

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: Committee Meeting 7pm 19 June 2024

Attendance: Jochen Zeil, Marcus Hipkins, Ernestine Kirsch, Margaret Dudley, Marianne Albury-Colless, Leon Arundell, Simon Clarke, Bruce Smith, Ian Hubbard, Jane Goffman, Catherine Cronin.

Apologies: Gordon McAllister

Minute taker for the meeting: Ian Hubbard

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Confirmation of April 2024 Committee Meeting Minutes

Provide more detail on discussion of election topics and seek confirmation of draft April minutes at August Committee meeting. Seek confirmation of March General Meeting minutes in at May General meeting.

Chair's Report

- Chris Steele, MLA unwilling to present at an NCCC General Meeting. Discussed strategies to get NCCC's planning and housing issues into the public debate.
- Labour Policy on Club Developments: Clubs would also be allowed to 'use their land assets to invest in appropriate housing projects, including affordable housing, aged care, and build-to-rent' CT 12/6/24. Converting community, sport and recreation land into commercial residential developments. District Plans raise the importance of Community infrastructure needs analysis but seems little progress on actually doing these studies. NCCC are seeking to have the District Plan treated as a living document with deep community engagement. What is the definition of "appropriate housing"?
- Independence of Chief Planner: The ACT Planning System Governance Review: Final report found that the dual role arrangement where one person was both the EPSDD Director General and Chief Planner resulted in a 'significant concentration of responsibility in one individual' and noted that these responsibilities weren't always 'compatible'.
- Suburban Land Authority Wright Sustainable Housing Project
- Evaluation Framework for outcomes based planning

- Development Application Exempt knock-down-rebuilds: compliance issues. Oversight over exempt developments and private building certifiers past and future in dealing with the new outcomes based planning framework. Agenda item for the next Planning Forum.

Actions:

1. Continue to engage with Planning Minister's Office
2. Arrange presenters for the July General meeting focusing on public housing
3. Draft Op Ed outlining how densification, reclaiming large parcels of land can assist in increasing the supply of community infrastructure, including public and affordable housing

Remuneration for Community Councils and their office holders. Committee members thought that remuneration could compromise independence. More important issue is the lack of resources available to community councils. Some of these resources are available within Government and more equitable access could be facilitated by a dedicated liaison officer. Access to resources including expertise, advice and data. Annual grant should be increase to enable access to a range of specialist expertise and services.

The Combined Community Council didn't think 3 year funding cycle was workable. They agreed with the concept that having a dedicated liaison officer within the Planning Agency to meet with regularly, provide a channel where issues could be raised and facilitate contact with appropriate Government agencies as required.

- NCCC Succession Planning: Options to be considered include rotating the chair, deputy chair, Treasurer roles. Each Resident Association take on the Chair position for a year.

2. Treasurer's report

The Treasurer's Report for June was provided, including the latest bank statement. The current balance of the NCCC account is \$6,359.09. The Treasurer requested that members let him know about any outstanding payments that need to be made so that they can be paid this financial year.

3. Other business

Discussion of Model Rules and issues raised (see Access Canberra website). Dickson 60th Birthday celebrations not going to happen due to lack of resources. City Renewal Authority has funds for this type of activity. Climate change and heat stress crisis in the US. Figures for mortality rates in Europe are worrying. Has implications for Australia and Canberra and the Government seems to be missing this. Impacts vulnerable people particularly. NCCC will need to raise this with Government. What can be done for this summer? Shade structures. Refuges in city.

Action:

A note be prepared on short and long-term steps to mitigate the impacts of heat in Canberra as a consequence of climate change.

Close of meeting

Appendix: Summary of Election Topics discussion at the April 2024 Committee Meeting

There was a broad discussion regarding how the NCCC should raise issues of importance to be considered during the upcoming ACT Elections. Do committee members have the time and resources to develop content and distribute to North Canberra political representatives? What are the key issues and how do we get consensus on these issues?

Content and Distribution

Committee members have put forward a number of issues that were of concern to members of the NCCC. The topics range from the broad to very local issues.

There was general agreement that the issues need to be presented as a list of four or five key issues on a page. Examples of this have been produced by community organisations such as Pedal Power. These organisations provide two levels of information, a crisp one pager and a link to more detailed explanations. The one pager is a 'call to action' and the greater detail provides the proposed how and what's achieved. Support but special interest groups with aligned issues such as Pedal Power, ACTCOSS and Landcare.

