

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

Email: info@wccc.com.au

Website: www.wccc.com.au

Phone: (02) 6288 8975

Fax: (02) 6288 9179

ABN: 52 841 915 317

PO Box 3701 Weston Creek ACT 2611

Minutes

October Monthly Meeting 7.45pm 22nd October 2003

Welcome

Mr Carl, Chairperson, welcomed the committee, residents and guest speakers to the meeting. Mr Carl introduced Andrew Brown from GHD Pty Ltd and Peter Johns from ACT Land Development Agency (LDA) who would talk on the Broadacre Estate Study in Weston. The Study is directed to the former ACT Forests' block of land bounded by Cotter Road, Streeton Drive, Unwin Place and Hickey Court. Following these Mr David O'Keeffe from Madison Lifestyle Communities, would speak to the meeting.

Mr Carl indicated that Mr O'Keeffe was being given an opportunity to talk to residents out of balance and fairness as other groups interested in the land, New Creation Ministries (NCM) and ACT Forests, had previously addressed residents at WCCC meetings.

Apologies

Gary Caitcheon, Karin MacDonald MLA, Katy Gallagher MLA, Juanita Kerec, Steve Pratt MLA, Louis Young, Tim Janes.

Broadacre Estate Study

Andrew Brown of GHD informed attendees at the meeting that this was an information session to advise residents of the Study, its approach and the issues being canvassed. The approach by GHD is to start with the fundamentals of town planning and undertake a baseline assessment of the site. The site is being looked at in terms of its 'fit' in Weston Creek and how this fits with its potential role in the wider Canberra context.

The aim is to look at the characteristics of the site rather than speculated activities which could be undertaken at the site. GHD would provide the LDA with a report and recommendations. The Study would cover town planning issues of economics, social issues and environmental considerations. Also the Study would look at the issue of should it be one or several sections in a block. Also investigated will be slope, soils and natural hazards. The Study will include infrastructure present and potential infrastructure needs depending on recommended uses. The cost effectiveness of infrastructure would also be investigated when the land is sold.

This Study would take into account future provision of infrastructure and services to cope with possible uses. The sustainable use of the land is a prime consideration and the topography impacts on stormwater runoff and soil erosion.

Mr Brown indicated, on a plan on display, that the photos surrounding the plan gave an indicative view of the types of activities in the area. The Study will take into account existing lessees, which appear at present to be religious and educational.

Issues which have been identified early are mature trees, restricted access points, and traffic volumes – these could be solved by engineering solutions. Traffic capacity of the narrow road is an issue currently and will be a significant future constraint. The Study will look at what's there now, what are the constraints and what are the opportunities. The key stakeholders have been consulted and this includes this session at a WCCC meeting.

Also an intangible which needs to be considered is the feelings for the area and the aspirations of current users and residents. It is not an easy process and feedback is very important in ascertaining acceptable and workable solutions where there are obvious conflicting future opportunities. The economic use of the area needs to be considered from a town planning perspective. The aim will be to provide information to the LDA for them to move ahead.

Mr Johns continued indicating that LDA have commissioned GHD to undertake the study that LDA commissioned.

Q&A

Mr Carl called for questions:

- The area under investigation is Broadacre, is the land across the Cotter Road also Broadacre? Yes.
- Is this study linked to any other study or review going on at present? Mr Johns indicated that it was specific to the block and looking at an existing block with sections which differs from the other reviews which are looking at future potential use. Catherine Kiernan from ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) indicated that ACTPLA would take into account advice from the LDA and also take account of the fact that both sides of Cotter Road had the same land zoning.
- What are the blocks being investigated? Mr Johns indicated that there are several blocks and numerous sections in the area and that existing leaseholders are being consulted.
- What is the definition of Broadacre? Mr Johns indicated that it usually covered schools and other uses which had large land take. The types of activities which could be approved are numerous and include special care establishment and special care hostels. [included for completeness: agriculture, animal care facility, animal husbandry, caravan park/camping ground, cemetery, communications facility, community activity centre, corrections facility, defence installation, educational establishment, emergency services facility, veterinary hospital, land management facility, municipal depot, nature conservation area, outdoor recreation facility, parkland, place of worship, road, scientific establishment, special care establishment, special care hostel, tourist facility, transport depot, health facility, or woodlot].

