

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

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Minutes Monthly Meeting 23rd October 2002

Welcome

Jeff Carl welcomed the Committee and residents to the regular monthly meeting. Mr. Carl indicated that there was no main guest speaker for the meeting, which has allowed an opportunity to address a number of issues which have become of significance in the last month. Mr Carl indicated that Ms Kirsten Weber from Communities @ Work, David O'Keeffe from Madison Lifestyle Communities Pty Ltd and Alan Hinge from Mulley St Holder would each like to briefly address the meeting. Other issues could be raised in General Business.

Apologies

Di Patterson, Tim Janes, Jonathon Reynolds, Dr Joe Baker, Judith Poulos, Juanita Kerec, Dave Jamieson

Kirstin Weber - Communities @ Work

Kirstin introduced herself as the Community Development Manager at Communities @ Work. Communities @ Work was formed through the amalgamation of Tuggeranong Community Service and the Weston Creek Community Service (no links to the WCCC). Communities @ Work cover a potential population of 120,000 and provide childcare, 260 family day-carers; Before and After school care; training for childcare workers; care for children with special needs; transport assistance; youth program and behavioural management for children.

Communities @ Work has undertaken a needs analysis in the Weston Creek district using the local consultancy firm Nucleus. It was not an all-encompassing needs analysis but one which focussed on issues which could be addressed by the services currently provided by Communities @ Work.

The outcomes of the report (which is yet to be released) focussed on development of financial support services (similar to CARE Credit and Debt Management), art & drama classes, sport and recreation for healthy lifestyle, non-professional mentoring & support, parenting support, children's programs & childcare and volunteer homehelp.

The survey was undertaken using ABS statistics. The consultant undertook some surveys at shopping centres in May, a survey of users of the 'services' of Communities @ Work (although it was commented that this could be biased) and data from Planning and Land Management (PALM) on the characteristics of the area.

Kirstin indicated that the reason for her wishing to address residents was to (1) inform the residents that this needs analysis had been undertaken; (2) advise that Communities @ Work were looking at how to implement the issues/needs in the report; and (3) encourage residents to come forth with issues/concerns which were not touched on by the report (in addition to seeking suggestions on how other needs are identified).

Kirstin advised that the final report would be released shortly and feedback from the community was encouraged. There is no set timeframe for community comments. Some of the less complex needs and issues are being addressed immediately and others would need further time to consider.

Mr Carl thanked Ms Weber and indicated that the WCCC looked forward to receiving a copy of the final report.

David O'Keeffe - Madison Lifestyle Communities Pty Ltd.

Mr. Carl invited Mr O'Keeffe to update residents on a recent meeting of leaseholders in the Unwin Street - Hickey Court area of Weston who are adjacent to the clear-felled forest block which could possibly be used for aged care units.

Mr O'Keeffe advised that a meeting was held with NEB Holdings Pty Ltd (who have the AFP lease), Mr Peter Johns (Land and Property Group, Dept of Urban Services), Ms Pat McGinn (Deputy Chair WCCC), The Sikh Association, The Baha'i Association and the Orana School. The discussion focussed on the potential for utilising the clear-felled land. The main topic to arise was the problem of traffic flow at the Streeton Drive -Unwin Street intersection and it is an issue with all leaseholders. There was no opposition in principle to aged persons residences, although the representatives from Orana School could not give such unequivocal support until after the School Board of Management had discussed the proposal.

There was discussion at that meeting of the apparent 'corridor' on old NCDC plans giving alternate road access to Cotter Road and how this could be progressed. However there may be strong resistance from ACT Roads and Traffic for a linkage direct to the Cotter Road.

The land is currently zoned 'broadacre' and needs to be rezoned to 'community facility' for a direct sale and possible use for aged care facilities. The process is currently awaiting a response from the Land and Property Group in DUS.

