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Protecting, promoting and enhancing the economic, cultural, social and environmental well-being of the residents of North Canberra

The North Canberra Community Council receives funding and support from the ACT Government



Minutes: General Meeting 7pm 16 March 2022

Online via Zoom

Minute taker for the meeting: Bruce Smith

Attendance: Jochen Zeil, Marcus Hipkins, Simon Clarke, Marianne Albury-Colless, Ian Hubbard, Jane Goffman, Neil Parsons, Gordon McAllister, Ernestine Kirsch, Janet Wayn, Geoff Davidson, Stephanie Kalish, Margaret Henderson, Bruce Smith, Paul Costigan

Observers: Rebecca Vassarotti MLA

Apologies: Sue Dyer, Marg Dudley, Chris Finnigan

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Confirmation of previous Committee Meeting minutes

- a. The October 2021 minutes were confirmed

REPORTS

2. Chair's report

Jochen proposed that the Chair's report be focussed on updates and discussions about the proposals from the Ainslie Football Club and developments relating to social housing in the inner north.

Ainslie Football Club (AFC): Marcus provided an update on proposals by the AFC to develop the area around the football oval. The Planning and Land authority has given approval for a sub-division which makes the car parks into separate blocks. The longer-term aim is to put residential development around the oval. This will require a draft variation to the Territory Plan.

NCCC has sought a review. This has gone to mediation but as yet there is no resolution. NCCC was required to put in submission by 11 March (Marcus circulated a draft submission to the Committee 1-2 weeks ago). There will then be an Ainslie Football Club response, and then a Planning and Land Authority response. A hearing is set down for 24 May and is scheduled for 3 days.

The issues go to technical points about compliance with the Territory Plan and the relevant Acts, rather than focussing on the bigger questions about public space in the inner north. Marcus noted that he could not go into detail because it is subject to proceedings. Regardless of the outcome, it will be useful to get clarity on key issues such as the management of public spaces.

Marcus will keep the Committee updated.

Public Housing evictions: Jochen noted that Paul Costigan had written to him to say that the NCCC should be concerned about the proposed eviction of a number of residents in public housing in Ainslie and Braddon.

Rebecca Vassarotti spoke to this, informing the meeting about ACT Government actions. She noted, however, that the primary responsibility within the ACT Government sits with Minister Berry and that Ms Vassarotti has responsibility for housing services. Ms Vassarotti's main points included:

- The Government has been working through a renewal programme, involving the renewal of 1000 properties. This is in response to an ageing public housing stock, which makes repairs and maintenance increasingly difficult.
- There is a need to ensure that stock is fit for purpose. More than 50 per cent of tenants have disability needs, and tenants are ageing and often in small households. There is a waiting list of 3,000 people – a significant proportion are on a high needs list.
- There has been a process to support tenants to relocate who are in properties which have reached end of life. The Government has been working with community sector partners, including ACTCOSS and Shelter since May 2021. There has been significant mapping of tenants needs and how to meet them
- It was understood that there would be communication provided to around 300 tenants who may need to relocate. Attempts to contact them through phone and hand-delivered communication. There has, however, been concern and distress and many are unhappy about the process. ACTCOSS is meeting with the Directorate with the aim of seeing how tenants needs can be met.

There was a general discussion about the issue, with a consensus that the Government needs to rethink its social housing strategy in the inner north. Key points included:

- The process has been manifestly inadequate. There needs to be a more sensitive way to deal with this
- There should be a greater focus on maintenance – this doesn't seem to be happening.
- The real issue is money. The Government is going backwards on social housing. The argument that houses are not fit for purpose is wrong. The houses have been run down, and then it is argued that there is no alternative but relocation. We can't sit by and watch this. People who are being evicted are being made to feel guilty. The real argument is about how much is being spent on social housing. People are getting hurt.
- The Ainslie Association has received nine letters from people in Ainslie who are being evicted. All nine are older women who have lived in area for 30-40 years. They are distraught. We have seen some of the houses – they don't look so bad. The final letters are bureaucratic and insensitive.
- Should there be a levy on developments to finance public housing? Could the profits of developers be taxed to fund new social housing?

Ms Vassarotti agreed to take specific questions about numbers on notice. She noted that Tenant Officers are working very hard to help people to find new properties where people want to go. While she couldn't make a comment on the inside of the properties, there is some discretion about particular circumstances. Need to have a conversation about large number of people who are in larger residences with multiple bedrooms, while there is a large waiting list. So there are difficult decisions. She acknowledged that the ACT does not have enough public housing – it is double what there is in other jurisdictions but still not enough.

