



MINUTES

Ordinary General Meeting, Tuesday 16 October 2018, 7.32pm

Present: Nicholas Atkins, Kevin Chamberlin, Mary Chapman, Bill Cook, Ray Cowling, Stephen Farrugia, Peter Gerrand, Valerie Gerrand, Janet Graham, Michael Horscroft, Jan Lacey, Jane Poynter, Annie Rivera, Duncan Rouch, Jacqueline Stevenson and John Widmer

Apologies: Emmy Chung, Melanie Del Monaco, Stephen Hatcher, Dan McDonnell, Bridget Macwhirter, Michael Murphy, Jacques Péril, Margaret Péril, Asha Rao, Sue Scarfe and Geraldine Suter

The Chair, Kevin Chamberlin, welcomed attendees to the meeting and the apologies were noted.

Moved Mary Chapman, seconded Jane Poynter:

That the apologies be accepted.

Carried.

1. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Regarding the last motion of the Ordinary General Meeting held on 18 September 2018, at item 6(c), concerning local government electoral reform, Kevin said the Association had written to the party leaders requesting acknowledgment of receipt. At this stage we had received a reply from the Reason Party.

Ray Cowling said he had spoken with Councillor Rohan Leppert, who had suggested inserting the following additional point in Ray's original list:

"1.2 Require that the address at which a voter is able to be found (as opposed to the property/land/business that entitles the voter to vote) must be that voter's actual address, and must not be 'care of' another person or company. This would reduce the massive capacity for fraud."

The former clauses 1.2 and 1.3 would be renumbered 1.3 and 1.4 respectively.

Kevin added that he and Bill Cook especially had been active in the ongoing campaign about Council reform for nearly 15 years. Melbourne University had recently become very interested in cybersecurity issues, not just about people voting for other people but the whole administration of the electronic system. He noted a case in New South Wales where the wrong person had been declared elected. This matter is to be included when NWMA representatives meet the politicians.

2. Committee report

Secretary Jane Poynter said all matters were itemised separately below.

Mary Chapman noted that the application for the **Candelles Reception** site in Victoria Street had gone from a very noisy use to a yoga and meditation centre.

3. Abbotsford Street North Melbourne Consultative Committee

There were reports from those who had joined this new committee, which had been formed to review and make suggestions for the new private-public development of the Abbotsford Street housing estate under the government's Public Housing Renewal Program. The first meeting had taken place today, 16 October.

Duncan Rouch said it would be two to three years before building would be completed. The current status was that a tender had been published with hopes of getting responses before Christmas. There were a number of DHHS staff members at the meeting, split between those responsible for delivering the development and those responsible for tenant relocation. One officer was introduced as a project manager. Melbourne City Council representatives included a structural engineer. Community groups were represented. Molly Williams was there for Inner Melbourne Community Legal (IMCL).

A minimum 123 dwellings were planned compared with the current 112. They were “hoping” there could be more. A new revelation was that the staff hadn’t known previously who was living there — now that the tenants have moved out they know this. Duncan itemised the proposed division of units. At the February meeting they will have the developer on board who will discuss plans.

Annie Rivera added that there was good representation from the community including two estate residents. It was disappointing that most answers were “We can’t tell you until we see the plans”, which was perceived as giving the developer too much power. She thought the tender process must be well advanced because the successful bidder was to be announced at the next meeting in late January or February. Many questions had been asked about ratios, density and heights, to which the answer had been that the buildings would be of a very high standard. Annie said the land allocated to a school would be sold to the Department of Education but there were no plans for the use of the facility.

Kevin (representing NWMA) believed the message had got across that the community wasn’t gullible. The Development Plan Overlay (DPO) stipulated a five-storey limit even on the education site. The City of Melbourne (CoM) has the option of taking 5% of the land value as an open-space levy or requiring actual open space. It is negotiating to take the money. However, given the intensity of the new development, many people want the land. While a 6-star rating is considered okay, the estate is going to average 7-star. Rather than the 112<123 figure for units, we wanted to know the number of bedrooms planned, and also the mix — whether private and public would be in separate buildings as at the Carlton estate or mixed. Currently there are 88 units with two bedrooms and 24 with three bedrooms. There were four households with five or more people before the tenants were relocated. Most of the overcrowding was in two-bedroom units, while some of the three-bedders were under-utilised.