Mr Carl thanked Mr O'Keeffe and indicated that the WCCC could publicise the issue to initiate further community debate in the up-coming letterbox 'flyer' scheduled for November. Mr Carl called for questions:

- A resident indicated that it may not be appropriate for another road to intersect with Cotter Road, however a 4 way roundabout may be viable. It was indicated that there is a sense of frustration within the leaseholders group on a lack of a traffic plan.
- If it is a direct sale how is the land valued? The Australian Valuation Office makes an independent determination as to the value of the land.

- In determining value are other potential uses considered? The formula for determining the value varies and may include other potential uses of land based on its zoning.
- A resident asked for an overview of the concept as he was not at the previous WCCC meeting. Mr. O'Keefe indicated 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 to 30 units in perhaps 7 clusters giving 150 self care-units. In addition approximately 70 beds containing some Dementia specific and respite care could be included. The premise is the ability to 'age-in-place' without a lifestyle disruption in moving to support 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.
- A resident indicated that he would be concerned in respect of the visual appearance of the proposal on the hillside. It was indicated that the proposal is largely on the lower flat land and the area under discussion does not take in the sloped area. The sloped area is The Sikh Association proposed lease.
- A resident asked if there were drawings available as yet? It was indicated that progress was such that it was too early to be considered at that level of detail. The responsiveness of the community and the willingness of Government to change the land's zoning were of critical importance before the next steps.
- A resident asked if the proposed facility would be self-contained. It was advised that the facility would have heated pool, gym, library, computer rooms, craft rooms, tennis court and artificial bowling green.
- A resident asked how could the community assist. Mr O'Keefe advised that support for the concept and the change of zoning was critical and community support needs to be shown to politicians.
- Is there a range of ways of buying into such accommodation? It was indicated that various 'packages' could be considered such as choice of payments, sacrifice of capital gain, part purchase etc.
- Will the elderly be in an isolated village? No, there has already been interest from Orana School in forging links with the elderly and involving school children in their education curriculum.
- Physical safety and well-being are important to the elderly. How is this managed? The physical layout, design, lighting, vehicle and pedestrian access are all taken into account to passively manage the safety of residents and other steps can be taken as needed.
- How much employment will this generate in Weston Creek? It is not known exactly the numbers but it would require a significant number of people to manage the facility on a 24-hour basis.

Mr Carl thanked Mr O'Keefe for the update and indicated that the WCCC would continue to raise the issue and gauge residents responses.

Mr Alan Hinge - Mulley Street Holder

Mr Hinge thanked Mr Carl for the opportunity to talk to residents regarding the proposed lease of the ex-Holder High School Oval to the Canberra Montessori School (CMS). Mr Hinge indicated that he was opposed to not being kept informed and of the community not being provided with correct and complete information on the costs and public subsidies.

Mr Hinge indicated that the concerns of the newly formed Mulley Street Residents Action Group were focussed on:

- Possible loss of all access to Holder Oval
- Possible loss of tennis courts and remnant woodland
- Increased traffic flow in Mulley Street
- Major public subsidies for the purchase of the land and possibly (but not confirmed) the construction costs.
- Indirect costs - surveys, infrastructure and public works.

It was advised that members of the resident action group were seeking:

- Retention of access to a significant part of Holder Oval
- Retention of current footpaths and access to the bikepath network
- Retention of tennis courts and remnant woodlands
- A comprehensive survey of traffic flow in Mulley St / Blackwood Terrace.
- Detailed investigation of claims and promises made by CMS and that all their commitments to the community are met.

Mr Hinge indicated that the school is better than other options but needs to be an assessment of the cost to the community versus the benefits.

Mr Carl advised the meeting that Dept of Urban Services (DUS), Land and Property Group had requested that the WCCC keep the Mulley St residents informed - the residents group was provided with a copy of the letter the WCCC sent in response to the DUS initiated site investigation.

