

# WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

*- Your Local Voice -*

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*Established 1991*

## Monthly Meeting Record of Proceedings

27<sup>th</sup> July 2005

### **Rehabilitation of the Molonglo Valley.**

#### **Welcome**

The WCCC Chairperson, Mr Jeff Carl welcomed the guest speakers, committee and residents. Mr Carl advised that the order of the speakers would be :

- Jocelyn Plovitts - Canberra International Arboretum
- Tess Horowitz, Tony Steel, Martin Jolly – Bushfire memorial
- Dorte Ekelund and Paul Lewis - ACTPLA Molonglo Concepts.

In addition Mr Carl advised that Other Business would follow. Mr Carl acknowledged the attendance of the ACT Legislative Assembly member Jacqui Burke MLA.

#### **Apologies**

Richard Mulchay MLA, Juanita Kerec, Bob Sutherland, Laurie Gillard, Sheila Gillard

#### **Canberra Arboretum**

Ms Plovitts advised the meeting that the 'Shaping Our Territory' group within the Chief Minister's Department was managing the creation of the Arboretum. There was an international competition conducted with each entrant needing to have an Australian partner. There were 45 entries and this was short listed to five.

The Arboretum area is 250ha along the Tuggeranong Parkway from the Cork Plantation in the north heading south. The aspect is to the east and the soils are very poor, having previously been part of a pine plantation.

There was a prestigious panel of judges who assessed the entrants. The Arboretum is for future generations and Stage 1 is due to open in 2008. Stage 1 will have a visitors centre, a new road into the area and the '100 Gardens' will be commenced. There may possibly be a Hotel but not in Stage 1.

The concept has swathes of colour across the landscape. There are 'Alleles' forming walkways between each of the '100 Gardens' and good views back to the city. The pine trees on the site will be retained as long as possible as they are holding the soil together. There will be hidden gardens in the treed areas which will open into public space. One of the first areas ready will be the Bonsai garden.

A major issue will be the quarantine aspects of importing seed stock from endangered trees from all around the world. There is an Interim Board which is managing the process. The trees for the '100 Forests' are to be endangered trees and they need to meet the criteria of being threatened. The tree species needs to have available stock, an example being the Wollemi Pine. There will need to a lot of work in the selection of the final 100 trees species.

Whilst the '100 Gardens' will contain many threaten species, this is not a criterion for inclusion. There will be a large range of species.

The plans are to use as little water as possible; there will be no luxurious English Country Gardens. It is expected that the water will be collected and used on-site; there will be contoured swales for water collection. It is anticipated that the water use for the year will be no more than 2 days of wastewater flow from the trunk sewerage line under the site. The projected cost of Stage 1 is \$12M.

The Stage 1 will focus on visitor experience as well as arts and music festivals. The area is being marketed as an attraction, the aim being to keep visitors in the ACT longer. An extra day per visitor to the ACT will meet the development costs of the Arboretum. The area will have open days while under construction and all parking will be managed on site.

Mr Carl called for Q&A.

### Q&A

- Is there any Federal funding? – Not at present but there could be. The ANU and CSIRO are interested in experimental plots. Other areas of interest for the Commonwealth may be the Aboriginal scatter sites which could have appropriate plantings for the importance of the site.
- Will it just be Australian flora? – No not just Australian there will be international plantings as well.
- Why won't it burn down? Discussions have been held with the Emergency Services Authority regarding irrigation and on site water storage. The aspect of non-connecting tree crowns will be important. The 'Alleles' will serve as firebreaks.
- Why is it in a grid pattern and not following the contours? The layout will be a grid in appearance but the trees and plantings will definitely follow contours and make the most of water retention and erosion minimisation.

- When will it start? It has already started. The concept plans are in place the master plan is being developed now. A heritage study is underway. There is also a National Capital Authority study happening in parallel. It is expected to be 4 to 5 months for works approval. Soil erosion control strategies could commence as well as riparian plantings.
- What is happening to the Lindsey Pryor Arboretum? That facility is somewhat rundown but it will be upgraded. There was also a small arboretum on Cyprus Hill.
- Is the Forestry School at ANU involved and will they operate from the site? Forestry is heavily involved and will have experiential plots; as to their relocation that has not been canvassed.
- Weeds are major problems in the cleared areas around Weston Creek and it would be assumed to be a major problem on this site -- what is the weed control? There is an awareness of the impact that out of control weeds can have and the area is subject to a weed management plan. The main targets are Patterson Curse and blackberries.

Mr Carl thanked Ms Plovitts and advised that informal question could be raised after the meeting.

### **ACT Bush Fire Memorial**

Jeff Carl introduced Tess Horowitz, Tony Steel, and Martin Jolly. Tess indicated that the community consultation report was released in July 2004 and there was a competition for the design of the concept of a bushfire memorial. The memorial needs to have form and be a 'place' which evokes the emotion.