It was agreed that Ian and Paul will draft a letter for Jochen to send on behalf of the NCCC and circulate it to the Committee.

3. Treasurer's report

Bruce reported that the current balance in the NCCC account is \$9,018.85. He reported on the updated expenditure projections for 2021-22, which were broadly consistent with the original estimates done in 2021. He noted that there has been a slight increase in overall projected expenditure, despite the cancellation of some Covid-related events, due to:

- increased expenditure on ACAT appeals
- costs of the social media project
- increases in some Association costs.

The NCCC insurer has increased requirements for the confirmation of insurance coverage. They now require formal risk management plans to be in place for all events and (at least initially) require approval for each event. We have now lodged two risk management plans which have been accepted.

4. Other business

- Reid Heritage Festival will be held from 9-30 April. A possibility for next year would be to organise an integrated Heritage theme across the inner north
- The Watson Association met with Ms Jo Clay – Greens Transport and Safety spokesperson to discuss why childcare centres should not be treated the same as schools for speeds etc.
- Dickson Association is working on the idea of a community survey. Free platforms can be good but have significant limitations. One possibility is that NCCC could take out a paid subscription which each Association could use. We could also partner with experts such as an area of the ANU
- Chris is taking the lead on NCCC social media for the next few months, producing posts for Facebook and Twitter. He is looking for recommendations from the Committee for good social media accounts for NCCC to follow. He would also be happy for Committee members to send through ideas for social media posts.

Close of meeting: Meeting closed at 8.32pm

Committee meetings and general meetings are held on alternative months. The next General meeting will be held on 18 May.

Attachment A – Residents Association Updates

Ainslie Residents Association

The impact of proposed new developments in and around Ainslie are currently taking up a fair bit of time for members of the Ainslie Residents Association (ARA).

Applications for the Redevelopment of the Ainslie Football Club site.

There are a couple of live development applications for the redevelopment of the AFC site with some more in the pipeline. The question has been asked as to why the redevelopment couldn't be presented in one DA including the proposed Territory Plan variation to include a substantial multi-unit development on the site.

The current DA's of for the site to be subdivided into three lots including the oval and two carparks. The other DA is for the construction of a private childcare centre on the southern Angus St side of the AFC site. These proposal are eating away at the site currently zoned for sport and recreation. The question has also been asked whether alternative options to this redevelopment have been considered.

Local Public Housing Residents are being forced to relocate.

The ARA has been contacted by several public housing residents who have received letters requiring them to move out of their homes and relocate. Three hundred such letters have been sent out and it would be reasonable that a large number of these people are living in the inner North. The residents that have made contact are older women who have lived in the suburb for 30-40 years. This forced removal seems heartless when the aim is sale and redevelopment of these sites.

YWCA lodges new DA for Rutherford Crescent Site DA 202139743

A new development application has been lodged to build a nine-unit complex on community facilities land adjacent to Bill Pye Park. This is a reduction of one unit and increased setback of one meter to the Park boundary. ACTPLA approved the previous ten-unit development regardless of it not meeting a number of the Territory Plan rules. ACTPLA has also made some technical amendments to the rules concerning solar access (shade from trees) and parking associated with adaptable housing which make approval easier to obtain. Many other issues raised in the ACAT have not been addressed such as impact on the Park, safety of tenants, greater density than surrounding RZ1, traffic and desired character. At least the action of the ARA going to ACAT has so far resulted in bigger personal open space for the prospective tenants. The community will still lose access to this community zoned land if the development proceeds.

Residents have until 29 March to lodge an objection. The YWCA has chosen not to consult local residents this time round.

New ACT Planning Act

An exposure draft of the new ACT Planning Legislation is open for public comment for three months from March 16 to June 15, 2022 (yoursayconversations.act.gov.au) "District-level planning will be used to identify areas of value, and those areas where growth and change need to occur, and tailor provisions in the planning system to implement those the planning strategy at the district-scale and give effect to the object of the act," the policy review said. CTimes online

The act will have specific plans for eight identified districts in Canberra including one for North Canberra. The specific district level plans will be revealed later this year. Pre-DA consultation has been dropped and Government is seeking advice on how consultation for development is undertaken.

Letter to the Canberra Times published 4 March 2022, p20

Plan Priorities Wrong (Planning for a Warm Future – my proposed heading)

Confronted by the symptoms of climate change, unprecedented drought, fire and floods the most important feature of the soon to be legislated 'outcomes-based' ACT Territory Plan is to increase the rights given to developers.

With one disaster quickly following another, you would think the priorities of the new plan would include low emissions housing, community infrastructure and disaster resilient suburbs, more green space and trees and real solutions to the ongoing housing crisis.

