

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

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Minutes Monthly Meeting

Replanting bushfire affected areas urban parks and places

25th June 2003

Welcome

Jeff Carl, Chairperson, WCCC welcomed residents and guest speakers to the meeting. Mr Carl introduced speakers:

- Peter Zanneti (Facilitator)
- Mary Hutchison (Facilitator)
- David Moyle (Project Officer - Canberra Urban Parks and Places [CUPP's])
- Catherine Kiernan (Project Officer - Planning and Land Management [PALM])
- Karina Harris (Consultant - Harris Hobbs Landscapes)

Also attending are

- Eugene Herbert (Manager, Asset Creation and Acceptance – CUPP's)
- Neil Hobbs (Consultant - Harris Hobbs Landscapes)

Mr Carl advised that General Business would be after the guest speakers.

Mr Carl also welcomed residents from outside Weston Creek as he had recently been advised that CUPP's was using this meeting as their Canberra- wide community consultation.

Apologies

Senator Gary Humphries, Annette Ellis MP, Jacqui Burke MLA

Replanting bushfire affected areas in Weston Creek

Peter Zanneti began by advising that he was part of the design team for the re-planting strategy which was dealing with the exchange of information with residents and identifying the priorities raised in the survey questionnaires. It was planned to hold two community consultation meetings for Canberra-wide consideration of the strategy and this was the first. They would be back here for the July meeting with the recommendations which is the second consultation meeting. The feedback from the questionnaires would be one input to the recommendations. The strategy intended to begin re-planting in the Spring.

Mary Hutchinson continued and emphasised that the questionnaire responses are the most important way for the community to have input into the strategy and they would like as many as possible back tonight. Others could be left with the WCCC and would be collected by the consultants.

Mary handed over to David Moyle from CUPP's who advised that CUPP's manage the urban open space off private leases. This covers town and regional parks, pedestrian walkways, shopping centres, lakeshores, road verges, medium strips and road alignments. CUPP's also manage asset creation such as outdoor furniture and lighting. Mr Moyle showed several overhead transparencies indicating the area of the urban re-planting strategy.

How will the fire affected replanting in urban areas be carried out? Harris – Hobbs are the consultants engaged to assist. They will tackle – what will streets and parks look like after planting; how will future plantings complement current plantings; no plants will be removed; what habitat and food ecology will be needed; how long will plants live and what if there is another fire. The strategy will be developed from recommendations and will be in place for re-planting to commence in Spring. The extent of replanting will be determined by the funds allocated for the process.

The strategy is the beginning of an overall concept of what to do. Examples of the areas under this strategy are laneways, pedestrian walkways, road verges and urban parks. Areas not covered are those not controlled by CUPP's such as the Hills, Ridges and Buffers in the National Capital Authority (NCA) National Capital Plan, ACT Forests controlled land and other land under the control of Environment ACT. Other agencies are doing strategies for the areas under their control and an example known to many here would be the Stromlo Forest Review and the Review of Non-Urban Bushfire-affected areas.

David Moyle asked of any questions:

Q&A

- A resident commented that his observations were that there appeared to be no integrated approach across agencies in the ACT Government? – Mr Moyle advised to the contrary indicating that there was significant cross-agency communication through a number of different processes to avoid compartmentalisation.
- Will this urban replanting cover the land on Narrabundah Hill and opposite Warragamba Drive in Duffy? – No that land is controlled by PALM. Catherine Kiernan from PALM advised that they are doing a review of the lands that they control and residents would be

aware that the Planning Minister Simon Corbell has advised that there will be no residential development on Narrabundah Hill.

- What is happening with the pine trees along Cotter Road? – Mr Moyle advised that he believed that unsafe pine trees are being removed.
- Are arterial roads as well as major and minor roads included? Yes it will all road verges and medium strips, an example being Stretton Drive.
- Who is responsible for the land bounded by Dixon Drive, Holder and Cotter Road? That land is controlled by ACT Forests.
- There does not seem to be consolidated material about who is doing what and where? Mr Moyle advised, and re-displayed an overhead transparency showing the linkages of the various strategies and reviews underway and how they were connected to the main Canberra Spatial Plan. Mr Carl added that the diagram was in the Community Bushfire Update several issues ago (Issue 14, Thursday 22 May 2003), had been used by various speakers at previous WCCC meetings and was a handout at the last three WCCC meetings.
- A resident raised concern that he believed that the meeting was incorrectly advertised as he had thought it was forest re-planting of bushfire areas. Mr Carl responded by advising that all advertisements placed by the WCCC indicated that the presenters were Canberra Urban Parks and Places, which is self evident that it was a discussion about urban parks. The material also mentioned streetscapes, urban open space and public safety. At no time were forests mentioned. The resident countered that the material did not specifically exclude the discussion of forests and Mr Carl had advised as such at the last monthly meeting of the WCCC. Mr Carl reiterated that at no time were forests mentioned. The previous discussion and advertising focussed on urban parks and replanting in streetscapes. [Later investigations have found that some publishers have used cut-down versions of WCCC information in other publications].