It was said that 80% on the waiting list were looking for one- and two-bedroom units. The community reps had said this should be looked at more systematically. Ten per cent of private homes are to be sold to first-home buyers. There will be on-site training and skill development with jobs to go to Victorians, Australians and New Zealanders in that order during the construction phase.

Discussion followed at the NWMA meeting about the Auditor-General’s report, which stated that about 7000 people were waiting to transfer, mostly from large homes to small ones, and that there was no effective system in place to arrange this. It was noted that flexible designs could enable conversion without duplication of utility rooms; this had happened at Arden Park, corner Abbotsford and Arden streets, with some one-bed units being converted to two-bed.

It was thought that CoM supported the development. Their submission to the panel had been concerned mainly with heights and density rather than social aspects. Open space was currently around 40%. In the draft plan the 20-metre-wide Wood Street ‘extension’ was considered open space and there was another 6-metre-wide strip in the southern part of the site. With the five-storey buildings, Annie understood that car-parking would be on-site rather than on-street (in the earlier stages it was only street parking).

Moved Mary Chapman, seconded Michael Horscroft:

That the reports on the first meeting of the Abbotsford Street North Melbourne Consultative Committee be noted.

Carried.

4. Community Conversations with Lord Mayor and Councillors

Peter Gerrard reported that 16 constituents and eight support staff members had attended the North Melbourne meeting on Wednesday 10 October. He thought Lord Mayor Sally Capp was an “outstanding facilitator”, saying she took notes and later went over what had been raised. The other two councillors present were Rohan Leppert and Beverley Pinder.

Ray Cowling agreed that Councillor Capp was a good chair but said the consultation had left 16 people suggesting what we wanted. There had been a “twinge of conscience” when the phrase “Sunshine lost is never regained” came up. Sally referred to the shadowing situation over the Yarra. Ray said he was hoping for a lot from her.

Jane noted that the average age of invitees was about 50, there were three Africans and no Asians present. She questioned how representative of the community the group was.

John Widmer thought the participants in the Kensington Community Conversation were very much a selected group, from groups that weren’t very active (he hadn’t been invited). He described the meeting as “highly managed” and queried why a town hall meeting with everybody hadn’t been arranged rather than separate consultations by suburb. He said Sally Capp had the view that Melbourne could increase its density.

Jane had found the process a bit airy-fairy but key take-outs were:

- It was good that some services were represented, such as North Melbourne Language and Learning.
- There was a request for more money for NAC (North Melbourne Agency Collective).
- Ray’s concerns about light and shadowing by buildings.
- Peter’s request to support extending trams along Spencer Street.
- Conversion of car-park to parkland at Queen Victoria Market — all supported that.
- Trying to stop the flow of traffic from the West Gate Tunnel.
- Ageing in place — there aren’t many services in the CoM. Councillor Pinder was keen to support that one.
- Rabbits in Royal Park.

Mary explained that the rabbits were now inside and outside the fence around the Royal Children’s Hospital. Something can be done about them only within the hospital boundaries.

It was noted that the West Melbourne Structure Plan (WMSP) was sitting on the Planning Minister’s desk, which was a problem if Richard Wynne was not re-elected. Everyone was urged to contact Minister Wynne asking him to endorse the WMSP before the state election caretaker period began, which would be 30 October latest.

Moved Ray Cowling, seconded Nicholas Atkins:

That the NWMA and members telephone or email Planning Minister Richard Wynne requesting that he formalise the West Melbourne Structure Plan before the caretaker period commences.

Carried.

5. North West Patch report

The NWMA had become the auspicier of North West Patch some time ago. The Patch is now an independent incorporated group. On Saturday 22 September the Patch had its first working bee, when the planter boxes were set up in the Meat Market garden and planted. A video slideshow of the day was screened with photos by Jane Poynter and music by Courtney Barnett — ‘Avant Gardener’. The official opening will be on Saturday 10 November, 12.00 noon to 3.00pm. They will try to get a politician there.

6. Spring Fling Street Festival, Sunday 21 October

The Association had received information today from The Centre about our stall. Jane was awaiting the worm farm kit and the compost bin from CoM. She had phoned Compost Revolution today. We might be able to borrow one of each item for Sunday. The idea was to show visitors how these worked and they could then purchase one at a discount. The anticipated support for a recycling bin for batteries in the library had not been forthcoming.

