

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

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Established 1991

(Weston Creek Citizens Council Inc. – Reg. No. A2637)

Record of Proceedings

Regular Monthly Meeting

Wednesday 28 September 2005.

at The Weston Club, Liardet Street, Weston.

1. Welcome

The Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) Chairperson, Mr Jeff Carl, opened the meeting at 7:45 pm and welcomed those who came. He noted that school holidays and the rain which was otherwise welcome would prevent some people from attending the meeting.

2. Apologies

Senator Gary Humphries, Jane Smyth, Bill Stefaniak MLA, Dr Deb Foskey MLA, Pat McGinn, Juanita Kerec, Gary Caitcheon, Tricia Hoad

3. Bushfire Recovery

Responding to a question from the floor about illnesses as a result of the 2003 bushfire disaster, the Chairperson, said ACT Health was not actively investigating the matter, but were passively monitoring the situation. He said that there were a number of community organizations which had an interest in this subject and they included Relationships Australia, Communities @ Work and Supportlink and it could be worth speaking to them. It was also worthwhile speaking to the Bushfire Recovery Unit which was still operating though not in dedicated premises and at a reduced level. As mentioned previously, there was passive monitoring of the situation though people who, for example, turned up at hospital casualty departments and did not mention that they thought their problem was bushfire related would not be picked up. This is the first time that this has been brought up at a WCCC meeting.

Another question was “is there a link between the ACT Government making a profit out of pine trees and toxins”. The answer to this question was that not all toxins would have come from the burning pine forests and many could have come from burning houses. It was suggested that the operations of ACT Forests was not now viable. Houses burnt in

Duffy for example, in Warragamba Avenue, despite the fact that the pine trees were two to three times further away from them than the Australian standard specified.

People still being affected by these matters should also speak to Mr Richard Arthur and Mr Ric Hingee. They could be contacted via the Phoenix Association.

Mrs Brinton said she would raise these matters at the next Bushfire Community Development Meeting.

The Australian Catholic University, in partnership with the University of Canberra and the ACT Government, had started follow up surveys on community recovery issues arising from the bushfire and had received funding to do this research. The WCCC understand that the research team will be advertising for people to participate in the survey if they want to.

A related question was the fact that people were dumping rubbish in the old forest areas and this was becoming a problem. The Chairperson indicated that all the WCCC could do was to report this. There was now a manager for the Stromlo Forest and people could always ring ACT Forests.

Another point was that people who kept their houses after the fire now found themselves living in a new neighbourhood which may not be what they want. There were issues related to the size of the new houses compared to the size of the original houses and other rebuilding and planning issues.

4. New Library for Weston Creek

At the recent "Up the Creek" festival the WCCC ran a stall where people were asked to make a wish for Weston Creek. There was strong support for the establishment of a permanent library in the district. The ACT Government has indicated that this is not one of its priorities. In these circumstances all the WCCC can do is to continue to point out to the Government that this is a high priority concern for residents. In the meantime the WCCC will continue to advertise the times of visits by the mobile library in its electronic Newsletter to help boost the number of library users in Weston Creek.

Related to this issue is the need for more community space for festivals such as the "Up the Creek" festival as the existing space is limited and this could be incorporated in any new library space.

5. Apologies for recent electronic communications difficulties.

The Chairperson apologized for recent delays in getting out the WCCC electronic Newsletter. This was due to a combination of factors, including new anti-spamming measures adopted by our internet service provider and personnel changes on the WCCC Committee. These factors have now been looked into and rectified and there shouldn't be any more delays.

6. Broadacre Estate News

The Broadacre Estate in Weston Creek is that area of land on the corner of Streeton Drive and Cotter Road and which extends up to Hickey Court and Unwin Place. The

latest development will be a modernistic looking Sikh Temple. Construction of this facility may start shortly.

Other organizations in the area include the Orana School and the Baha'i Temple. The Chairperson reported that as far as he knew the Baha'i community was not planning any expansion at this stage but it has longer term plans to expand when members increase and resources became available. The Orana School is planning to expand especially to build a new playing field. To do this the school and the ACT Forests had agreed to a land swap so that the playing field could be accommodated in land being leased by the school. This has been discussed at previous meetings of the WCCC. The school will still have two campuses but most of the expansion will take place on the lower campus.