Mary Hutchinson continued and again emphasised that the questionnaire responses are the most important way for the community to have input into the strategy and they would like as many as possible back tonight.

A resident interjected by stating that had she known the importance of tonight's meeting and the limited opportunity to have input to the re-planting strategy she would have brought all her neighbours.

Karina Harris took over from Mary and asked for residents to consider their local area and what they would like in their area. Karina displayed an overhead transparency (text at attachment A) and asked residents to think about the landscape, what it should look like, what different uses the landscape is used for and consider the safety of plants and trees. Urban ecology is also important in terms of migration and habitats for birds and animals. Some highlights could be around shops and open areas where plantings affect space. Residents were asked to consider what they would like to see in their area, what is important to them and how re-plantings will reinforce perceptions of landscape types.

Karina reinforced the need to complete the survey form to collect the information of importance. The collection of the forms at the end of the night was required so as to collate the information

and put together the recommendations for the second meeting in one month. Rather than complete the forms the residents began to question the speakers in terms of the unacceptable approach and tight time lines taken in developing the re-planting strategy.

In the general melee of the debate residents asked for the survey to be published in *The Southside Chronicle*, online and in the Community Bushfire Update. A resident advised the meeting the distribution of the Community Bushfire Update had dropped off considerably in the last few months. Mr Carl indicated that as he was a member of the Community and Expert Reference Group (CERG) and would raise the concern of the poor distribution of the Newsletter in Weston Creek. [Information from CERG is that points of distribution have been stable for the last several months.]

The meeting then moved to a question and answer:

- Why are the forms needed back tonight? - There is a need to collect information as soon as possible to develop recommendations and bring these back to the next meeting.

What if the forms are not finished tonight? After a brief discussion CUPP's and the consultants agreed to receive the survey forms in the next few days. It was pointed out that there was no return address on the forms. The postal address was provided on the whiteboard (Harris-Hobbs Landscapes, 16 Robe St, Deakin 2600) Mr Carl indicated that this was an unacceptable timeline and more community consultation was needed. The consultants agreed to extend the period to 2 weeks to 9th July. [Later information - the closing date for receipt of the questionnaires has since been extended to Monday 21 July, 2003. Copies of questionnaires are available at Duffy Supermarket, Holder Chemist, Chapman IGA Foodmarket, Curtin Capital Chemist, Kambah Capital Chemist, Pearce - Digby Liquor.]

- A resident asked if the re-planting would include roundabouts? Yes if they were in fire-affected urban areas and were controlled by CUPP's
- A resident asked of the repair of broken footpaths in bushfire urban areas which had been crushed, smashed and demolished by heavy vehicles, graders and tractors? Mr Moyle asked that this be included on the survey form and the information would be provided to the appropriate agency.
- It was asked of the types species to be planted especially those which had low water needs. Mr Moyle advised that the strategy would not go to specifics of species but the general form, concepts and aims of a re-planting process. Low-water requirements would be a critical consideration.
- An attendee asked of the vagueness of the questions, in question 6 what is the meaning of "what matters"? The questions are designed not to lead an answer, they are designed to be broad ranging and allow open responses. The attendee responded that the vagueness, without guidance, may make the question not work.
- It was also asked of Question 4 "changes to characteristics" Does "characteristics" have a special meaning in landscape terminology? The question is an open invitation to respond.

- Will it count if people state what they don't like? How will it meet the needs of all people? Some people now have a fear of gum trees. – It is important that as many as possible record their concerns and preferences in the survey instrument.
- There is re-growth happening after the fires, what is happening to these plants? Can they be harvested and moved to appropriate locations? Please put it in the survey and it will be attended to. The residents indicated that time will pass before anyone considered the surveys and people out in the suburbs want to do something constructive about the regrowth.
- Will the verge of the Tuggeranong Parkway be rehabilitated? Yes the road verges and alignments of the Parkway are included in the re-planting.

Mr Carl called an end to the questioning and emphasised that the WCCC had raised with the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce and the Community and Expert Reference Group concerns on the tight timelines of community consultation and this process exposed another of those concerns. He also indicated that the survey was a useful method of collection of information and concerns of residents and an extension of 2 weeks was useful but still inadequate. Mr Carl thanked the speakers from CUPP's and Harris-Hobbs for their presentations. A short intermission of 10 minutes would allow some surveys to be completed and collected.

