

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

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Minutes

“Meet the Candidates” Meeting

7.45pm 22 September 2004

Welcome

The WCCC Chairperson, Mr Jeff Carl welcomed the Candidates, the Committee and residents. Mr Carl advised that given the number of candidates in attendance there would be an opportunity for each Candidate to speak for the same period of time. The candidates will speak in their particular Group. The draw of Groups was determined by the order that they registered on entering the door to the meeting. Mr Carl advised that the views expressed are those of the candidates and not the WCCC.

A short ‘other business’ would be conducted later and then residents could mingle with the Candidates.

Apologies

Karin McDonald, Joe Baker Jon Rigter, Trish Hoad

Candidates Address

Candidates were advised they each had 3 minutes to speak with a reminder bell at 2 ½ minutes. The candidates spoke in the order of:

Simon Corbell ALP

Mike Hettinger ALP

Katy Gallagher ALP

Ted Quinlan ALP

Robert Rose ACT Democrats

Simone Gray Free Range Canberra

Jonathon Reynolds ACT Equality Party

Nancy-Louise McCulloch ACT Equality Party

Ken Helm Independent

Ron Forrester Liberal Party

Jacqui Burke Liberal Party

Lucille Baillie Liberal Party

David Kibbey Liberal Party

Deb Foskey ACT Greens

Charlie Pahlman ACT Greens
Amanda Bresnan ACT Greens
Helen Cross Independent.

After the presentations Mr Carl opened the meeting for questions and answers

Q&A

- An attendee asked Mike Hettinger on material on his website relating to Peter Garrett and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF). Mr Hettinger indicated that the work he had undertaken with ACF enabled him to appreciate the importance of the environment and the preservation of nature parks as a high government priority.
- An attendee addressed a question to Helen Cross; how can we get a commitment that members will be responsive to our needs. Mrs Cross indicated that the best way for effective representation was to ensure there was not a majority government of either Liberal or Labor persuasion and that a strong cross bench was important. There was a need to direct preferences carefully in the Hare-Clark system.
- An attendee asked Ted Quinlan how Canberra can be run efficiently and effectively when costs increase substantially especially land tax? Mr Quinlan responded that the costs were in proportion to the increased value of the land. Over the time that the costs had increased the rent for the property, which attracts land tax, would have also increased.
- It was asked of Jonathon Reynolds why his party has a policy of mandatory sentencing which had been tried and rejected in other jurisdictions. Mr Reynolds advised that the policy was directed specifically to the high volume drug traffickers and those manufacturing drugs.
- An attendee asked Jacqui Burke why the Liberals had rejected a prison for the ACT and that this would impact on the families who travelled interstate for visits. Mrs Burke indicated that it was considered that the \$110M, for a low number of prisoners, was better directed in the ACT health system. It is unfortunate that 120 families need to travel interstate but the health system is in dire need of the funds.
- It was asked of Ted Quinlan what opposition promises are not achievable or are unfunded. Mr Quinlan indicated that the \$110M for capital works for the hospital was a good example as there was no provision of an income stream to run the hospital.
- A question to Helen Cross, the attendee indicated he had attended the Tuggeranong Community Council “Meet the Candidates” where Karin Macdonald indicated she was the originator of the No Smoking Bill. Mrs Cross advised that she considered it mischievous and that Hansard provides the details. The Bill was introduced by her and passed with support of the Liberals and the cross bench.
- A question for Ken Helm, what difference would you bring to the Assembly? Mr Helm indicated that after 2 terms as Mayor of Yass he was well aware of the concerns of roads, rates and rubbish. There needs to be a focus on local grass roots issues and these need to be adequately funded and be efficiently delivered.

- An attendee identified himself as Geoff Roberts, President of the Conservation Council and asked Charlie Pahlman of the ACT Greens policy on infill versus green fields development. Mr Pahlman advised that the ACT Greens considered urban infill, where appropriate, a means of better utilisation of existing infrastructure and a reduction in transport costs. There needed to be long term planning now for the future of Canberra.
- A resident asked Simon Corbell on the progress of the rebuilding after the fires in Weston Creek. Mr Corbell advised that there were 136 houses rebuilt and occupied and a total of 298 had development applications approved. The rebuilding is not only infrastructure but also the social rebuilding of the community and the Bushfire Recovery Centre undertook the task.
- Another question for Simon Corbell, where is the water coming from for the 20,000 houses that Labor wants to build in the Molonglo Valley? Mr Corbell indicated that water is an issue and will be an issue wherever new housing is located, either within the ACT or in NSW. It would be better if the housing was in an area where the ACT had influence over design and building requirements so as to use water-sensitive urban design and greater use of grey water. The resident indicated that she did not believe the question was answered.
- A question to Ron Forrester, what is the response in regard to the earlier issue of funding? Mr Forrester responded advising that the \$110M is for bricks and mortar, and yes running costs are an issue but there is a need to see what the current government has on the books.
- A question for Ted Quinlan, where is the water coming from, why not build the new dam now, it will be much more expensive in the future. Mr Quinlan responded advising that there was a need for a regional solution and as regards water use the ACT border was fading. There needs to be adequate investigation and consultation with neighbouring shires on a reasonable and workable solution.
- Another question for Mr Quinlan, I was away overseas on a work posting and lost my house. I am now trying to rebuild but some of the exemptions are finished. Why are some residents treated differently from others? Mr Quinlan indicated that the Government had worked to ensure all affected people were offered the same treatment and if there is an issue he would be glad to investigate it. Mr Quinlan asked the resident to speak to him after the meeting.
- An attendee indicated to Mr Quinlan that the Chief Minister had stated on 3 Feb 2003 that security of leases was not an issue and leases were secure. By November of last year security of rural leases was still not in place. When will they be renewed? Mr Quinlan handed the question to Mr Corbell. Mr Corbell indicated that rural leases in the Molonglo Valley were being treated the same as rural leases in the Belconnen district and in Gungahlin where rural leases could become an area of suburbs.

- A resident asked Mr Reynolds of what exciting new developments can Weston Creek expect in the new Assembly, possibly a pool and a library? Mr Reynolds indicated that his party would seek to consult with residents on their high priorities for the district.

Mr Carl called an end to the questions and after short piece of 'other business' the candidates will be available to mingle.

Other Business

Spring Fair

Mr Carl called on Barbara Brinton from the WCCC Committee. Ms Brinton advised the meeting of the Spring Fair to be held from 9.30am to 2.30pm this Saturday 25th Sept at Coleman Court. The Fair would be opened at 10.00am by Robert De Castella. The WCCC would have an information stall with the theme 'Make a Wish for Weston Creek'. Residents were encouraged to write ideas and suggestions for Weston Creek.

Mr Carl closed the meeting and thanked the candidates and residents for their attendance.

Meeting closed 9.50pm

Next Regular Meeting

Wednesday 27th October – **ACTEW - Future Water Options**