



PO Box 396  
Dickson ACT 2602  
info@northcanberra.org.au  
www.northcanberra.org.au

*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 21 August 2024

**Attendance:** Jochen Zeil, Marcus Hipkins, Ernestine Kirsch, Leon Arundell, Simon Clarke, Ian Hubbard, Sue Byrne

**Apologies:** Marianne Albury-Colless, Bruce Smith, Chris Mobbs, Margaret Dudley, Catherine Cronan, Jane Goffman

Minute taker for the meeting: Ian Hubbard

### GENERAL BUSINESS

#### 1. Confirmation of April 2024 and June 2024 Committee Meeting Minutes

April 2024 and June 2024 minutes confirmed.

#### 2. Chair's Report

Meeting with Chris Steele, MLA Minister for Planning. 11am 15 August 2024.

We sought to raise planning and community consultation issues related to the following topics:

(1) Public housing and planning issues such as the need to quarantine appropriate land close to facilities and services and questioned the need for public housing to pay market rates for land.

**Minister's Response:** This would be lost revenue if public housing didn't pay the Suburban Land Authority full market rate. This would reduce the funding available to build public housing.

This was an interesting response as Government sets the price of land and receives the funds as a dividend from SLA. The SLA dividend goes into general revenue. High priced land means the cost of building public housing is higher, so less public housing for the same

amount of capital funds. Mentioned that high priced land will result in less public housing from the ACT's share of the Commonwealth Future Housing Funds.

We also discussed the potential for a cross subsidisation model where ACT Housing could have tenants with a range of incomes paying higher rents to make public housing more viable and self-sustaining. ACT Public housing revenues have declined significantly as the provision of housing has become more targeted towards the most vulnerable and lowest incomes. The viability of public housing would improve significantly if public housing were able to rent a proportion of properties on the same basis as community housing, ie. 75% of market rate (rather than the current 25% of income). ACT Housing could potentially own some build-to-rent properties that the ACT Government is funding the private sector to build. Financial modelling could provide the proportions of different rental levels to ensure the viability of ACT Public Housing into the future. Also modeling to maintain and grow stock numbers.

The Minister claimed that they had put a lot of money into building public housing, although the decline in stock numbers shows this is not the case. Additional capital has gone into the increasing costs of repairing and maintaining the existing stock. He appeared not to have a good grasp of how public housing was funded or maintained. This lack of understanding makes it difficult to see the range of solutions for the crisis in public housing.

(2) Urban densification and the inadequacy of current planning instruments, such as district strategies and zoning changes. District Plans need to be treated as living documents and consulted at the local level.

**Response: Admitted that zoning changes are slow, and an ineffective, way to increase housing supply due to the availability and suitability of blocks coming onto the market for redevelopment. The Minister provided a vague promise that district plans would continue to be consulted on.**

(3) The current trend of clubs using community land for housing developments to compensate clubs for their failing business models. There are once-in-a-lifetime opportunities offered by reclaiming land for urban densification, such as Thoroughbred Park and Yowani Golf Club.

**Response: The Minister suggested and reclaiming these large, well-located sites from Clubs would potentially cause legal, constitutional and contractual problems.**

This suggested that the Planning Minister was likely to agree to a Club's proposed redevelopment plan and Territory Plan Variations without studies into potential alternatives or the outcome of community consultation. Not willing to take on the political fight on behalf of the community.

Constitutionally the issue for the Minister was that for acquisition you would need to demonstrate a 'public good'. The acquisition of Calvary Hospital showed that 'where there's

a will there's a way'. Some links clarifying acquisition powers are attached. Essentially the Government has the power to determine what a 'public good' is.

(4) There is a need to create a direct contact for community councils to have quarterly meetings with Planning Reps to discuss local planning issues and have regular input into updating District Strategies.

**Response: Agreed to review and explore opportunities for improved community consultation regarding District Strategies and local issues.**

Action: Follow up with senior planning staff from the meeting for opportunities for engagement on the District Plans.

(5) Meeting Independents for Canberra, Thomas Emmerson with Catherine Cronin

Discussed public housing. They would like to reduce waiting lists but at this stage did not have a detailed plan on how this would be achieved. They were still developing the details of their policies and propose a number of town halls to refine policies that represent the community in each electorate. They hoped to play a role similar to that of David Pocock in the Federal Senate keeping government to account and pursuing a progressive social agenda.

(6) Proposal to organise a meeting for candidates. Suitable topics and format for a meeting were discussed and which candidates should be invited.

Action. See whether candidates are available.

(7) Met with Michael Hiscox, CFMEU at Dickson. The CFMEU were concerned about the poor state of public housing. They were interested in bringing the repairs and maintenance of public housing back in-house, rather than it being outsourced to a private provider. They were also interested in providing public housing for essential workers. Discussed utilising some of the CFMEU's research capacity to explore a cross-subsidising model for public housing sustainability.

(8) Succession Planning. Jochen is suggesting a rotating chair where the residents Associations chair for a year then it rotates to the next group. Jochen would put himself forward as Deputy Chair (on election) to support the Chair. Asked Committee members to consider succession planning for discussion at the next Committee meeting.

### **3. Treasurer's report**

The Treasurer has so far received funding proposals for 2024-25 for Braddon, Campbell, Hackett, Lyneham, Reid and Watson. He has asked other resident associations get back to him with their proposals or with confirmation that they will not be seeking funding for this year.

The current balance of the account is \$5,942.59 and the most recent bank statement has been provided.

#### 4. Other business

NCCC Representation on the proposal for the Braddon Hotel and Wellness, 6 storeys in an RZ1 streetscape, 21 Elder St Braddon Development Application. There have been a number of proposals for this site, none of which were appropriate to the context. There were 51 submissions lodged opposing the development by local residents. Biggest issues for opposition include bulk and scale, safety, privacy, 24/7 commercial and entertainment development in a suburban street across from a school. See representations file, representation from NCCC and Ainslie Primary School.

<https://www.planning.act.gov.au/applications-and-assessments/development-applications/browse-das/development-application-details?da-number=202443065&amendment-version=>

This is the first DA the NCCC has reviewed under the new outcomes based planning framework so the decision will provide insights. The two week public consultation period was shown to be too short to enable community consultation and this was extended at the request of some community members.

Committee members raised the issue of notifying Access Canberra regarding a male sleeping rough in a park in Reid. Access Canberra didn't have a procedure to record and act on this notification. In the absence of a procedure the notification was recorded as an 'abandoned vehicle'.

## Attachment

### Land Acquisition references for further information

The [Lands Acquisition Act 1994](#) (available at <https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/View/a/1994-42/current/html/1994-42.html>) contains a number of references to an acquisition of land being for a "public purpose".

In the dictionary for this Act:

**"public purpose** means a purpose in respect of which the Legislative Assembly or the Commonwealth Parliament has power to make laws."

Under the *ACT (Self-Government) Act 1988* (available at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03699/latest/text>) the Legislative Assembly "has power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Territory."

The words "peace, order and good government" are generally regarded as being very broad (see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace,\\_order,\\_and\\_good\\_government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace,_order,_and_good_government) if you are interested in reading more) The Legislative Assembly clearly has power to make laws with respect to housing, planning and the establishment of new suburbs.