



MINUTES
Ordinary General Meeting, Tuesday 17 September 2019, 7.35pm

Present: Kevin Chamberlin, Emmy Chung, Sebastian Clark, Bill Cook, Wendy Cook, Stephen Farrugia, Janet Graham, Jan Lacey, Dan McDonnell, Johanna Mithen (visitor), Claire Noonan (visitor), Jane Poynter, Duncan Rouch, Xuan Wang (visitor) and John Widmer

Apologies: Nicholas Atkins, Peter Gerrand, Valerie Gerrand, Stephen Hatcher, Michael Horscroft, Rosemary John, Jacques Péril, Margaret Péril, Sue Scarfe, Jacqueline Stevenson, Geraldine Suter and Carolyn Thompson

The Chair, Kevin Chamberlin, welcomed attendees. The apologies were accepted.

1. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Jan Lacey read out a suggested motion that she had sent to the Chair and Secretary before the last meeting with a proposed letter to Council regarding its Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy, which had not been included in the minutes.

Moved Jan Lacey, seconded Jane Poynter:

That the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on 20 August 2019 be confirmed, subject to the addition of four paragraphs and an amendment to the motion under item 5(b).
Carried.

There were no other matters arising.

2. Guest speaker: Victoria Clarke, Coordinator Waste and Amenity Programs, Engineering Services, City of Melbourne, via Skype

Victoria Clarke was welcomed to the meeting on the Dewey Common's big screen. This was the first time the Association had used Skype for this purpose.

Victoria said the City of Melbourne (CoM) allocated 6% of its budget for waste and amenity programs to waste collection and 94% to advocacy and influencing behavioural change. The whole strategy is based on the circular economy and the hierarchy described in the 'upside down triangle' (see Figure 2 on page 16 of the *Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030*). Disposal is paramount. Food waste is booming, with bins proliferating and numerous trucks driving around to empty them. The fewer bins there are, the easier they are to access and the safer it is for all.

There are 10 big priorities, including reducing waste and trying to re-use items (Table 1, page 11). They are encouraging buildings to make recycling easier. The CoM has offered a green bin in the past and will probably roll out this option next year. Can we condense bins and improve the system? Point 10 refers to residual waste. We should decrease the amount of waste. They are also looking at burning waste.

The strategy has detail about different initiatives, composition of waste, how much can be improved, and a look at solutions around the world. The Lord Mayor has fast-tracked the program since recycling company SKM went into administration. She acknowledges that Council can't solve everything itself and is looking to the community to come up with ideas. Applications for the Waste Minimisation and Innovation Fund would be opening on Monday 26 September. Grants of up to \$5000 are available for schools, community groups, residents' groups and non-profit organisations, and up to \$25,000 for start-ups and universities making higher-risk investments.

The conversation was opened up for attendees' questions/comments and answers by Victoria.

Q: I was involved in a CoM waste and resource recovery strategy forum a couple of years ago. I'm concerned about the long timeline when the matter is urgent, particularly regarding food waste disposal. More than a quarter of councils have introduced a kerbside collection for food waste. Can we prioritise that?

A: We don't have a homogenous council area, which would make it easier. We have high-rise apartments and low-rise buildings. We've been trying to get solutions into high-rise. Owner-occupiers are more likely to engage than tenants. We have to go through a lot of internal approvals — that's the way local governments work.

Q: I don't understand the problems with high-rise apartments.

A: It's the way they collect waste internally — there might be a bin on each floor or a chute. People struggle to follow basic rules. A lot of buildings don't have facilities for food waste. There's also the question of managers having to take on extra work. Some tenants don't see their bins at all. There is also cultural influence. For example, people from Korea are more attuned.

Q: I went to a plastic packaging workshop at RMIT about things that could help.

A: You wanted to meet up in October?

Q: Yes. Phasing out single-use bags is good. Current issues include downcycling, not recycling, so it's not part of the circular economy. RMIT made suggestions about setting up a company.

A: It's good that you're looking at addressing market opportunities.

Q: Fast-food companies are supplying plastic containers that can go into a green bin without food being scraped off.

A: It would need to be done without penalising businesses in the city. We would need to ensure that everyone had access to such repositories.

Q: Previously I lived in a townhouse with a small patch of earth and was an avid composter. I think people living in apartments would be very willing to compost but they don't have gardens. The Good Karma Network has a lot of people interested in shared facilities. Would Council support a public space with a bit of earth where we could compost? The grant idea is fantastic. Regarding the current lack of recycling capacity, is there somewhere we can take our recycling?

