

DRAFT
MINUTES OF THE WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

held on Wednesday 22 November 2006

at The Weston Club, Liardet Street, Weston

(The meeting was attended by 20 people.)

1. Welcome: The Chairman, Mr Allan Synfield, welcomed attendees to the meeting.

2. Apologies: No apologies were received.

3. Concerned Residents of West Kambah: The Chairman said that two speakers had agreed to address the meeting and they were Mr Geoff Pryor from the Concerned Residents of West Kambah (CROWK) and Mr Ross McKay from the Chief Minister's Department (?) to talk about a proposed virtual retirement village.

Mr Pryor said that CROWK consisted of 46 paid members but its history went back 30 years. The group was concerned about development on the western side of the Murrumbidgee River. What the organizers were hoping to achieve was a socially vibrant sustainable community.

CROWK saw as a continuous precinct the area stretching from Cooleman Court to the Tuggeranong Hyperdome. There is a beautiful view along the precinct which is unique. CROWK received a grant of money which is administered by the Southern Catchment Management Group because CROWK is an unincorporated body.

The precinct is a very healthy community but a "mind shift" is needed to see the precinct in regional terms. In particular CROWK members felt that development in the area was being taken over by others and not necessarily by people who lived in the area. CROWK is seeking discussion papers to tell outsiders what kind of people we are and what it is like to live in "our" area. We need to collaborate with artists and to contact more people.

A way of doing this will be to sit down with people in the various shopping centres possibly over a cup of coffee to discuss relevant issues. We need to mount a strategy forum and assist CROWK in promoting the project. At the end of the study period we want to particularly find out whether CROWK has made a difference.

After the discussion phase we want to be able to choose two specific projects for further study. This will be after June next year. The catalyst is to take control for us, the residents of the precinct.

Questions were then invited from the floor and the first question was "how did CROWK get a grant from Health Pact?" The answer was that the project was related to "wellness"

in the community. In response to a question as to whether CROWK was linked to the Canberra Centenary celebrations set down for 2013 Mr Pryor said No.

Should the Weston Creek Community Council and the Tuggeranong Community Council get together on this? Mr Pryor responded that he would love to see this happen and there would be value in doing this. He said that the precinct is geographically defined and it was bigger than a local neighbourhood. Health Pact funding was seeking to have a socially more engaged community and planned to go to sustainability. The Group intended to involve everybody in the community including the business people. Mr Pryor said the Group was not part of the SEE change initiative. (see below)

4. Virtual Retirement Village: The Chairman then introduced Mr Ross McKay from the Chief Minister's Department to talk about the proposed virtual retirement village.

Mr McKay said that over 90 per cent of older people never needed traditional residential care. There were many people who managed on their own but they were often socially isolated and some needed small jobs to be done. These could include changing light globes and even putting out the rubbish bins. The virtual retirement village idea came from the Beacon Hill community in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

Beacon Hill is a not-for-profit group of people who are fifty years or older . It is not intended that this community is a substitute for traditional institutional care where this is required. The community has 340 members and the annual fees (all prices in US dollars) are \$550 pa or \$780 pa. These fees are subsidized for people who have only modest means. In a larger community (not Beacon Hill) of 8,000 people it was found that 27 per cent had incomes below the poverty line. Typically these communities offered a wide range of services including home repairs, household cleaning, home office record keeping, meals and so on. There were active social programs including dining groups and concierge services to arrange outings and the like. The question was" does this list and proposal interest the WCCC?"

In response to questions Mr McKay said that such a virtual group in Australia might be eligible for Home and Community Care (HACC) funding. Generally the meeting welcomed these ideas and the feeling was that they should be explored further.

Comment from the floor suggested that computer technology had a "huge role" because it linked people in virtual reality. Another attendee suggested that the experience of the City of Gosnells in looking after older people was apposite and it may be possible to find out about this from the web.

ACTION. It was suggested that WCCC write to Mr McKay and to Communities at Work to set up a special meeting or day and invite people to join such a village. Most attendees at the meeting were keen to find out more. It was agreed that this be undertaken early in the New Year.

5. SEE Change (Society, Environment Economy): The Secretary reported that he had received an email invitation to join the SEE Change group meeting on Saturday 25 November at the ANU only two days earlier. Everybody was welcome to attend if they wanted to. It was fortunate that Mr Geoff Pryor was present because he was active in the SEE Change movement and he had agreed, at the last minute, to talk to the meeting about this organization. The Chairman invited Mr Pryor to address the meeting on this topic.

SEE Change was about sustainability and involved discussions about how we deal with our political system and how responsive the political system is to us. Included in this were community issues and it was important to get them going. Compared to CROWK SEE Change was more about process.

The Secretary reported that he knew little about SEE Change having just only heard about it but it his preliminary impression was that the organization was more about environmental education and not necessarily taking fixed positions on environmental issues. One possible outcome is for the organization to be co-located in schools and organizing projects such as community conservation gardens.

6. Other business: (a) Split of expenditure on emergency services: ACTION the Chairman undertook to write to the Emergency Services Authority to see if he could get the split of expenditure between the various sectors of emergency services?

(b) Development of Tralee and Aircraft noise: The Chairman invited the Secretary to raise this topic. The Secretary explained that ordinarily the WCCC did not involve itself with development proposals outside Weston Creek. However, there was a possibility, now that the NSW Government has agreed to allow development of Tralee on land the airport wanted set aside as a corridor for planes, that aircraft noise might have to be shared around the different suburbs of Canberra including Weston Creek as well as Tralee. The only comment from the floor was that a visitor to the site had been told by the developer that existing plane noise was not a problem as a plane flew overhead. The problem was compounded by the airport operator's expressed intention to operate the airport on a 24/7 basis and so encourage freight business from Sydney airport because that airport had a curfew in place during the night hours. There was no further comment.

(c) New Bus Timetables and routes: The Chairman reported that new bus timetables and routes would come into operation on 3 December. A comment from the floor was that the Rivett bus route was changing as well as the timetable. This had affected an elderly couple who now would not be able to manage the walk to the new bus stop especially with a load of groceries. ACTION had requested time to come to the meeting and explain the new arrangements but this had arrived too late for them to be included in the meeting.

(d) Youth issues: In response to a question from the floor about youth issues the Secretary was able to reply that Communities at Work had recently addressed the meeting to explain that falling demand for the Youth Centre at Weston meant that it

would reduce opening hours but it would increase hours of its school based programs in Weston Creek.

(e) WCCC position on passing motions at meetings: A speaker from the floor challenged the WCCC's present policy of not passing motions at meetings and said in a friendly discussion that this could be seen as a "cop out". The Secretary defended the present position but agreed that this criticism should be considered. **ACTION** that this issue be raised at the next committee meeting. (NOTE the fact that motions are not passed at ordinary meetings does not mean that action cannot be taken or results reported to the ACT Government. In these minutes there are several ACTION items for example.)

(f) Regular Chronicle Column: The absence of the regular "Chronicle" column in November was noted by the meeting.

7 Date of the next meeting: The next regular meeting of the WCCC will be held on Wednesday 28 February 2007 at the Weston Club.

The meeting closed at 9:20 pm