The artwork will integrate into the memorial site. It is often difficult to integrate artwork into a site but with a clean canvas there is much potential. The artwork on the site will engage people and mean something to them. The 2003 Bushfire was an event which affected people and the memorial needs to have a healing role.

Submissions for the memorial competition needed to be in by November 2004 and the decision was made in December 2004. The presentation to the panel was focused on a memorial having an emotional response, feelings and a reaction to the bushfire. The feedback of a 'walk' was very strong from the consultations.

After months of working on the site the location has changed several times and the site is now confirmed as adjacent to Duffy across the Cotter Road near the Eucumbene Drive intersection. The entrance will be from the Uriarra Road.

The first area of the memorial will include an entry of curved walls made from damaged and donated bricks, although this will have to be structurally sound. There will be 140 inscribed pavers in the wall, words of gratitude and loss. It will be a very different memorial; it will be different in tone. There will also be large metal beams impregnated with red glass which will symbolise the flames of the bushfire. This will be surrounded by heavy plantings of casuarinas. It will be a site symbolic of the power of the fire.

The central axis of the memorial leading from the first area will be a walkway that will point back to Mount Ainslie, which is an important landmark to all of Canberra. The walkway will be lined with gums, 99% of the plantings will be native and of these 70% will be local. This will be the formal avenue and will be useable by wheelchairs, etc.

The second area of the memorial site will be encouraging, a place to enjoy, to reflect. It will have terracing, gardens, rocks, stepping stones and picnic areas. The site is high and will have a shallow bubbling spring pool. Water use will be very low and water will be reclaimed from the site and recycled. All water on the site will drain into the constructed creek.

The 4 meter high beams will be covered with 500 snapshots in plate glass transparencies. From a distance there will be colour, and close up the details of the photos will be seen. There will be lots of grey, red, ash and blue. There will be 5 colours around the spring. A meandering return path running adjacent to the creek will have native plantings and will link the second area back to the first area. Wheelchairs are not intended to travel along the return path.

### Q&A

- Will there be multiple pedestrian access points? It is difficult at this early stage to answer. The road access will be from Uriarra Road and there will be the option to walk down to the memorial from the Mt Stromlo Recreation Park. There will need to be direct pedestrian access across Cotter Road from Holder and Duffy which is happening at present.
- Jacqui Burke MLA, asked how is the maintenance and upkeep being managed and budgeted? The aim is to keep this to a minimum. All water will be recycled and held in a 50,000 litre underground tank, all pumps will be electrically efficient and low voltage 12 volt lights will be used. As much as possible the sculptures will be vandal proof. There will be supplied a maintenance manual on the completion of the works.
- How will rubbish be dealt with? ACT Forests, although undergoing change will be responsible in the new arrangements. There will be security guards and locked gates. The land management agency responsible for the area will have regular maintenance schedules.

A comment, the Memorial is wonderful for Weston Creek and we need to embrace it and be positive in its construction and on going use. We need to ensure that it is well looked after and perhaps a band of volunteers could assist as needed.

- What is the nearest recreational facility for amenities? There is the Mt Stromlo Recreation Park but the nearest amenities would be 1 km in a straight line but this involves crossing a much eroded gully which would need a bridge to get to the amenities. It may be necessary that the new carpark have toilet facilities at close proximity even if were to be compost toilets.

May I suggest that this will be very inadequate in the summer heat and with a large number of visitors and encouraging picnics?

- What type of access path will be constructed? It will be crushed granite, with sloping access to meet disabled needs.

- Will there be electrical power for events? Yes the meeting place is designed as a natural amphitheatre, which will have available power, lights as well as lighted sculptures.
- This is a non-urban area and the memorial needs to continue the non urban theme.- there is a very fine line not to be crossed so it does not become like an urban town park. Yes it is a challenge to keep it calm and quiet. However the Mt Stromlo Recreation Park and the memorial site will need to be well managed sites.
- Vandals will be a major problem, the best approach is to keep cars away because vandals don't walk, how will you manage this? There have been discussions with a number of ACT agencies on this issue. Stone bollards will be in strategic locations, other passive treatments will be used and there will be locked gates.

Mr Carl thanked Tess Horowitz, Tony Steel, and Martin Jolly and advised that informal questions could be raised after the meeting

### **Molonglo Concepts – ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA)**

Mr Carl introduced Dorte Ekelund and Paul Lewis from ACTPLA. Dorte provided an overview of the processes to date in the work on the Molonglo Valley. In 2003 and 2004 the future direction of Canberra was the focus. Although, with recognised low to moderate growth, the city was still growing and that growth needed to be managed and prepared for. The growth needed to be responsibly managed.

There were 10,000 Canberrans who responded and participated in the community consultations on the Spatial Plan for Canberra. Many indicated that they did not want an endless sprawl and the Y plan extending NE and NW directions was not the preferred model. There was strong support for a compact city which managed greenhouse issues and had a small ecological footprint.

