

# **WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

*- Your Local Voice -*

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## **Minutes - Monthly Meeting 28<sup>th</sup> May 2003**

### **Welcome**

Chairperson Jeff Carl welcomed the Committee, residents and the guest speaker Mr Peter Johns from the Land Group, Department of Urban Services, who would be discussing the Broadacre Estate Study planned for the area in Weston bounded by Cotter Road / Stretton Drive / Unwin St and Hickey Court. Mr. Carl indicated that other issues would be raised in General Business.

### **Apologies**

Louis Young, Senator Gary Humphries, Helen Sinclair, Tim Janes, Jacqui Burke MLA, Annette Ellis MP, Margaret Nichols, Barbara Campbell.

### **Mr Peter Johns, Land Group**

Mr Johns advised that the area being investigated had been the subject of interest of a number of groups for the last 12 to 18 months. There was the land swap between ACT Forests and the Orana School so as to improve the Orana lease shape to allow other activities to progress. In addition the Sikh Association was negotiating their lease. Mr Johns acknowledged that the WCCC lobbying in respect of representations by current leaseholders, along with a meeting of current leaseholders and the WCCC, had contributed to the current Broadacre Estate Study being initiated.

It was recognised that there are at present three interested parties for the cleared land at the Cotter Road / Stretton Drive intersection, these are for an aged persons facility, the New Creation Ministries (NCM) and the new Headquarters or Depot for ACT Forests. Mr Johns acknowledged that David O'Keffee from Madison Lifestyle Communities Pty Ltd had an interest in an aged care person facility however this was not an approved purpose under the current "Broadacre" classification of the land. One application for the land had been received.

Mr Johns indicated that NCM had approached Urban Services in respect of submitting a request for a direct purchase of the block. Mr Carl indicated to the meeting that representatives of the NCM had met with the Executive of the WCCC to discuss possible alternate sites, as they believed their current fire-damaged site was too small. The Executive advised of a number of sites in Weston Creek which could be considered, however NCM has chosen to submit a request

for direct sale for the Cotter Rd / Stretton Dr block. The block they currently have is probably 2-3 ha and the block of interest is approximately 8ha.

Mr Johns acknowledged that the WCCC had submitted an extensive, detailed and timely submission to Urban Services which contributes to the consideration of the issue of a direct sale of the lease to NCM [the submission is on the WCCC website].

Mr Johns advised that at present a Consultants Brief is in preparation. This draft has been provided to the WCCC and the current leaseholders for their consideration and comments. Comments are required in the next 2 to 3 weeks before it goes to tender. The period of the contract will probably be 3 to 4 months. Comments of the draft Consultants Brief are welcome.

Mr Carl asked for any questions:

### Q&A

- If NCM got the block would it enter onto Cotter Road? - No, whoever had the block the preferred entry is onto Unwin Place opposite the Police entry.
- The visual look of the block is important, will some pines go back? - There would need to be extensive replanting as this is a gateway to Weston Creek which the WCCC submission had highlighted. Mr Carl also advised that this was reported in the current *Southside Chronicle*.
- Could Weston Creek have something other than churches and schools?
- Has the block gone to market? - No it has not been openly offered.
- Why hasn't re-zoning of the land in the area been part of the draft Consultants Brief? – That is an issue that could be taken on board in what is contained in the final Consultants Brief before it goes to tender.
- Is a variation to the Territory Plan a major obstacle? – No a variation to the Plan is not insurmountable, there have been over 200 variations.
- Why a Forest Depot? - ACT Forests had approached the Land Group looking for a site.
- Is there a reluctance to look at the land for aged care? The waiting lists are very long! No it is an open study of issues and options.
- The traffic issue did come to the attention of the WCCC some time ago, why has it not moved ahead? It is moving ahead now.
- Is the slope of the land a problem for aged care? There are a number of aged care facilities in Canberra on a range of different slopes; in fact it is very difficult to find flat land in Canberra. The design and siting can minimize the impact of slope.
- The waiting lists for older person accommodation are getting longer all the time, why is time being wasted?

