

# **WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

*- Your Local Voice -*

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## **Minutes Monthly Meeting 25th September 2002**

### **Welcome**

Jeff Carl welcomed the Committee, residents and the guest speaker David O'Keeffe from Madison Lifestyle Communities Pty Ltd. Mr. Carl also indicated that other issues would be raised in General Business.

### **Apologies**

Mr Gary Humphries MLA, Ms Helen Cross MLA, David Clinch, Di Patterson, Helen Sims, Patrick White, Tim Janes, Les Bienkiewicz.

### **David O'Keeffe - Madison Lifestyle Communities Pty Ltd.**

Mr. O'Keeffe thanked Mr Carl for the opportunity to return and advise the community of the progress made since the last monthly meeting of the WCCC. To assist attendees Mr O'Keeffe outlined the concept for the land at the corner of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive. The proposal was only at the concept stage and only a concept plan was available, based on issues raised at the last meeting. The large plan was displayed for the meeting.

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 were clusters of 25 to 30 units in perhaps 7 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. O'Keeffe indicated that had had informal discussions with ACT Roads and Traffic Section and there were absolutely no plans to entertain another road onto Cotter Road from the area under discussion. Other issues which are addressed in the initial draft concept plan include car parking improvements, traffic easements and the Orana School operating on two campuses. The land remaining after the lease for the Sikh Association is approximately 8.5ha. Slip lanes may be a solution to traffic problems at the Cotter Road/ Streeton Drive intersection as well as at the Unwin Place / Streeton Drive intersection. The production of a concept plan for the area may be the catalyst required to encourage PALM to focus on a Master Plan for the area.

Mr Carl called for questions

### Q and A

- A resident indicated that the WCCC had had about 50 responses since the issue of what to do with the cleared land was raised in February and these had focussed on a green belt, tree re-planting and an urban park but not an aged care facility.
- A resident indicated that she was not at all happy about a commercial venture, as this was open green space. Mr Carl indicated that although it is ACT Forests land it is currently zoned broadacre, which does not explicitly exclude aged care facilities. It may appear to be 'green space' or 'urban open space' but technically it is not. The types of activities which are approved are numerous. [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].
- Ian Stehlik, the Business Manager of the Orana School raised issues to assist the discussion. The Orana School had been in place since 1989 and is undergoing a boundary change through a land swap to straighten the block shape. There are currently 520 students in the school. The safety issue of traffic in the area is a major concern for the School. The School recognises the needs for aged care facilities but would prefer a green buffer. He acknowledged that an aged care facility would be a great neighbour for the school, compared with the other allowable activities which could be built on the block under discussion.
- A resident asked whether there was possibility of having a trade-off between this block and retaining part of the North Duffy / Holder block.
- A resident asked how many other sites have been offered for aged facilities? Mr O’Keeffe replied 1 – and the site offered was too small to make aged care facilities financially viable. He indicated that 70-80 beds were needed to be financially viable. He became interested in the land following the story in *The Canberra Times* regarding the options for the land after it is cleared. Establishments with 20/30/40 beds will be in financial trouble. The concept is to keep people together and 20/30/40 bed facilities are too small, they need to start at 70 beds. 150 self-care beds need approximately 7.0 ha. Examples of comparable establishments in the United States are 25 acres (10ha) with 300 dwellings –200 self care and 100 care facilities.
- Has the old Holder High School Oval been offered? No it was identified as a flood zone 8 years ago and was deemed as not available.
- What will be the cost of the residences? A recent discussion with the Weston Creek Retirement Village in Fisher indicated that 2 bedrooms were \$250,000 and 3 bedrooms at \$350,000.

- Could a cooperative approach be considered for people with limited budgets? There is significant demand for aged care facilities and discount upfront fees and reduced on-going management fees could be tailored.
- Are one-bedroom residences viable? One-bedroom residences are not particularly in demand even though they are marginally less in cost. There is a need to do market research for demand; currently 85-sq m for 2 bedrooms (9 squares) is a reasonable comparison.
- Furniture and the elderly is an issue? Yes there is a need to consider how furniture fits into a residence and this impacts on the need to have adequate space to move around furniture.
- What are the options for bus traffic? Research in Melbourne and Sydney and some in Canberra indicate that many in independent living units have cars. A village such as that proposed would have its own bus service every day, or possibly every second day to local shops and other facilities.
- How do residents influence the outcome? Perhaps there is a need to write to Bill Wood the Minister for Urban Services.

Comment was also made that many of the alternate options for the block of land were not particularly attractive (eg an urban park) because of the on-going cost to Government to maintain in respect of rubbish (litter, dumped cars), illegal fires and mowing.

- Is there an awareness of the light pollution restrictions in Weston Creek? The lighting of aged care facilities does have its own peculiarities and there is knowledge of the restrictions in respect of the Stromlo Observatory. Unofficial contact with the Observatory has indicated that their optical telescope work will be completed by 2004 when the moratorium is expected to be reconsidered.
- What are the current bed licences for the ACT? It is expected that the Commonwealth will issue 69 licences in the ACT this year. The allocation of licences are based on self-care and based on market demand. 70 beds per annum is the average for the ACT. "Bed-readiness" is a measure used for the issue of licences. It may happen that one establishment in Belconnen could receive 110 licences as they are 'bed-ready'. There is the realistic option that licences could be achieved on a progressive scale over several years to reach the desired number of 70.

Mr. Carl called to an end the questioning and suggested that further questions could be raised after the meeting directly with Mr. O'Keeffe. Mr. O'Keeffe will be available after General Business.