A: In terms of actuating open space, I support that idea. It would need to be as passive as possible, so not relying on people to turn the compost over. Some apartments do have communal bins. In terms of recycling, take it to Dynon Road, where items will be recycled. Kerbside material is not being recycled. Dynon Road does have that capacity.

Q: I read the *Waste and Resource Recovery* document and realise how complex the whole issue is, with many actors involved in the process. There's no blanket solution. Regarding high-rise collection, apartment buildings have a collection five times a week. We should try ways to save Council money. The Council needs to understand user habit.

A: We will do research in the field, in someone's house, to better understand what people do — a human-centred design approach. That would be the point of the trials we will run.

Q: With applications for grants re composting, what would Council's risk be?

A: Only \$5000 to start with — thinking through accessibility, trip hazard, and that compost may contain pathogens.

Q: We need to be aware that compost can be highly toxic to dogs and cats, so it would probably have to be fenced off.

Q: Dynon Road is a hostile, industrial environment to residents, but the staff are good.

A: Citywide is a subsidiary of CoM. I will take back to them that it's not a very good user experience although the staff are helpful.

Q: Are you aware how good Moonee Valley's recycling facility is? It has containers for different metals etc and very helpful staff.

Q: You can take e-waste there. Moonee Valley is open to CoM residents.

Q: Clifton Hill also has that, and it's very educational. It's a pleasant experience near Merri Creek.

Q: When Council rolled out its green-waste bin trial in North Melbourne and Kensington last year I was very disappointed it didn't include West Melbourne. That is just what I need to make it easy to recycle prunings and garden waste. Once a fortnight or month would be fine. Without a car it's impossible to take stuff to Dynon Road. I need a collection at my doorstep.

A: We're working on getting that third bin out and it's coming. It will be green and food waste combined. I also like the point about reducing landfill. It's an environmental imperative and financially necessary to keep methane out of landfill.

Q: On a more strategic level, I think far too much material is getting into the system. Packaging is overwhelming. What is Council doing about dealing with the proliferation, and also a policy for a container deposit?

A: Advocacy is a big part of the strategy. Council has advocated for a container deposit scheme for a long time and for 'extended producer responsibility': "If you made it, you take it back." Then you find products made from materials that can be recycled. We need to force capitalism back on itself. It has to be done at federal level, not state or local government. We will continue to advocate for it. COAG decided to ban the export of waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres. The Greens are about to produce another extended waste and recycling policy.

The Chair thanked Victoria for her presentation and she left Skype at 8.20pm. The discussion continued. Separating products into different classes rather than commingling would be a good idea. If glass breaks it contaminates paper. However, refilling glass bottles would be the best solution. One attendee had started making her own yogurt and pasta to avoid purchasing unnecessary packaging.

3. Affordable housing

Jan Lacey reminded us that at the last meeting it had been noted that a response from CoM to NWMA's letter was still awaited. A reply from Lord Mayor Sally Capp had since arrived (dated 15 August but emailed 21 August) quoting back our statistics and listing general comments about what Council was doing, which was expected to result in an Affordable Housing Policy to be completed by May 2020. Councillor Rohan Leppert had already replied (on 12 June) saying the *Homes for People – Housing Strategy 2014–18* didn't go anywhere because inclusionary zoning had been deleted.

Valerie Gerrard and Jan (drafters of the NWMA letter) saw no point in writing to Sally Capp again. Sally had offered a meeting between Council's Urban Strategy team and the Association, to be arranged by contacting Emma Appleton, Manager Urban Strategy. Jan suggested inviting Emma to a meeting.

Kevin commented that Glen Eira Council, which had some excellent policies, was tough on developers who didn't include affordable housing in planning applications. The real stumbling block was still the State Government. Rules have to be in the planning system to have any firepower.

Moved Jane Poynter, seconded Emmy Chung:

That Jan Lacey and the Chair write to the Minister for Planning, raising the issue of affordable housing and the failure of current policy to achieve sufficient results.

Carried.

4. Committee report

Spring Fling Festival, Saturday 19 October 2019

Secretary Jane Poynter said Spring Fling arrangements were progressing. The NWMA will be with all other NAC (North Melbourne Agency Collective) members and the Hotham History Project in Shop 54 Errol Street.

5. Reports from affiliated organisations

(a) Abbotsford Street Estate Community Consultative Committee (CCC)

Duncan Rouch reported on the third meeting of the Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne, CCC, held on Tuesday 10 September. His notes had been circulated to members on 13 September.