- Is a retirement village acceptable? Assisted living and hostel are; but it is a grey area depending on the type of retirement village, which is a very general term.
- It was mentioned in the presentation that a holistic approach was being taken to see how the land fits in Weston Creek and Canberra in general. Will the study consider recommendations to change the land use definition? Possible changes could be considered.
- If changes were considered what is the process. Catherine Kiernan from ACTPLA responded. It would need a legislative change to the ACT Territory Plan and perhaps the National Capital Plan. This would go from LDA to ACTPLA and if agreeable go to the ACT Assembly to change the Territory Plan and to Federal Parliament to change the National Capital Plan. This would be a time consuming process. However some parts could be granted special provisions if needed.
- Are the boundaries open to discussion? Mr Johns indicated they were as there were many and complex issues impacting on the use of the land.
- The provision of further aged care facilities in Weston Creek has been well discussed; is it an option? Mr Johns replied Yes many options are being considered and the wording 'Broadacre' does allow many and varied activities, such as defence facilities, RSPCA, schools and vets.
- People may remember the trailer park and the Big Strawberry –are they likely to reappear? Mr Johns indicated he had known of the Big Strawberry but not the trailer park, and probably no, they would not re-emerge.
- How will the weighting of the views of the current leaseholders and the community views be taken into account? Mr Johns indicated it was very difficult to give weightings to particular views and issues in town planning. Mr Brown advised that most, but not yet all current leaseholders have been in discussions, and there would be a return to a future WCCC meeting.
- Is there a general feeling of what should be on the land, there appears that there will not be consensus? Mr Carl replied that there are indeed numerous and a variety a views ranging from NCM, aged care, support for a recreational facility, open space, kangaroo refugee and return to forest. It needs to be considered that there is little or no Government money to maintain the area.
- What got this study going – who wanted it? Mr Carl replied that the WCCC has been lobbying for over 2 years, since the windstorm damaged the trees in February 2001 and it was known that the land would be returned to the ACT Government. In addition numerous current leaseholders had attended previous WCCC meetings and voiced concerns on traffic flows and congestion. Orana School were very concerned with a public road through their twin campus. Orana, the Baha'is, and the AFP Complex all generate significant traffic volumes on a narrow road. Both the Sikhs (who are planning to build in the area) and the Baha'is hold events attracting upward of 600 people and the Orana School is projected to grow from 500 students to 700 which has an exponential increase in traffic.

- A resident asked of the potential use of the land and in Mr Brown's presentation he used the word sold? Mr Brown indicated that that was a separate discussion from this study. This study was focused on what the land could be suited for, not the decision on what would occur.
- Was that a yes or no it would be sold? Mr Johns replied that no decision had been made on the NCM request for a direct sale of land.
- That was not an answer; is there an assumption that it is be sold or not sold; if it is to remain urban open space selling is not an option? Mr Johns indicated there were no underlying assumptions.
- How large is the block? 9 ha.
- Is the land to remain as one block and how long has it had this current land zoning definition? Mr Johns indicated that there is potential for block and section boundaries to be re-aligned although large trees possibly older than 25 years would need to be taken into account. The Territory Plan was brought in in 1991 and the term Broadacre used. Mr Brown advised that he had checked and the land has never had a land-use variation so it has always been Broadacre.
- Mr Carl asked of the link to the Canberra Urban Parks and Places verge re-planting effort described at a previous WCCC meeting and how this would affect the site? Catherine Kiernan indicated that the road verge on Cotter Road adjacent to the block was very narrow and extra plantings would need to be considered.
- A resident observed that people appeared keen for aged care – could a land use change be considered? – Mr Johns replied that that view was definitely on board and in the discussions.
- A resident asked of the timeline of the study. Mr Johns indicated that it would be before Christmas and it was expected to come back to another WCCC with some findings before the final report was submitted. Mr Carl indicated that a timeslot could be considered for 26th November after the Spatial Plan meeting.
- Ms McGinn indicated she had a question from her neighbour, the area is the formal entrance to Weston Creek, it is our 'gateway' how will this be re-established? Mr Johns advised the meeting that they were well aware of the importance of the area as a gateway and appropriate treatment to an important access would need to taken into account.
- Is the land opposite, bounded by Streeton, Cotter, Dixon, Warragamba up to Duffy included? No not specifically but impacts from current and possible future uses around this land will be taken into account.
- Increasing traffic turning into Unwin Place from Streeton Drive is a concern as traffic comes down Cotter Road at 80kms. – Mr Johns replied that they were aware of the speed of traffic taking the corner and the left turn into Unwin Place was indeed very near the Cotter - Streeton intersection.

