



**MINUTES**  
**Ordinary General Meeting, Tuesday 16 July 2019, 7.31pm**

**Present:** Kevin Chamberlin, Emmy Chung, Sebastian Clark, Peter Gerrand, Valerie Gerrand, Janet Graham, Michael Horscroft, Rosemary John, Jan Lacey, Dan McDonnell, Jane Poynter, Duncan Rouch, Lorraine Siska and John Widmer

**Apologies:** Nicholas Atkins, Bill Cook, Jenny Cook, Stephen Farrugia and Jacqueline Stevenson

The Chair, Kevin Chamberlin, welcomed attendees and thanked them for turning out on a cold and wet evening. The apologies were accepted by the meeting.

**1. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting and matters arising**

*Moved Duncan Rouch, seconded Peter Gerrand:*

That the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on 18 June 2019, having been circulated, be confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

*Carried.*

**Matters arising:**

**(a) Spring Fling Festival**

Secretary Jane Poynter said the plans had changed more substantially than Tom Seddon had indicated at the previous meeting. The NWMA stall will probably be in George Johnson Lane. The fee has increased from \$80 last year to \$120 plus GST for a market umbrella and table or \$110 without table. Food trucks will be parked in the car parks along Errol Street between George Johnson Lane and Raglan Street on the eastern side, so there will be nowhere to display the Association's banner. The NAC (North Melbourne Agency Collective) was contemplating setting up its own table consisting of North Melbourne Language and Learning (NMLL), Public Record Office Victoria, The Huddle, Australian Red Cross, Department of Health and Human Services and a lot of church support groups. This will possibly be in the Arts House Warehouse in Little Errol Street. The Legion club will be the only wet area (serving alcohol) in the festival. The City of Melbourne (CoM) and West Gate Tunnel Project will have stalls.

Another idea was to have a Community Hub in The Warehouse. The Lithuanian Club might house a kids' play area and a quiet area for families. Suitcase Rummage has been reinstated but in a smaller version. The NMLL microbusinesses will make sample food that the CoM pays for. There could be a history of the area, stories from local people and a location map of where things are in North and West Melbourne.

The question for the Association was whether we wanted to be a stand-alone stall or with the NAC. We still have to come up with a theme if we are stand-alone. If with the NAC, there will be a roster to sign on for two-hour slots in the Community Hub, thus avoiding having some NWMA members spending most of the day at the stall. There will be walls to decorate. We still have the historic Graeme Butler photographs. We would mainly be giving out information on all the different things to do in the area.

It was decided that our first preference was to be in the Community Hub in The Warehouse, second choice to be stand-alone. The vacant shop at 54 Errol Street (former Kitchen Capers) will be available for someone. The Association will make a final decision at the next meeting.

*Moved Michael Horscroft, seconded Lorraine Siska:*

That this meeting authorise the Secretary to obtain quotes on smaller and more appropriate display materials and, in conjunction with the Chair, to purchase such items.

*Carried.*

Jane added that Spring Fling is trying to be more for the local community than for outsiders (60% of visitors last year came by car).

**(b) Affordable housing**

The Lord Mayor's staff had replied to our letter about affordable housing, advising that we would have a response by the end of this week.

**2. Committee report**

The NAC had been discussed at item 1(a) above. There was nothing further to report.

**3. Reports from affiliated organisations**

**(a) Melbourne North Police Community Consultative Committee (PCCC)**

The PCCC had a meeting on 21 June. Jan Lacey said there were many ongoing matters but not much new. There was a further reminder to take care of one's possessions and lock car doors. Crime was going down in our area and the figures were good compared with, say, Lygon Street. However, bikes are being stolen in increasing numbers, especially from verandas. The role of social media in the prevention of crime had been raised. There are several local Facebook groups where one can post notices about lost pets or a stolen article etc.