Duncan said community members had complained about the minutes of the previous meeting, which didn't represent the discussion that had actually taken place. The nominated chair doesn't attend meetings but is required to sign off on the minutes.

There were 74 responses in total to the online survey and at the drop-in sessions on 6 August. Feedback included the following:

- Preferred features in community and public spaces: Community garden 35%
- Preferred programs and services: Health support and services 23%
- Preferred environmental initiatives: Compost bins 35%
- Preferred sustainable transport options: Bicycle hoops 34%

There were both negative and positive comments. People seemed quite interested in a possible cafe on the south side of the Wood Street extension and in low-impact manufacturing businesses. Comments on the design included pedestrian gradients (already minimised, according to the developer) and that the community housing looked different from the private housing, so not tenure blind. MAB and DHHS are reviewing the facades "to possibly simplify and consolidate". The Wood Street extension is a public space but considered to be an owners corporation responsibility. MAB would be negotiating to buy the existing shops on the corner over the next two weeks.

Kevin commented that some traders had asked MAB to make them an offer. MAB was going to prepare a proposal and would no doubt want to build higher than two storeys. Jan pointed out that, for the local neighbourhood, there would be a gap between the old shops being sold and the new shops being built.

Duncan said the plans for the education site were for a new primary school, up to five levels in accordance with the DPO. With regard to returning tenants, HousingFirst's information was somewhat conflicting. The average proportion of returning tenants is 24%. Of other tenants, only 75% have to be on the priority access list. Regarding the demolition timeline, there had been a delay in removing services from two buildings due to technical issues. The new buildings might be completed between June and September 2022. The plan was to get tenants in by 2022.

Jan reminded the meeting that there would not be any public housing in the 11 estates forming the Public Housing Renewal Program, or any real growth in community housing.

(b) Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek (FMPC)

John Widmer presented his FMPC report for September 2019. Rainfall along MPC was up 10% on the same time last year. Kaye Oddie had written about the outstanding work of the Ocean Crusaders 'paddling against plastic', sponsored by the Port of Melbourne and Melbourne City Council. 110 volunteers had collected nearly a tonne of rubbish from 900 metres of waterway between the Yarra River junction and Footscray Road, on foot and by kayak and dragon boat.

There was a photo of a real fisherman with three rods — already realising Council's 'vision'? A detail from the 'Macaulay Terraces' image was juxtaposed. The CoM had endorsed the plan on 21 August (Appendix IV – Creek Management Responsibilities). CoM manages most of the local flood mitigation connected to the creek, while Melbourne Water is responsible for whole-of-catchment water management. CoM does not have direct authority over MPC. The creek's owners are Melbourne Water, Port of Melbourne Operations, VicTrack and some private owners. The associated infrastructure of CityLink is not considered at all. Transurban is a bull in a china shop.

Regarding the West Gate Tunnel Project, money is being made available to two other city councils (Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay), but not to CoM, through a West Gate Neighbourhood Fund. This program is designed to support inner-west communities, prioritising those most affected by construction of the WGTP.

This month's observation: Graffiti is out of control. Some has been there for two months, with one piece high up the electronic tower above the vandalised safety cage. It is unclear whose responsibility it is to remove graffiti.

This month's litter photo (taken on 16 September): The litter traps are functioning but full. How easy is it to clean them? The nets appear to be submerged. Yoey at Ellen Sandell's office will continue to maintain a file of photos of the creek.

(c) CoRBA (Coalition of Resident and Business Associations)

Bill Cook said CoRBA had not met since his last report.

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

Jan said the PCCC hadn't met but she had forwarded to the group the papers on noise. Kevin said that Tim Rose, Senior Policy Officer at EPA Victoria, had phoned, wanting to visit or speak at tonight's meeting. Tim encouraged people to make submissions about vehicle and road noise, which were being accepted until 31 October (www.engage.vic.gov.au/new-environmental-laws/subordinate-legislation), and said the process would be continuing into next year. Concerns about noise in Dudley Street and noise from motorbikes and car yards were mentioned again. FMPC had been active on noise for about four years with regard to the West Gate Tunnel Project. John said he and Fran might be able to make a submission.

6. Discussion of correspondence circulated in the past month

None other than as referred to elsewhere in the minutes.

7. General business

None.

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

Tuesday 15 October 2019, 7.30pm, at the Bastow Institute, 603–615 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.