

Since the implementation of these provisions in August 2003 there has been no significant change in the total number of applications for dual occupancy developments on residential blocks but there has been a change in their locations, ie the number of plot ratio changes (dual occupancy applications) in "suburban areas" has dropped but the number of changes within A10 "core areas" has increased.

Feedback to the review committee so far indicates the following:

1. Encouraging diversity does result in changes to the existing character of the street.
2. Should 'plot ratio' be replaced with 'site-coverage'? There are community concerns with the appearance of new housing, particularly in bushfire affected suburbs. Some concerns include (i) the tendency to build to the extremity of blocks (footprint) is creating fire hazards due to lack of spacing between homes. These 30 square homes often have poor solar orientation and lack of protective eaves in order to cover the

footprint. This is changing streetscapes; and (ii) The diminishing green space and the disenfranchisement of children due to lack of play space on blocks.

3. Where A10 applies on one side of a street should zoning be adjusted? Discussion indicated 'no' to avoid the potential confusion of 'creep' in provisions.

4. There are 150 suburban residential blocks over 1400sq metres in Canberra, most of them in cul de sacs, and 80 have narrow frontages. Some surround or adjoin 'orphan' blocks under 1400 sq metres. Problems in allowing multi-unit development on these include: lack of privacy, parking and traffic issues; change in streetscape if trees are removed or if access ramps project forward of the building line (the term 'generally' needs to be removed from the document); and a denial of the original intention of cul de sacs.

There then followed some general discussion regarding the proposed Molonglo Valley residential development and whether it was going to be 'eave to eave' housing. Also discussed was aged persons in Weston Creek who want to remain in the district and continue to contribute to their community, but are unable to sub-divide their block if under 1400 sq metres.

As there were no further suggestions or comments, Mr Carl thanked Mr Gell and Ms Williamson for their attendance and participation in our meeting.

#### GENERAL BUSINESS:

#### **4. Themes and Speakers for 2006 WCCC regular monthly meetings:**

Following discussion at a recent WCCC Committee meeting about trying to ensure that WCCC covers a broad spectrum of issues of interest to our district, the following topics and themes have been decided for the remaining meetings of 2006:

**March:** Aged Care in Weston Creek and the needs of Seniors in our community. There has been a recent claim that Weston Creek has an adequate supply of resources for the aged at the present time, and there will be an over abundance of resources by about 2010. Guest speakers invited from both the Australian and ACT Governments.

**April:** History and Culture in Weston Creek with discussion on a project for the history of Weston Creek.

**May:** Economic Development in Weston Creek with emphasis on shopping centres.

**June:** Feedback from the WCCC's autumn '*Taking it to the Streets*' program and an open forum. We will also be discussing the ACT Budget and its impact on Weston Creek.

**July:** Community Services and Facilities in Weston Creek: Child care, Education & Library services.

**August:** WCCC AGM:

**September:** tba

**October:** tba

**November:** The environment, open space development, bushfire preparation for the summer of 2006/7.

**5. *'Taking it to the Streets'* program:**

These interviews will again take place in each Weston Creek shopping centre in late March/April 2006. WCCC will collate issues for the next ACT Budget submission and report back at the June meeting. (The ACT Budget will be announced in June this year.)

The Chairperson closed the meeting at 9:20 pm.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the WCCC will be held on 22 March 2006.