Emmy Chung said such groups work in a similar way to the Protect Abbotsford Street Facebook page. She listed four:

- (i) Crime Watch – North Melbourne Facebook Group — this is a closed group and currently has 343 members
- (ii) North Melbourne Good Karma Network (public group) — 1900 members
- (iii) North Melbourne Primary + Uni High Parents + Carers Group (closed group) — 316 members
- (iv) Protect Abbotsford Street (public group) — 159 members

**(b) Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek (FMPC)**

John Widmer screened his July 2019 report, which included a photo of a group of ibis. He said he had counted 50 and that there were also tawny frogmouths along the creek. It was now certain that all the planting — 200 plants — from last year was dead. There is a lot of dead vegetation at the corner of Arden and Lloyd streets opposite the power station. The CoM's community consultation had ended. John's submission had not been reported on. Fran Araneda from the Kensington Association agreed with him that this was not a consultation at all but just an exercise to tick the 'consultation' box.

The role of Transurban was to plant around its tower, but this was very patchy and subject to vandalism. A comparison of photos of the litter trap taken on 21 May and 16 July showed that it was functioning, but John was not sure whether the litter was being removed.

John concluded by thanking everyone who had attended the celebration for Enid.

**(c) Metro Tunnel Project — Arden & Parkville Community Reference Group (CRG)**

Peter Gerrard said there had been no meeting of the CRG since the previous NWMA meeting. He was amused at the difference in the application process between this group and the West Gate Tunnel Project Community Liaison Group. For the latter, he had had to fill in a two-page questionnaire and do a telephone interview. He had advanced to the shortlist and would have a face-to-face interview on Wednesday 17 July.

Regarding the Legacy Art Program, Kevin had contacted the government about the *History of Transport* mural, among other things. The matter is being pursued by the minister responsible, Planning Minister Richard Wynne, and the Transport Minister, Jacinta Allan. They have assessed the mural and determined that it can be moved but are looking for a location for it. Some members thought there might be room for it within the new North Melbourne station structure.

#### **4. Discussion of correspondence circulated in the past month**

The Carlton Residents Association's *Newsflash* June 2019 was tabled. The electronic version had already been circulated.

#### **5. General business**

##### **(a) Proposed North and West Melbourne Updated Urban Forest Plan**

Duncan Rouch had looked at the CoM's 2014 Urban Forest Plan for Kensington and North and West Melbourne and had found that the plans for the two areas were almost identical. Not much detail was given, however. Duncan said the City of Melbourne had no substantive existing native ecosystems, so his idea was to reconstruct a native forest to better support native fauna. Street trees are apparently selected predominantly for engineering reasons. The aims of his Urban Forest Plan are:

- (i) to improve the human environment
- (ii) to improve the environment for native flora and fauna

In terms of tree selection, this is based on bioregions. You can look these up and they will tell you what is suitable. The City of Melbourne area is part of the Victorian Volcanic Plain Bioregion.

Duncan said **Royal Park** had the structure and style of a European park, except with native plants. Most visitors come from North Melbourne or Gatehouse Street. To the north and west of The Circle could be a good place to put in a native forest and some native heath, providing a contrast between the two sides. This is currently scrub.

Michael Horscroft noted that there was a lot of underutilised waste area behind the zoo. Kevin pointed out that the master plan followed the original plan for Royal Park to be an open-plain type of park. The concept of its being a forest was not compatible with this. Peter suggested Duncan speak with Cathy Oke, chair of Council's environment portfolio.

Duncan turned to **Moonee Ponds Creek**, suggesting it was the only other place where a complete area of native flora could be planted. His proposal was that lower Moonee Ponds Creek be reconstructed in native form, with associated riparian understorey and trees, wetlands, estuary and saltmarsh.

**Urban streets** presented some more opportunities. A lot of streets have median reserves that are suitable for installing understorey and heath plants under existing trees. Drought-tolerant plants would be chosen. He suggested removing car-parking spaces in the Haines Street median, as they would not be needed by the new housing estate. This was disputed, as some residents of Haines Street south use them — perhaps a compromise of removing some of the spaces would work.

Kevin suggested Duncan look at the West Melbourne Structure Plan. He also noted that the West Gate Tunnel Project might present opportunities, as big projects always leave areas of remnant land, and there might be other opportunities in built-up areas. Perhaps Duncan could talk to the West Gate Tunnel Authority and ask where suitable places would be. John added that in the expanded park around North Melbourne Station, habitat had been planted that was suitable for insects, which are necessary for ecosystems.