- Mr O’Keffee asked Mr Johns of the reference to only one application being received for the land. Mr Johns replied that only one formal application for direct sale had been received. Mr Johns did agree that correspondence had been exchanged with Mr O’Keffee. Mr O’Keffee indicated that he understood that correspondence to be an application; he agreed to re-send the material to Mr Johns as a formal application.
- It was asked could such an application for aged persons be considered? A variation of land use would be required for an aged persons facility.
- A resident asked of alternate sites for NCM as an aged persons facility would need a large block. Mr Carl indicated that the NCM had been advised of the site next to the Canberra College Stirling Site, there is a small site in Darwinia Tce near the Chapman Shops, a site where Bovis Lend Lease are temporarily located as well as near the archery field in Holder
- Mr Ian Stehilk, the Business Manager of the Orana School advised the meeting that the Orana School had been in place since 1989 and is undergoing a boundary change through a land swap to straighten the block shape. Also there are currently 550 students in the school which is expected to grow to 750. In addition there are 50 staff. The safety issue of traffic in the area is a major concern for the School and the school is attempting to manage some issues of vehicle movement and welcomes a comprehensive assessment of the all the issues of the area. Orana is very interested in the gateway concept. The School recognises the needs for aged care facilities however this needs to be considered with urban design and this is critical to dealing with the area as the Weston Creek gateway.
- Mr Carl summarised that the main issues raised have been traffic, gateway, pedestrian access to Orana from Weston, and the “Broadacre” land use policy.
- A resident asked if it were possible to connect the top of Unwin Place to Heysen Street in Weston? Mr Johns indicated that this would probably involve a lease area or an area designated as a section in the block, perhaps there was enough space.
- A resident of Heysen St indicated that it was probably not in her best interests to have more traffic in Heysen Street but perhaps a small roundabout at the Hilder Street intersection might work.
- A resident suggested that aged persons facilities needed to be close to shops and the site was too far away from shops. Mr Johns advised that very few aged person facilities are near shops, Mirinjani being an exception. The most popular is St Andrews on Yarra Glen. Mr Carl added that he understood the concept proposed for the Weston site had both on site services as well as its own transport for residents.
- A resident advised that Weston Creek is central to all of Canberra and would have good access to people visiting the elderly in an aged persons facility on that site.

- A question was asked of what sites are available for aged care facilities, Mr Johns indicated that there was one site in Belconnen near Lake Ginninderra and one at Greenway, the questioner re-emphasised the question of available sites in Weston Creek. Mr Johns indicated that there was no other land of a suitable size in Weston Creek for aged persons. Mr Carl advised that the size of the land is critical because an aged care facility needs to be of a particular size to be viable and continue operation and small facilities become increasingly unviable so block size is critical - and there are no other available sites in Weston Creek of this size.
- A resident asked of the concept being envisaged by Mr O’Keffee. Mr Carl elaborated that that the proposal was to have continuing care units with high and low levels of care and self-care units. The expectation would be that there were clusters of 25 units in perhaps 6 clusters reaching 150 self care-units. In addition approximately 70 beds containing Dementia specific and respite care could be included. The premise is the ability to 'age-in-place' without a lifestyle disruption in moving to supported accommodation. The concept includes a communal park of native trees with stormwater and recycled greywater being utilised to water the park. The units would be single storey low rise and meet adaptable housing regulations. The clusters could be considered medium density.
- Mr Carl did advise the meeting that David O’Keffee from Madison Lifestyle Communities Pty Ltd had addressed several meetings of the WCCC and details were available in the Minutes on the website [Aug 2002 and Sept 2002].
- Mr O’Keffee added that the facility would have a community centre, consulting rooms, visiting physician, dietitian, nutritionist, visiting hairdresser, recreation room and swimming pool.
- A resident asked why the Broadacre Estate Plan was being considered in isolation from the Canberra Spatial Plan which was the topic of the recent special WCCC meeting? Mr Johns indicated that he was indeed in contact with the Canberra Spatial Plan team in PALM.
- A resident asked what would be happening if the pine forest had not been wind-damaged and clear? Mr Carl indicated that most of the pine forests in and around Weston Creek were in the harvesting cycle and would have been cleared in stages by 2009.
- A resident suggested that Weston Creek as it is now will be very different in 15 years and there is a need to consider change and how that change is managed for current residents.
- It was asked of the importance of the gateway concept for the area and what could be located opposite the area on the other side of Cotter Road. Mr Johns advised that the land was zoned “accommodation and tourist”. Activities already occurring were the Defence College and the RSPCA but there was land which may suit other uses.
- A resident asked if that land could be offered to NCM?