We were also planning to produce some laminated posters and leaflets for the stall — “Here’s who to phone about the WMSP”. We would also have membership forms, and Annie would put leaflets for PASE (Protect Abbotsford Street Estate) on the table. The Patch would be selling plants and there might possibly be a worm farm to raffle. Jane thought we might be able to get a screen to show the North West Patch video.

Kevin would pick up the tables and banner. Nick (now North West Patch's official horticultural manager) offered to meet Kevin at 8.30–8.45am on Sunday to help set up. Members were asked to volunteer to help at the stall for an hour or so.

The above actions regarding Spring Fling were noted.

7. NWMA annual Christmas dinner

It was North Melbourne's turn this year. Sir Robert Peel Hotel, corner Queensberry and Peel streets, was suggested. Michael undertook to do a reconnoitre. Tuesday 27 November and 11 December were possible dates.

8. Reports from affiliated organisations

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

Jan Lacey said the committee had met since the last NWMA meeting. The PCCC's stall at Spring Fling would be doing bike engravings. They would be running the usual Christmas toy and food drive — the flyer would be out in early December for the Association to circulate. VincentCare was about to embark on anger management courses for young men and also 'difficult' kids from problematic home backgrounds. A Muslim group is joining VincentCare to collaborate.

Traffic in Carlton was still a problem because of the Grattan Street closure. Regarding the campaign to keep the Criminal Investigation Unit in North Melbourne, the most likely outcome was that it would be moved to Spencer Street but that wasn't known yet.

(b) Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek (FMPC)

John Widmer said a major concern for our section of the creek was the insertion of a new suburb described in the *Arden Vision* document. Were the references in this 'motherhood' statements or bold intentions? Melbourne Water still regarded MPC as a drain. Transurban had made the creek more natural when constructing CityLink.

Nathan at Ellen Sandell's office had taken up the matter of litter, questioning the minister. The answer was that the creek was cleaned once a month. John said the litter traps needed to be cleaned after a flood, not monthly. The problems with our end of the creek are the accumulation of the upstream litter. Slides screened showed a huge clean-up of the litter trap in the area closest to Racecourse Road. They had said 80% was leaf litter, but it didn't look quite like that. Some kind of suppression appeared to be going on — despite numerous references to the creek in *Arden Vision*, Melbourne Water seemed mainly concerned about drainage.

John said it needed a whole catchment plan. Chain of Ponds is working on this, mainly through a collaboration between Moreland and Moonee Valley councils. Melbourne City Council is not very active on this. Kevin added that MPC would take much more water once Arden was built because of the hard surfaces. Other buildings nearby are also being bought up for apartments. Bill said plans were needed for water storage in buildings to capture rainfall.

(c) North Melbourne Agency Collective (NAC)

In her report, Jane mentioned that organisations represented included DHHS, Hotham History Project and North Melbourne Language and Learning (NMLL) — it was a movable feast in terms of attendance. The Huddle provides a lot of services, including popular holiday sports programs and a women's fitness program at Flemington Community Centre. NMLL had arranged a dinner on Wednesday 24 October for men from refugee or asylum-seeker backgrounds, to try to find out what these under-represented men wanted. There are also many opportunities for volunteering — see websites.

Jane suggested that early next year NWMA host a volunteering session where groups explain what they do. There needs to be a broader audience than NWMA regular attendees.

(d) Rail Projects Victoria – Kensington & Arden Community Reference Group

Peter was planning to attend the meeting on Thursday 25 October. At the September meeting Matt Hammond from the Kensington Association had raised the matter of “the importance of incorporating community feedback and ideas to create an integrated built form legacy design in the Kensington precinct”. The CRG minutes stated: “RIA (Rail Infrastructure Alliance), CYP (Cross Yarra Partnership) and CoM confirmed that creating a unique legacy design that is sensitive to the community and locale is a project priority and is in line with project goals and outcomes.”

Peter had written to RIA urging the designers to go beyond merely reflecting the industrial history in the choice of building materials, and provide a more explicit reference to that history, such as the use of a permanent mural or a dynamic display at the station that showed historical photos and appropriate text.

9. Discussion of correspondence circulated in the past month

There was no discussion.

10. General business

None other than as itemised separately above.

11. Time, date and venue of next ordinary general meeting

Tuesday 20 November 2018, 7.30pm, at the Bastow Institute, 603–615 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.