- What was ACT Forests wanting the land for? Mr Carl replied that it was being considered as one of the possible sites for the re-building of their depot and headquarters. ACT Forests still control the land.
- Could ACT Forests replant trees? Technically yes, but given the McLeod report recommendations for no commercial plantation east of the Murrumbidgee, that would need to be taken into account.
- Why is the land across the road not in this study? Mr Carl indicated that the boundaries of the Urban Fringe Study and the Canberra Spatial plan study were very grey.
- If the land is 9 ha how much is needed for each use? Mr Johns indicated that a retirement village may need 6ha and a school has guidelines established by the Dept of Education. Other uses would have different land needs.
- A resident indicated that NCM admitted at the last meeting that car parking was a major issue and NCM may wish to provide on site car parking so it could be very big. Mr Carl indicated that he understood the current NCM block in Holder was 3ha and had little on-site car parking.
- Ms McGinn indicated that she would not like to have acres of car parking at the gateway to Weston Creek. Mr Brown replied that perhaps the concept of a smaller multi-user car park could be considered in a less obvious location. Mr Carl advised that the original NCDC plans had a communal car park in Hickey Court.
- A resident voiced that uses which have high volume of cars and a high demand for car parking should have leases near transport hubs. Mr Brown advised that although it could not be considered a transport hub, buses are able to access the area for the school.
- It was commented that this was not a considered reply. Transport hubs at shopping centres already have car parks which could be utilised rather than building more car parks which is moving away from the ACT Government approach to use more public transport.
- An attendee asked Mr Johns if the consultant's brief was a public document and could copies be provided? Mr Carl indicated that copies of the brief were on the table at the back of the room and freely available. It was also on the WCCC website under RECENT ISSUES.
- A resident raised concerns that recreational areas were being lost and Montessori School was a good example, why couldn't this land be used for recreational purposes.
- An attendee, who identified himself as a member of New Creations Ministry, indicated that the New Creations proposal does have facilities for use by the general community. NCM have youth programs, outreach programs, childcare facilities, etc which help to meet the local community's needs. Therefore, if NCM obtain the lease on the land, the land will not really be lost to the local community.

- Another attendee indicated that although there may be such facilities, if New Creations goes ahead, they would not be used by everybody even if New Creations considered them for everyone's use. This was because not everyone in the community would use facilities run by a religious organisation.
- It was pointed out that if the land use policy was changed from Broadacre to another type then the land would be changing from predominantly not-for-profit users to commercial for developers to gain this parcel of land and obtain profit from it.

Mr Carl called an end to the questions given the time and the next speaker. He indicated that Mr Johns and Mr Brown are welcome at the next WCCC meeting on 26th Nov to provide feedback to residents. Mr Johns and Mr Brown then left the meeting.

David O'Keeffe - Madison Lifestyle Communities Pty Ltd.

Mr Carl invited Mr. O'Keeffe to outline the concept developed by Madison Lifestyle Communities for the land at the corner of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive. Mr Carl indicated that as New Creation Ministries and ACT Forests had previously addressed residents at WCCC meetings Mr O'Keeffe was being invited to balance the debate and for fairness to have the opportunity to present.

Mr O'Keeffe began by advising the meeting that he was well aware of the needs of the aged as his parents were 79 and 80. The proposal was only at the concept stage and only a concept drawing had been made with no major detail. The large drawing was put on display.

Mr. O'Keeffe 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 about 150 self care units. In addition approximately 70 beds for respite care could be included. The concept included a communal park of native trees and stormwater would be recycled to water the park. The units would be single storey low rise and meet adaptable housing regulations. The clusters could be considered medium density. How much land is available depends on the community's interest and the receptiveness of government to new ideas on the use of the land.

Mr O'Keeffe advised that approximately 1 in 10 people over 70 required aged care. The requirements appeared to be a good size home on limited land. At present a commercially viable facility needs to be 70 to 80 beds and this appears to be heading towards the 80 to 100 bed size. The current ratio is approximately 1 bed in aged care to 2 beds in a retirement village. On the concept drawing there is 2ha for aged care 0.5 ha for the community centre and 5.5ha for a retirement village.

The concept drawing also addresses some major issues raised over the last 12 months including closing the road through the Orana School and relocating it; a central multi-use car park and appropriate treatment of the Cotter Rd / Streeton Drive and Unwin Place / Streeton Drive intersections to deal with current traffic problems and future possibilities. Mr O'Keeffe advised that a retirement village generates only 25% of traffic of a normal suburb and almost all of it is outside peak hours.

A good example of a facility close to a main road and not near a shopping complex is the very successful St Andrews Village on Yarra Glen.