*Moved Jane Poynter, seconded John Widmer:*

That we thank Duncan for his presentation and ask him to keep us updated on progress with his discussions with the authorities and City of Melbourne (Councillor Cathy Oke) and that we ask Duncan to consider approaching the infrastructure authorities to consider this use on any remnant land remaining after completion of the West Gate Tunnel Project.

*Carried.*

### **(b) Protect Abbotsford Street Estate (PASE)**

Drawing on reports from members of the Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne, Community Consultative Committee (CCC), Jan said the second meeting of the CCC, on 25 June, had produced some designs but the presenters had not mentioned that demolition was about to proceed even though a few days later neighbours had received a notice about demolition.

Before demolition can begin, however, a permit is needed and the community has to be informed. There also needs to be a construction management plan and there is a requirement to show that the community has been consulted. PASE was therefore going to hand out leaflets at the drop-in sessions.

The drawings shown at the CCC meeting revealed that the design was not tenure-blind as promised; the community housing blocks were much plainer than the private units. People should think of questions to ask at the drop-in sessions. Inner Melbourne Community Legal was also putting together a flyer explaining the difference between public housing and community housing. Janet Graham cautioned that the sessions were not intended to be an opportunity to challenge the ethos of the housing renewal program but would probably ask questions about cosmetic issues like preferred types of garden beds, artwork and colour scheme for the community room. She based this on a reading of the DHHS online survey that people could fill in if unable to attend a drop-in.

The likelihood of the estate being vacant for two to three years was raised. Jan said it was going to take that time for planning to occur, and queried, if that were so, why the tenants were moved out so soon. She added that the public was no longer 'authorised' to look at parts of the website.

Dan McDonnell commented that the developers (MAB Corporation) might be reluctant to put more apartments on the market until their other developments were sold. They might sit on them until the housing market picked up. Kevin said he had asked them to consider building public housing instead of business premises next to the current shops in Abbotsford Street. He didn't believe we needed more shops. Jan said PASE members were going to write to Minister Wynne with a series of questions. Kevin suggested adding that there had not been enough time for proper consultation or planning. There were no definite plans for the school. Concerns were expressed about the length of time the site would be undeveloped.

### **(c) St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre (SJFLC)**

Lorraine Siska, Jan Lacey and Nick Parassis (Melbourne North PCCC) had met with Ted Javernik, acting principal and teacher at SJFLC, and Tom Mason, the school's wellbeing and health officer, on Monday 15 July to discuss concerns about students' behaviour raised by Jacqueline Stevenson. Unfortunately, Jacque had had to travel interstate on the day of the appointment but she had provided a comprehensive list of questions about the school's educational and philosophical *raison d'être*. An appropriate person, probably Tom Mason, was going to respond.

Jacque reported brazen and confronting behaviour by groups of students in the streets, including karate-kicking parking meters even though these were mostly operated by credit card, not cash.

SJFLC caters for young people aged 13 to 24 with about three-quarters male and a quarter female. Established eight years ago, in 2014 it had 140 students and now has 300. These include 'school refusers' and people who may be victims of sexual abuse or family violence or with mental health or addiction issues. Importantly, students *choose* to attend this school. Any small goal achieved is regarded as a big success. Some students are not allowed to attend, so they do an outreach program after-hours. This is a 'school of last resort' for youths from any suburb, not just the local area. SJFLC has a policy of never refusing a student.

Among the positive aspects are that SJFLC wants to have a good relationship with the community. Nick Parassis said it was important to develop the community's understanding of the school. However, anyone who sees bad behaviour in the streets should call the police — as SJFLC itself does. The school would welcome ideas to expand its work with the community. Jan added that the students were quite proud of their school notwithstanding the problems. Tom offered to talk to an NWMA meeting about the school's philosophy and goals.

John stressed that the school needed to have its students under control and he suspected that there were too many to be managed. By putting all difficult students in one place, it was creating a problem for the community, which was not acceptable conduct for a school. These kids live in the community. He pointed out that some are over 18 — an arrestable age.

Kevin thanked Lorraine for her presentation and noted that the Association awaited a response to Jacqueline Stevenson's questions. Lorraine was asked to invite representatives from St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre to present at our next meeting.

#### **6. Time, date and venue of next ordinary general meeting**

Tuesday 20 August 2019 at 7.30pm, at the Bastow Institute, 603–615 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne.

The meeting closed at 9.08pm.