- It was asked if NCM could purchase the fire-damaged Vet block adjacent to them in Holder? Or perhaps some of the Sukyo Mahkaria lease? could the vet do a land swap? Mr Johns advised that he understood the vet was considering re-building.
- The draft Consultant's brief is called an estate plan - does this mean residential? Mr Johns advised that estate was a reference to the entire area as an estate and a number of issues, which need to be considered in a residential estate, also need to be considered in an estate of 'Broadacre' land use - that is why the terminology is very similar. The term urban design is taken as a wide-ranging interpretation of urban and does not specifically refer to urban residential.
- A question was asked of why are we looking at the detail of this Estate but the link to the Canberra Spatial Plan was not being made, where were the boundaries of the Spatial Plan? Mr Carl indicated that he understood that the boundaries of the 5 reviews were overlapping and very fluid. The fact that the land being discussed has block and section numbers and is sub-divided probably excludes it from the Spatial Plan and the review of non-urban areas. The Spatial Plan appears to be concentrating on possible new "greenfields" rather than existing subdivided land.
- It was asked why the hurry? Can we wait until other reviews are completed? We may have to consider very different options for the Estate depending what is put in Stromlo Forest.
- An elderly resident advised the meeting that she had lived in Weston Creek for 32 years and a retirement village sounds great because the current house is too big and we don't want to leave Weston Creek.

Mr Carl indicated that there appeared to be no end to the questions, however there was the opportunity to contact the WCCC by email or phone with follow up issues, as well as directly comment on the draft Consultants Brief to Peter Johns. Mr Carl thanked Mr Johns.

### **General Business**

#### **Tanjil Loop Duffy**

Mr Carl advised that he had attended an on-site meeting on behalf of the WCCC last Saturday morning with ACT Housing and local residents in Tanjil Loop, behind the Duffy Shops. This was to discuss the proposed rebuilding of the ACT Housing properties. There was very vigorous debate at the meeting. The option of rebuilding to the same design was not possible because that design does not meet current design specifications. Another option was to build 22 units and sell 7 privately and the retain 15 by ACT Housing. The Scout Hall would be re-built on their existing site adjacent to Tanjil Loop. Mr Carl indicated that ACT Housing would keep the WCCC informed on the progress.

### **Kathner St / Percy Cres Chapman**

Mr Carl advised that the first dual occupancy development applications (DA) have been lodged for fire-cleared blocks. These appeared to be two-storey DA's and the first of 30+ DA's with Planning and Land Management for fire damaged sites.

It appeared that of the 400 blocks that had been destroyed approximately 1/2 to 2/3 would be rebuilt with larger houses; some of these may or may not need to go through a DA process. The current DV200 is still going through minor changes on plot ratio and set back distances so that the possibility of 'building out' is reduced. If DV200 is used for these DA's then these rules apply.

The 5% limit on dual occupancy in a section no longer applies to new DA's, although the WCCC did lobby the ACT Legislative Assembly Planning and Environment Committee to keep this rule in place in Weston Creek for perhaps another 2 years to avoid a complete suburb character change to dual occupancies. The WCCC was unsuccessful in getting the 5% limit extended for additional time.

A resident asked of the ability to "complain". Mr Carl advised that it should be raised in the first instance with PALM then with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). The definition of an "interested party" who could complain was debated. Residents were encouraged to be vigilant in looking for DA notices in *The Canberra Times* and in front of individual blocks in their neighbourhood.

### **Electoral Re-distribution in ACT – Call for Submissions.**

Mr Carl indicated that the ACT Electoral Commissioner has called for public submissions on a possible re-allocation of electoral boundaries for the 3 electorates in the ACT.