Q&A

Mr Carl called for questions:

- A resident asked how large was the facility proposed? Mr O’Keeffe indicated that 70 beds in aged care and 140 to 150 in a retirement village.
- It was asked of how the land would be available? Mr O’Keeffe indicated that it could be by direct sale or through auction.
- A resident asked of the distance to a shopping centre for the elderly? Mr O’Keeffe indicated that the facility would be of the size to have its own bus. In addition it is known that residents at Moreshead travel 1.75km to Dickson Shops on motorised scooters, and Cooleman Court is much closer to this site.
- A resident asked who would re-do the road works? Mr O’Keeffe indicated that these are called off-site capital works and would be the responsibility of the lease holder who had an impact on traffic flows and car parking. In other developments as much as \$600,000 to \$700,000 had been spent on off site capital works and roads.
- An attendee advised of the meeting with pensioners that Simon Corbell had had a few weeks ago when he said blocks close to shops would be kept for pensioners. Mr Carl replied that he understood this approach was being considered in new suburbs on the fringe of Canberra. In older suburbs consolidation of leases and higher densities can be undertaken within 300m of shops.
- A resident asked of the steep gradient of the land. Mr O’Keeffe indicated that the gradient was only about 1 in 7 at the steepest part and most could be managed with civil engineering works and meandering paths. Ms McGinn gave the example of aged care units at Waramanga Shops which are dual level; both levels have access from ground level. Mr Carl indicated that some nursing homes in Brisbane are also on steep slopes.
- It was asked why the area bounded by Streeton, Cotter, Dixon, Warragamba up to Duffy could not be used? Mr Carl advised that this was a designated buffer zone in the McLeod Report.
- Is aged care in the Broadacre definition? Mr O’Keeffe replied that special care establishment and special care hostels called ‘assisted living’ can be included. There is an example of aged care being built on Broadacre land in Belconnen.
- What is the opinion of the school? At a previous WCCC meeting, the school indicated that it was generally supportive and could include programs that interact with the facility such as 'adopt-a-grandparent'. In addition the facilities could provide after school care for Orana children.
- What facilities would be on-site? There would be an indoor heated pool, library, and community services.

- What is the distance from car parking from the units? All units would have a garage; this is unlike the facility in Araluen St Fisher where undercover parking next to the unit is not provided.
- How and where would paths and cycle paths go? Mr O’Keeffe reminded the meeting that this was a concept drawing and the details were not on it; but the issues being raised could be addressed and a workable solution found.

Mr Carl thanked Mr O’Keeffe for the presentation and answering questions.

Any Other Business

Mr Carl called for other business

Canberra Social Plan.

Mr Carl advised that the draft submission was coming together and covers issues of land rates and taxes, community funding and community facilities. If residents wish to add comment please send an email to the WCCC by Friday 23rd Oct. The WCCC submission would not cover issues likely to be picked up by other organisations, such as clean air, water pollution, discrimination and disability issues.

The Canberra College

Mr Carl advised that he and Barbara Brinton, an education adviser to the WCCC, attended the College Board meeting of The Canberra College early this evening. The information provided by Mr John Stenhouse a/g Principal of the College was reinforced. That information is in the September meeting minutes at the back of the room. The Stirling site would be retained as an educational facility into the long term.

Mr Carl asked for any other business.

Mr Sutherland advised the meeting the Weston Creek Community Services (not linked to the WCCC) merged with the Tuggeranong Community Services to be called Communities @work. It is intended to wind up the Weston Creek Community Services at a special AGM next Tuesday 28th Oct at 12 noon in the offices in Parkinson Street, Weston. All welcome.

The Transport Reform Advisory Group has been advised by ACTION that weeknight services after 8pm to Weston Creek will be discontinued. Mr Carl indicated to the meeting that representatives from ACTION had previously addressed a meeting of the WCCC to outline the revised service provisions.

Mr Sutherland also spoke on the issue of the lack of a part of the Streeton Drive bicycle path, perhaps 200m near the Mulley Street intersection. The completion of this relatively short strip would join two existing parts of bicycle paths. In addition Streeton Dr south Hindmarsh Drive needs to have an on-road bicycle path. There was debate in the meeting as to the impact of not having a bicycle path and whether the normal footpath was acceptable.

The meeting was advised that there were copies of the September minutes available. Also copies of the WCCC submissions to the "Review of Non Urban ACT" and the "Canberra Spatial Plan" are on the website. In addition, the WCCC submission on the Arawang Netball Court lease renewal is also available. The WCCC has again written to the Treasurer Ted Quinlan MLA in regard to his 2001 election commitment to increase the size of the netball/AFL car park in Stirling. It is understood that this is now with Minister Wood, Minister for Urban Services. The WCCC submission to the Canberra Social Plan will be on the website this weekend.

A resident adjacent to cleared bush fire affected blocks in Duffy asked of the responsibility to clear weeds which were now fence height. Mr Carl indicated that it was the leaseholder's responsibility. The residents advised that the leaseholders(s) were not known. Mr Carl indicated that as he was a member of the Community and Expert Reference Group (CERG) and there would be a meeting tomorrow (Thursday) he would raise the concern of the poor maintenance of cleared blocks. Another resident indicated that it was also a problem in Chapman

Mr Carl called for any other business. As there was none forthcoming Mr Carl closed the meeting and thanked residents for their attendance.

Meeting closed 9.45pm
Next Regular Meeting
Wednesday 26th November 2003