Paul Lewis then presented a PowerPoint presentation. The Molonglo Valley is being investigated to see if it is practical for residential use. The underlying environmental attributes are not significant as the area was a pine plantation. The location is between Woden Valley/Weston Creek and Belconnen and a major central area with residential potential is within 7.5 km of Civic. Two other potential sites are adjacent Belconnen and are expected to rely on Belconnen for the supply of services and facilities. The investigation is responding to a government direction. Any further progress will require changes to the Territory Plan and the National Capital Plan. Two public workshops were conducted in the past week to engage residents in very earlier concept studies, to determine areas of importance to the community and to explore ways of using existing infrastructure in adjoining areas.

The process at present is to look at the opportunities and constraints in the Valley. The work comes from the Canberra Plan, which consisted of the Economic White paper, the Social Plan and the Spatial Plan. The Spatial Plan had a focus of containing in growth in a 7.5 km or 15 km radius of the city.

The area commenced investigations in March 2004. There is the capacity for 12,500 to 15,000 dwellings and a population of up to 50,000 people. The area has good infrastructure with arterial roads nearby and easy connections to water, sewerage and electricity supplies.

There has been some work with the National Capital Authority to meet the NCP principles of staying off hilltops and away from rivers and address the needs of rural areas. With the Commonwealth input the area available for potential residential development was reduced from 3,000ha to 2,000ha and a revised population estimate of 44,000 people.

There are multiple joint studies underway on grassland, Riparian, Yellow box, legless lizards as well as Aboriginal and European Heritage studies.

Another issue which could be addressed in respect of activities in the Molonglo Valley is a means of treating stormwater from Weston Creek and Woden Valley. These two districts are the only ones in Canberra which do not have treatment of stormwater runoff.

A study on Structural Planning is looking at a framework for planning and decision making. It focuses on urban designs, sustainability, telecommunications, water (its use and reuse), as well as public transport. In respect of water an aim would be to drought-proof as much as possible by using wastewater and stormwater.

The consultation with the Canberra community has been extensive and will be on-going. There are a number of ways to be involved through community workshops and feedback surveys. Stage 2, if progressed, will be the formal processes for changes to the Territory Plan and the National Capital Plan. These processes will include public hearings before Government committees.

Mr Carl called for Q&A.

### Q&A

- How have the fire hazard threats been considered? Mr Lewis indicated that there have been on-going discussions with the Emergency Services Authority. The discussions considered the fire threats and ways of mitigating the threats. The threats include fuel load and managing the fuel, distance to houses and the ability to protect life and property. Ms Ekelund added that the potential presence of residential areas in the Molonglo Valley reduced the susceptibility of threat to Black Mountain and consequently CSIRO and ANU. The current concerns are the green belts which lead directly into the city. An additional advantage to bushfire management by having residences in the Molonglo Valley is a straightening and reduction in the length of the urban edge on the western side of Canberra. Strategically locating open-space recreation areas such as playing fields and golf courses on the western edge also helps.
- There appear to be a large numbers of green corridors on the maps. Do you have enough corridors for fire passage? Yes, there are a lot of green corridors. The aim is to protect the environment and allow for animal movement, but balance this with fire management. There will not be a wall of buildings. The fuel load will be well managed.
- The areas indicated for potential residences are on both sides of the river. It looks like 3 new bridges will be needed? There is the rural crossing at Uriarra but the detail of river crossings has not yet been developed.

A comment on the workshops, the community workshop last Thursday was not particularly helpful but this evening's meeting is much improved over the messages from the consultant hired to conduct those workshops. Another resident indicated that the message on Thursday's workshop must have got through to the consultant as the Saturday workshop was well focussed.

- What will be the water re-use strategy? Any potential developer will have to meet water re-use specifications but it is up to the developer how they meet the targets. There could be tanks, water re-use, grey water irrigation. There are a number of options available.
- Where is the water coming from? There will be re-use and storage as well as attempts at drought proofing. – That does not answer the question where will the water coming from in the first place?
- Is there any intention to fix up the Molonglo River corridor? Yes, the river below the Dam could only be described as highly degraded and much work needs to be done to improve that reach to the Murrumbidgee River.

Mr Carl thanked Dorte Ekelund and Paul Lewis and advised that informal questions could be raised after the meeting.

### **Other business**

#### Stirling Development Application

There is a current DA for the block of land between The Croatian Retirement Village and The Weston Campus of Canberra College for 15 units. This is a small triangular block of land facing Fremantle Drive.

#### Annual General Meeting

The WCCC AGM will be on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> August at 7.45pm at The Weston Club. Members interested in nominating for the Committee can collect nomination forms tonight or phone the WCCC number.

#### Mirinjani Development Application

There is a DA for a 64 bed extension to the facility on the block of land to the south. The Mirinjani Development will be a topic for the August Regular Monthly meeting.

#### Spring Fair

Barbara Brinton advised the meeting that the Weston Creek Spring Fair will be held in Cooleman Court on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> Sept and the WCCC will have an information stand.

Mr Carl called for other business, as there was none forthcoming he closed the meeting at 9.25pm

### **Next Meeting**

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2005 7.45pm