The publication would represent the organisations policy platform. There was discussion on the NCCC's policy platform and whether what we currently have is a set of principles rather than a platform. The point was made that the role of the NCCC was to raise community issues with Government. The NCCC is struggling to find avenues to raise issues with the Government.

There was a discussion of what were the key issues for the community in North Canberra. Understanding the demographics of the North Canberra community is important. For example, the median age is 31 and 44% of people rent.

Key issues include:

- district planning, proactively engaging with community organisations interested in planning.
- public housing, affordable housing and renter's rights,
- community facilities and public infrastructure
- climate change and sustainability, maintaining our green infrastructure, sporting fields, pools and play grounds
- public transport

Densification, rezoning and affordability.

Questions were raised about the link between densification, rezoning and affordability. Is redevelopment and infill delivering greater affordability? The Government expects that North Canberra will accommodate and additional **25,500** people by **2050**. The required housing will be delivered as medium to high density housing within the existing footprint.

Infill. The Government is relying on the private sector to deliver this infill on RZ1 and RZ2 blocks. This requires the existing owners to undertake dual occupancy development. This strategy is unlikely to deliver the required housing in a timely manner. Many existing owners are happy with what they have and will not move. When properties are sold the new occupants have a range of choices from do nothing, renovate, knockdown rebuild or dual occupancy.

Mapping has shown that many of the RZ1 blocks are not suitable for dual occupancy without demolition of the existing dwelling. With the per square meter cost of existing land being similar to greenfields this provides an opportunity for the small developer but unlikely to deliver the housing stock required. The knock down rebuild is the most likely outcome replacing the existing dwelling

with something newer, grander in a better location. The resulting construction would be targeted at the upper end of the housing market.

To test this housing development strategy and planning policy is achieving the required outcomes quarterly construction statistics need to be publically provided.

Another important question was whether these developments are being undertaken with a social conscience, climate change awareness and ecological sensitivity. They are not producing affordable housing. Public Housing should be given land at cost. Owner occupiers should also be allowed to buy land at cost (with conditions). To be affordable House and land packages need to be around \$500K.

Reclaiming Large Infill Sites (when Territory Plan is being proposed)

If the rezoning of RZ1 and RZ2 blocks fails to produce more housing. It would be sensible to have a proactive plan where the Government resumes large parcels of land in well located areas. The Government could then deliver public housing and housing that's affordable. These sites would self-identify through the current lessee seeking a Territory Plan Variation from an existing use to medium or high density residential. The Government would plan the site to maximise uses that deliver the best outcome for the community. As well as proportion of public and affordable housing land would be provided for important community facilities.

There is space for affordable and public housing but there needs to be the political will to conserve, reclaim and quarantine this land. Concern was expressed that the best sites are being privatised and sold to developers. This started with the large public housing sites in Civic and up Northbourne Avenue and has continued to Yowani Gold Club, Kamberra Winery and Thoroughbred Park. Why weren't any of these sites kept for mixed social housing?

There is a concern that the ACT Government is not taking responsibility for housing supply. They encourage clubs and a range of other organisations to seek Territory Plan variations to build housing on land that has a community or social use. Through this process they give up the opportunity for well-planned and well-consulted urban densification.

Government needs to build a lot more housing. Like they used to. In the 50s and 60s Government Housing departments built up to 30% of the housing. This must be re-established to maintain housing supply and affordability.

The Government did have a policy of about the proportion of social housing in greenfield and urban developments. This doesn't appear to have been implemented.

"Of particular note is the government's new commitment dedicating 15% of its annual Indicative Land Release Program to growing the supply of public, community and affordable home purchase homes. Equally, it will look to increase the supply of affordable and social housing on privately leased land through incentives and, where appropriate, with planning controls." Housing Minister, *ACT Housing Strategy (2018 p16)*

Planning, Design and Climate Change

We should not lose track of the climate change projections that will impact on urban heat and biodiversity. The projected rainfall patterns suggest that we will struggle to provide fresh water. It doesn't appear that we are planning and building for these projections. Planning doesn't seem to be planning for the future.

'Canberra - What sort of City'. Discussed whether Canberrans and the rest of Australia were interested in the National Capital being an exemplar. The Federal Government would have to lead this and provide sufficient funding for it to be realised. This would include proper urban design, public transport, public housing (that is so good that people would be proud to live in it). All of the best buildings and spaces in Canberra have been federally funded. Canberra's grand boulevard is looking very ordinary. This will require engaging with the local Senators and representatives to make this case and be proud to do it. They could shame the Federal Government into improving the look of the National Capital.