The eight and a half hectare site immediately on the corner of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive was sought after by New Creation Ministries but this church has now been offered a new site in Kambah and the WCCC understands that this is acceptable to the church. A developer was interested in the broadacre site for the construction of an aged persons village but this would have required a change in lease purpose. The developer may no longer be interested in this project. The Chairperson said that the site may also be considered for new Defence Force housing but this had yet to be confirmed.

The Australian Federal Police complex over the road in Unwin Place had been sold by the police in recent years and leased back.

The WCCC understands that the tender process is underway for the construction of Stromlo Village on the site bounded by Warragamba Avenue, Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Road and work could commence soon. The tender has been closely tied to the contract being let for Uriarra Village.

Mrs Jocelyn Plovits from the ACT Government has agreed to attend future meetings of the WCCC to discuss progress on Deeks Forest Park and the Bushfire memorial being constructed near to the intersection of Cotter Road and Eucumbene Drive.

The Woden Gymnastics Club, which presently occupies space in the Grant Cameron centre (the former Holder High School), is keen to build its own facility. The club has approached the ACT Government to build on the site formerly occupied by New Creation Ministries in Dixon Drive, Holder. The WCCC has been advised that the Gymnastics Club is cooperating with the ACT Table Tennis Association and the Archery Club with a view of jointly occupying parts of the proposed new building. The Club has arranged finance but it has yet to secure the lease. It appears that two or three churches could also be interested in the site and the ACT Government has yet to make a decision. The spokesman for the Gymnastics Club would like to talk to a meeting of WCCC about its plans.

7. Possible refurbishing of the Community Centre and Old Health Centre

A question was raised during the meeting regarding the fact that the Community Centre needed re-furbishing and was inadequate. Cooleman Court may need to expand especially if the new district of Molonglo goes ahead. The WCCC may have to consider how any expansion can be accommodated on the site especially with the need to continue to provide adequate car parking for Cooleman Court patrons.

8. ACTION buses

The Chairperson said that Mr Peter Wallace had now been appointed to be the permanent CEO of ACTION. The new bus stop lay by had been marked out on Brierly Street opposite the service station and the new bus stop outside Cooleman Court will come into use on 10 October. A small shelter has been provided for passengers but the site otherwise lacks the shelter enjoyed by the former site on the opposite side of Brierly Street .

9. Future of schools in Weston Creek

Following the announcement by the ACT Government that the Ginninderra District High School would be closed at the end of this year and a new “super school” catering for students from preschool through to year 10 would be constructed on the site, the question arose as to what the future held schools in Weston Creek. The WCCC understands that the Ginninderra proposal means that Holt and Higgins Primary Schools will close in 2008 to accommodate the new super school proposal. The Chairperson said that there would be no further school closures in the term of this government. The question of what will happen to the empty space in Rivett School when the Weston Creek Childrens Centre relocates to its former site when its replacement premises are constructed has not yet been addressed.

The Chairperson said that as far as he knew there were no proposals for a “middle or intermediate” school in Weston Creek. It would be a good idea to contact schools and teaching staff with a view to again review the school situation in Weston Creek. A meeting devoted to this could be held in early 2006 to generate a debate about what the community wants for schools in the Weston Creek cluster.

10. Mirinjani extension

There was nothing further to report. The WCCC understands that the proposed extensions are going through the ACT Government planning approval process.

11. Community Councils’ Forum

Debate at the last meeting was mostly about the proposed “super school” in Belconnen.

12. Flight paths

The Chairperson reported that the Canberra International Airport Aircraft Noise Forum was the body which included Canberra Airport management, local government representatives, airport clients, airlines and community groups to discuss airport noise issues. At present very few planes flew over populated areas. If the proposed plans for residential development in Tralee proceeded it would mean that airplane noise would have to be shared on a regular basis with every other part of the region. Only the proposed Kowen Forest development which, won’t be needed for some considerable time, is affected by aircraft noise in the ACT.

13. Woden Town Centre

The new Woden Police Station will be opened shortly and after that the existing premises would be demolished. It is understood that the new vacant site will be sold by the ACT Government possibly to Westfield Properties. Car parking for workers in Woden will be reduced if plans to build over some of the existing car parks proceeds.

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

The Chairperson closed the meeting at 9:10 pm.

Next Regular Meeting
Wednesday 26 October 2005