Mr Carl reconvened the meeting for general business

General Business

Broadacre Estate Study

Mr Carl advised the meeting that, after the last monthly meeting of the WCCC at which Mr Peter Johns of the Land Group, presented information on the proposed Study, the WCCC has placed on record with Mr Johns that the traffic issues of the Study need to be considerably strengthened to meet perceived concerns of the community. Residents are able to comment on the Broadacre Study. In addition Mr Carl advised that one of the parties interested in a block on land within the Broad Acre Study, the New Creation Ministries, would be guest speakers at the regular monthly meeting on 24th September.

Study of non-urban bushfire impacted areas

Mr Carl advised the meeting that to complement and balance the information provided to residents on the Stromlo Forest Review, the WCCC had agreed to host a meeting to discuss the non-urban areas impacted by bushfire. This is currently scheduled for the regular monthly meeting in August. Mr Carl expressed concern that this was an overlap with the AGM and asked for comments from attendees on how best to manage the process.

Several suggestions on the best approach were debated, however it was considered better to have a standalone meeting with the non-urban review being the only topic. This would be the same treatment as the Stromlo Forest Review meeting. Gary Caitcheon proposed a special meeting in August; this was seconded by Louise Adler. After consulting calendars it was considered that the 6th or 13th August would be preferable. Mr Carl agreed to contact George Tomlins of the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce with the preferred dates [later information is that the date is confirmed for Wednesday 13th August at 7.30pm at the Royals].

A resident raised concerns of the unwieldily number of reviews and strategies being run by different Government agencies, there appeared to be so much overlap and no linkages. Ms Pat McGinn, Deputy Chair of the WCCC did indicate that there were indeed a number of reviews, however they were collecting and collating information for the overall Canberra Spatial Plan. The Spatial Plan was an effort which was underway prior to the bushfires and the current reviews are contributing to that Plan but now have greater relevance and attention from the public.

It was suggested that there needed to be an understanding on the hierarchy of the reviews. Mr Carl advised that Mr Moyle had shown an overhead transparency of the linkages of the reviews and that the diagram had been distributed at several WCCC meetings. The diagram is also available on the ACT Government website It was suggested that the WCCC website have a linkage to the diagram (www.bushfirerecovery.act.gov.au/pdf/Reviews_inquiries_studies.pdf)

ACT Forests

The meeting was advised by Mr Carl that ACT Forests wished to attend a WCCC monthly meeting to discuss their proposed Business Case for softwood plantations in the ACT. It was hoped that they could attend the July meeting, although other speakers were already booked. It was an issue of timely interest for residents as it would fit neatly into the knowledge needed for the non-urban bushfire impacted areas meeting in early August. It was suggested by attendees that we try to focus the delivery of information by ACT Forests to the issues of concern to local residents rather than have complete and detailed information on the business case. Mr Carl agreed to contact ACT Forests and arrange a short meeting prior to their attendance at the regular WCCC meeting.

Any Other Business

Mr Carl called for any other business

Q – What was happening tho the block on the corner of Stretton and Cotter Rd? **A-** This was the subject of the May WCCC meeting and details are in the minutes on the website. That block is included in the Broad Acre Estate Study.

Q – Has the ACT Forests Business case been published, can we read it before the meeting? **A-** As previously mentioned a meeting with ACT Forests will be organised before the public meeting to find out if it a public document.

Q - What about Stromlo Observatory? **A** - Mr Carl replied indicating that he understood the ANU was considering options however information in the press indicated that optical telescopes for research work would not be re-installed. It was also public knowledge, before the bushfires, that the ANU was scaling back the optical telescope work and moving this work to Siding Springs.

Q- What are the boundaries of the Spatial Plan and the Stromlo Forest Review **A** – Mr Carl advised that at the Stromlo Forest Review meeting both Dorte Ecklund from PALM and George Tomlins from the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce were not definitive on the actual location of the boundary between the studies.

Q- Has the decision been made on the location of the memorial for the bushfires **A –** Mr Carl advised that the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce were seeking comments from the community. The suggestions raised at the last WCCC meeting are on our website (May 03).

Q- What are the boundaries of the area loosely termed “Stromlo”? **A –** It was advised that the boundaries are generally considered Uriarra Road / Cotter Road / Tuggeranong Parkway / William Hovel Drive and Coppins Crossing Road. In general any land that has line-of-sight to the Governor - Generals House is out of consideration.

Q – Who is looking after submissions for the two main reviews? **A -** PALM are managing the Stromlo Forest Review and the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce are the contact for the review of the non-urban bushfire impacted areas.