The boundaries are determined using a formula based on populations and quotas and has a 5% error. The initial reading of the material supplied indicates that the current boundaries could be held in place for the next ACT Legislative Assembly election. The WCCC would be making a submission indicating a strong preference for Weston Creek to remain as a whole in the Molonglo Electorate of 7 members. If residents wished to make a submission, they are encouraged to do so. The documents are available from their website or phone 6205 0033.

### **AGM**

Mr Carl advised that the WCCC AGM would be on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2003 and if residents are interested in being on the committee please phone or email the WCCC.

### **Recreation Study – Bushfire-affected areas.**

Residents were advised that the options and discussion paper which as the basis of the study are available from the Environment ACT website. The strategy is looking at what was available in Stromlo Forest, what could be re-built there or what could be relocated to Kowen Forest. It appeared that the focus was on Uriarra and the Cotter areas, through to the Namadagi and

Brindabella areas. Residents were concerned that it was a long way to walk a dog to the Kowen Forest. A resident also indicated that in his reading of the material there were a lot of motherhood statements on recreation but nothing which is serious enough to have any substance to make a definitive submission. Mr Carl indicated that comments and suggestions for the WCCC submission would be very useful and to email them to the Council ASAP.

### **Any Other Business**

#### **Fire memorial**

Mr Carl advised the meeting that the WCCC had been contacted in response to the article of Greg Cornwell in this week's *Southside Chronicle* for a memorial for the bushfires at Duffy shops. Mr Carl also advised that the WCCC had been contacted to suggest that the proposed new ACT Public Library in Weston Creek should be named the BushFire Memorial Library. This Library could be located in the Coleman Court precinct. [A Library is also part of the WCCC submission to the Board of Management of *The Canberra College* who are investigating various management options for the Stirling site – copy on the WCCC website].

Mr Carl opened the discussion:

- A resident of Duffy indicated that she did not want to be reminded of the bushfires every time she went to her local shops.
- A memorial should be a place of quiet reflection and solitude.
- The sculpture idea is crazy, it will be vandalised, kids will be running around screaming, eating ice creams, litter and skateboarding, that is not where a memorial should be.
- Never heard such a stupid idea to come out of a politician.
- Duffy shop owners want everything; they are not the only ones in the rebuilding process.
- A Duffy resident suggested that each suburb could have a memorial, but that the main memorial should be in Duffy because it had the biggest material and personal losses.
- There needs to be sensitivity and caring in the design and location of a memorial.
- The idea of a sculpture with 4 seats for the 4 people who died is incredibly insensitive.
- A good place would be on the knoll just on the edge of the forest, near the Renmark Street intersection. This could be landscaped, screened and allow privacy for quiet reflection.
- \$185,000 is a lot of money to give to the Duffy shop owners for a memorial.
- We could spend the \$185,000 planting trees.

- We could have a huge memorial garden covering the area bounded by Cotter Rd [north], Eucumbene Drive [west] Warragamba Ave- Dixon Dr [south] and Stretton Dr [east]

Mr Carl indicated that residents could make suggestions on the Memorial to the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce by phone or email.

### **Noise Disturbance late at night**

A resident asked the WCCC to approach the ACT Police to increase patrols at shops especially Holder. This caused other residents to raise concerns about ‘yahooing’ – drinking, screeching tyres, broken glass and congregating youths late at night. Mr Carl indicated that he would contact Sgt Budworth at the Woden Station.

### **Duffy Service Station**

A resident asked of progress in the clearing of the site. Mr Carl advised that the Service station was one of 8 uncleared blocks in Weston Creek. The similarity appeared to be that the 8 blocks had business /commercial leases not residential leases. Mr Carl reminded residents that the tip for cleared fire damaged material would close on 16<sup>th</sup> June and that previous arrangements would then be back in place, which have significant costs associated with them.

Mr Carl called for any other business. As there was none forthcoming he closed the meeting, thanked residents for attending and advised that the next monthly meeting would be addressed by Canberra Urban Parks and Places to discuss the re-planting of fire-damaged areas in Weston Creek.

Meeting closed 9.25pm

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2003