Instead the feature of the new planning act trumpeted is giving developers greater flexibility. Fewer rules covering elements such as building heights and the number of units in a development. [CT p6 26 February] Greater density – now that's HOT!

Ian Hubbard, Ainslie

Highlights

- The Surface Art Festival was held from 4-6 March 2022. The Braddon Collective had a very successful pop-up stall at the Festival outside the Telstra Building (Mort Street side). We promoted the artists taking part in the Festival and chatted to visitors about the Braddon Collective - we asked "What do you love about Braddon?".
- Map of the new art works is here: <https://www.surfacefest.com.au/map>
- We used our Square Readers for the first time at the Festival! If any other groups are fundraising and would like to borrow the Square Readers just let me know ... you just need to open a [Square](#) account to use them. (Sign up is free and Square charges a % for each transaction.)

Summary of happenings in Braddon

- upcoming meeting - quarterly chat with City Renewal Authority
 - our next quarterly meeting with the CRA is in early April - we will hear updates on:
 - work commencing on the community centre in Haig Park
 - completion of paths and lights in Haig Park
 - commencement of upgrade to Lonsdale Street
 - design work for upgrade of Mort Street
 - any news about the Garden City Cycle route (*thank you to everyone for their recent input on this project!*)
- e-Petition to upgrade Braddon Park - still ongoing!
 - a sub-group of Braddon Collective, the Friends of Braddon Parks, has an e-Petition with the Legislative Assembly to urge the ACT Government to upgrade Braddon Park. This park is a pocket park in Lowanna Street (behind what was formerly known as Fenner Hall)
 - the neglected and outdated playground in this park is the only playground in Braddon
 - an online survey of park users was used to inform the wording of the petition
 - link to the e-Petition is here: <https://epetitions.act.gov.au/CurrentEPetition.aspx?PetId=210&Index=-1>
 - **Action item:** please sign our petition (if you haven't done so already!)

Campbell Residents Association

- CCA waiting to hear when DV 369 - Living Infrastructure (ie **tree canopy cover** in residential areas) is due to commence. Proposed commencement date was 1 July 2022 but ACT Government now indicates this is to be confirmed subject to statutory processes. ACT Govt held information sessions in Feb with industry to explain what DV 369 will mean for home building and multi-unit developments. <https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/dv369>

- Campbell's many volunteer gardening, weeding and park regeneration groups have been active with numerous working bees over Feb-March for the autumn planting season.
- Numbers of Campbell residents have reported on-going problems with mobile phone reception and internet connection. The NBN did undertake cabling work to fix some of the problems. CCA is advising residents to contact the Telecommunications Ombudsman if problems continue.

Dickson Residents Group

- National Trust Heritage Award given to DRG for last year's **Wings of Dickson** event and related research;
- Dickson Community Survey - now in draft version 3 after testing questions with 14 respondents, currently exploring which online platform will work best and reviewing questions asked by similar surveys to identify any gaps;
- DRG organised a successful CleanUp Australia Day event on Sunday 6 March at Dickson Wetlands, attracting 22 volunteers;
- DRG accepted an invitation to meet with Heather Henderson, Sir Robert Menzies' daughter, and we're currently negotiating with the developer of the former Dame Pattie Menzies building to extend the proposed awning over footpaths that adjoin the site in order to improve the pedestrian interface near the Interchange and light rail;
- significant progress by the developer with a solid construction hoarding at Dickson Shops featuring a playful mural, following repeated representations by DRG to the ACT government that the site's temporary fencing breached the DA conditions of approval and WorkSafeACT guidelines.

Lyneham Residents Association

- Clean Up Australia Day event in North Lyneham
- Two walks on our new Lyneham Heritage Trail being held during the ACT Heritage Festival. Location signs and wayfinding map sign at the shops are being installed at the end of March, and website under development
- Renewed concern about traffic congestion in Brigalow Street next to Brindabella Christian College and Lyneham Primary School and potential for collisions between pedestrians and cars entering the BCC carpark.
- Work slowly progressing on our two park regeneration projects

Watson Residents Association

- ~ great response from community with suggestions for Inner North play space.
- ~ release of EPPSD concept plan for block 76 - big on gloss and rhetoric but very short on solid detail.
- ~ a very "fly by night" consultation for the old Service Station site. Concern that it is a money grab due to housing market rises.
- ~ working with local parents re capacity issues at Majura Primary School.
- ~ working with a range of stakeholders and meeting politicians to raise concerns about safety around schools and childcare centres.
- ~ AGM on 17th March will see some office holder changes for WCA.