General Business

Chapman Sports Oval

The meeting was advised of an update on the proposal that sport and recreation facilities were to be provided at Chapman Oval in response to the possible loss of the ex-Holder High School oval to the Canberra Montessori School.

Canberra Urban Parks and Places has set aside funding for facilities at Chapman oval (eg change rooms, toilets, storage, etc) and a copy of the draft plans is being sent to the WCCC. Input from other sporting and recreation organisations in Weston Creek who use, or would potentially use the oval if facilities were provided, is expected to be sought by Minister Bill Wood's Office and the Sport & Recreation Bureau.

The WCCC will continue to lobby for community input to the project.

Minutes of last month's meeting

Mr Carl asked if there were any comments/ queries regarding the minutes of the September 2002 Monthly meeting. No questions were forthcoming.

Public Transport Inquiry

Mr Carl advised that the recent WCCC position paper on the options for public transport in Canberra was now on the WCCC website along with the original Tram discussion paper. Although there was still significant support for the Tram option this appeared limited to the Gungahlin district. Cars are the major transport method in Canberra, and car-pooling needs to be explored.

The WCCC is involved because a majority of our residents commute since we do not have significant employment sectors in our district. Stringent anti-car measures or poor bus routes/timetables would disadvantage our local residents and because of our location it would be an impact on our quality of life.

The recent Census data for travel to work gives a snapshot; a vast majority of Canberran's commute by car. More people walk/cycle than use buses! The subsidy for buses is about \$60M pa; what is the subsidy for cyclepaths/footpaths which have a greater number of users? It is expected that community consultation on public transport options will continue into next year.

Pro-development in Weston Creek?

Mr Louis Young raised the issue of the tone of the recent WCCC columns in *The Southside Chronicle*. Mr Young indicated to Mr Carl that he considered the tone and approach pro-development in Weston Creek. Recent examples being the Canberra Montessori School and the North Duffy /Holder land moratorium.

Mr Carl indicated that the approach taken by the Executive, who were all consulted on the draft columns, was to raise the debate and alert residents of information that the WCCC was aware of. Not alerting the local residents would amount to not fulfilling the reason the WCCC exists. We are a community lobby group for the benefit of residents. The recent column on the land use for the Stromlo Forest was in some respects tongue-in-cheek but was a very useful example of the potential impact of development in Weston Creek.

Mr Carl advised that being controversial needed to be balanced; as Canberra is a competitive city in which we are trying to attract services and facilities for our residents whilst minimising any adverse impact on the quality of life in Weston Creek. Mr Young considered that the columns may be sending the wrong message to planners, PALM and Urban Services.

The retention of services, in an area of falling population, is a major concern for the remaining residents Mr Carl noted. Mr Young commented that having the nearby forests does limit Weston Creek and it is a sacrifice that our residents are making for Canberra at large and he agreed that there is a need to balance the aspirations of living in Weston Creek with its current attributes. Would it be possible to stay as it is without development?

Mr Carl used the example of vacant 'community facilities' land. The land is there for long term release, and the timing of that release and what can be provided on that land is something that the WCCC can hope to contribute to on behalf of residents. The earlier discussion on the latent demand for aged care facilities in Weston Creek is an indication of a maturing population. It is apparent that the current Minister for Planning Mr Simon Corbell MLA has raised expectations as to the level of community consultations and the impact that residents can have on the planning process - it is yet to be seen how this input will be channelled to a beneficial outcome.

Mr Carl thanked Mr Young for the raising the issue and agreed that developments in Weston Creek were often controversial. Residents had the right to know and the WCCC was the means of getting the message out. He also indicated that he believed that Urban Services and PALM were well aware of the WCCC and its approach and that the 'wrong' signals were definitely not being sent to planners.

Mr Carl called for any other business. As there was none forthcoming he closed the meeting, thanked residents for attending and advised that Mr Bill Wood MLA would be the guest speaker at next months meeting.

Meeting closed 9.25pm

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 27th November 2002