## **General Business**

### **Minutes of last month's meeting**

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

### **Chapman Sports Oval**

The meeting was advised that as the Canberra Montessori school is proposing to build a school on a large part of the former Holder High School oval (a parcel of undeveloped community land) the WCCC has been lobbying regarding that arrangement which has been entered into with the Montessori school. Since then; agreement has been reached and Canberra Urban Parks and Places has set aside funding for facilities at Chapman oval (eg change rooms, toilets, storage, etc). A project manager has recently been appointed for the detailed design of these new facilities, but the WCCC is unaware of any community consultation having occurred on this project. We expect that a wide range of community groups will need to be consulted before significant progress is made since the final outcome must satisfy the community's expectations. The WCCC will continue to lobby for community input to the project.

### **ACT Planning Forums**

Mr Carl indicated that he and Pat McGinn attended discussions with Mr Simon Corbell MLA and other community groups on an ACT Planning and Development Forum which is to replace the Development Advisory Forum (DAF). The DAF is a body consisting of professional representatives (architects, landscape architects) and industry representatives (HIA, MBA). The new forum will comprise representatives from professional bodies, the development industry and community groups and have 10-12 members in total with an independent facilitator. It is hoped that the new forum will improve understanding between stakeholders on all matters regarding planning and development and assist the Government in working through its very full agenda of reforms in these areas.

It has not been decided how the persons representing Residents would be selected.

### **Size of the ACT Legislative Assembly**

Mr Carl indicated that Mr Sutherland wished to comment on the recent progress in the ACT Legislative Assembly in respect of the debate on the size of the Assembly. Given that it appears that both major parties may agree on the number of 23 the WCCC may need to send a supplementary submission to follow up on the original submission. This would suggest clarifying how this distribution could be best achieved and maintain balanced representation.

The background is that the ACT Legislative Assembly called for submissions on whether the numbers of members should be increased or not. The WCCC made a submission which supported an increase to 21 members in three electorates of seven members each. The WCCC second option would be to increase the number of members to 25 with five electorates of five members each.

The matter is still under consideration. The major parties, the Liberal Party and the Labor Party have indicated that they would compromise on their position and support an increase in numbers to 23 based on three electorates of six members and one electorate of five members. Increasing the numbers to 23 allows for some growth in the number of voters and may obviate having to request a further increase in numbers in the not too distant future. Criticism of the 23 member four electorate proposal is that this proposal as outlined contravenes the Hare-Clark system that the voters agreed to in the referendum conducted in the ACT on this subject. The model agreed

to was that there should always be an odd number of electorates with an odd number of members in each electorate. However, the major criticism of the 23 member 4-electorate proposal is that it could lead more often than other models to one person having the balance of power. This may appear to be unacceptable to most Canberra voters. This could happen if, in the three electorates with six members each the vote was split evenly between Labor and Liberal, and with two members each for Labor and Liberal in the electorate with the odd number of members leaving the last electorate being filled by an independent or minor party person. (In this case there would eleven members each elected to the major parties and one independent.) Even if this situation did not occur too often it would be the case that those voters lucky enough to be living in the five-member electorate would be known as the electorate "which always decided the government". This would mean that the politicians would concentrate their efforts on that electorate to its benefit and to the cost of people living in the other electorates.

Mr Sutherland suggested that the WCCC should write again to the appropriate committee in the ACT Legislative Assembly and offer up the criticisms of the 23 member four electorate proposal already made and offer an alternative of a 23 member five electorate proposal. Under this proposal suggestions there could be five electorates with four having five members and one having three members. The advantage of this proposal over the one suggested by the major parties is that, if there was an even split in the vote between the major parties, there would be nine members elected to each party with five independents or minor party people. Thus to form government one of the major parties in this situation would have to get nine members plus three out of the five independent or minor party members to form a government. This is better than the situation of having just one, possibly quite unrepresentative member, hold the balance of power which could so easily arrive under the major parties proposal. The meeting debated other options including a model of 23-member three-electorate proposal with nine, nine and five members.

Mr Carl agreed that the WCCC should write to the ACT Assembly and perhaps the Election Commissioner along the that the preferable outcome is 3 electorates of 9,9 and 5 members or secondly five electorates with four having five members and one having three members.

### **Other Business**

Alan Ford, of the Fisher Landcare Group addressed the meeting with regard to the aggregate stockpile located off Sulwood Drive, Fisher. The area is 'urban open space' and the concern is that a Dept of Urban Services stockpile is located in the area. Correspondence from the Minister for Urban Services, Bill Wood MLA, appears not to consider the location of the stockpile or its management an issue. The Landcare group considers that the use is not compatible with a zone of "Hills, Ridges and Buffers" and the smell, weed seeds, dust and noise were incompatible. Mr Ford asked the WCCC to investigate the issue and if appropriate write to Mr Wood supporting the Fisher Landcare Group in their efforts to remove the dump.

Mr Carl offered to contact Mr Damien Wall at Environment ACT who are developing the sub-catchment plan for Weston Creek to advise what steps could be taken.

### **Unwell Politician**

Mr Jonathon Reynolds of the Gungahlin Equality Party advised the meeting that he had visited Ms Helen Cross MLA who was, he perceived, still unwell. He indicated that Ms Cross gave her apologies but hoped to soon recommence attendance at council meetings.

**Oil Tankers in Weston Creek?**

Pat McGinn asked of knowledge of what appeared to be oil tankers entering an ACT Government secure compound near the intersection of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive. Mr Carl indicated that he was not aware of what the establishment was but would make inquiries.

Mr Carl called for any other business. As there was none forthcoming he closed the meeting, thanked residents for attending and advised that David O'Keeffe was available to answer questions.

Meeting closed 9.25pm

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2002