Q - What has happened to the reduction in the delivery of the Bushfire Community Update? they are not as regular as they have been? **A -** Mr Carl advised that in the beginning the Updates were delivered to the WCCC and these were then distributed to local outlets (shops, services stations etc). He understood that direct deliveries were being made. He would follow up with the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce to find out the details of current delivery arrangements. [All original delivery points are still in place except for IGA Waramanga.]

Mr Carl called on Maureen Hartung and Corri Hakaraia from the Blue Gum School who had previously requested an opportunity to raise issues with local residents.

Maureen advised the meeting that the Blue Gum School had 120 students and 26 staff and is renting premises in Watson High School. The school was looking for premises which could be leased and were interested in Weston Creek. The school was not in a position to build but would look to use under-utilised school buildings in the area. Schools in the area which had spare capacity were of interest. The former Holder Primary School is of interest as it is still in the form of an educational site. Blue Gum believes that government services located in some classrooms could be considered for relocation. It is a case of arguing that government services should be delivered from an appropriate location and maximise the benefit of the school infrastructure.

Maureen indicated that this was to raise debate and as a courtesy to alert the community. Mr Carl asked for questions/ comments. It was asked if other under-utilised schools were considered such as Duffy, Weston and Rivett. It was responded that the preference would be a stand-alone site as this impacted on Federal Government support for independent schools. Mr Carl added that recent experience has been that the government is reluctant to co-locate in the same buildings two different schools, although shared common facilities do exist between schools in Gungahlin. With this factored into the decision making process the under-utilised Holder Primary School is probably the most attractive/ best option. A resident asked of the process to gain an unused school lease. It was indicated that unused asset was first offered to a government department for conversion to offices, if this was declined then it was considered for the community to use. Jonathon Reynolds for the Gungahlin Community Council in asking a question declared self-interest in that schools should be used as schools and new Government Offices should be built in Gungahlin.

Mr Carl thanked Maureen Hartung and Corri Hakaraia and asked that the WCCC be kept informed of progress in respect of their negotiations with the ACT government. Mr Carl advised the meeting that Kerry Browning of PALM would be at the WCCC July meeting to discuss the community needs assessment study which PALM were conducting in Weston Creek and the Blue Gum issue appeared directly relevant.

A resident advised the meeting that Peter Martin of the Duffy Shops had died and his funeral was to be on Friday at 1pm.

Mr Carl asked for other questions, none were forthcoming

AGM

Mr Carl advised residents that the AGM will be on 27th August and to contact the WCCC if residents were interested.

Mr Carl made a final call any other business, as there was none forthcoming he closed the meeting and thanked residents and speakers for their attendance.

Meeting closed 9.50pm

Next Meeting:
Wednesday 23rd July 2003

PALM – Community Needs Assessment Study
ACT Forests – Business Case
CUPP’s – recommendations on a replanting strategy.

Attachment A Overhead Transparency used by Karina Harris (Consultant - Harris Hobbs Landscapes)

Replanting Strategy for Canberra's Urban Landscape

Tree and shrub plantings fulfil a variety of roles in Urban Landscapes. Historically, trees and shrubs in urban public areas have reinforced Canberra's identity as the bush capital.

Planting layout and design

Suburban planting patterns can create a hierarchy of zones and precincts, and highlight key areas such as local shops, suburb entries, landforms and pedestrian spines.

For example:

- Plantings can directly affect the perception of space, an obvious example is formal vs. informal planting patterns, creating a range of characters from hard edged and heavily structured to semi-natural treatments;
- Another common Canberra example is how street tree plantings of Eucalypts (with a relatively informal character) in suburban residential streets, may change to deciduous exotics, (with a formal, regular appearance) at local shops, to highlight the change in use of space;
- Tree form, character and type can change with road and landscape types: the landscape character of arterial, distributor, collector and local streets vary, and the planting pattern can reinforce the differences between landscape types.

Planting Functions

Trees in streets and parklands have a variety of functions, as follows:

- Trees provide a sense of scale and proportion to suburban areas;
- Trees provide shade and seasonal interest;
- Trees contribute to urban ecology, aiding faunal migration and habitat;
- On high speed roads, shrub plantings can shield headlight glare from oncoming vehicles;
- Appropriate scale of planting - (upper canopy, and low ground covers but little or no mid level planting) can improve public safety near pathways, underpasses and congregation points by allowing passive surveillance from adjacent areas.

The Strategy will suggest improvements such as:

- Careful plant selection and siting of shrub beds can help retard fire;
- Selection of new tree and shrub varieties that may perform better than previously planted trees with regard to disease, pests, performance and life expectancy
- Selection of new plantings to reduce potential weed impacts on adjacent natural and semi-natural areas.