



MINUTES
Ordinary General Meeting, Tuesday 18 June 2019, 7.38pm

Present: Kevin Chamberlin, Sebastian Clark, Bill Cook, Stephen Farrugia, Peter Gerrand, Valerie Gerrand, Janet Graham, Jan Lacey, Jane Poynter, Duncan Rouch, Tom Seddon (guest, The Centre) and Lorraine Siska

Apologies: Rosemary John, Dan McDonnell, Jacques Péril, Margaret Péril, Geraldine Suter and John Widmer

Kevin Chamberlin, the Chair, welcomed Tom Seddon and others to the meeting. Tom would speak about The Centre's proposed changes to the Spring Fling Festival for 10 minutes or so and then take questions and comments. The apologies were read out.

Moved Jane Poynter, seconded Lorraine Siska:

That the apologies be accepted.

Carried.

1. Guest speaker: Tom Seddon, Director, The Centre: Connecting Community in North & West Melbourne Inc

Tom said he had lived in Australia for 30 years since moving from the USA and had been the chief executive of The Centre since May 2018. A qualified lawyer, he had realised that the law wasn't his future. His previous job had been running the Bendigo Trust and the Bendigo Tramways and directing a number of related tourism operations.

Turning to the Spring Fling, he said it cost \$100,000 to put the festival on and it raised \$70,000. Costs were going up every year, with increased requirements for security etc. It was easy to say "we need to look at this again" and explore other financing options. But did we want Spring Fling to be brought to us by a large corporation like Coca-Cola? Probably not.

Tom tabled a street plan. To avoid the expense of closing the streets to trams, they had decided to follow the example of the Spanish Language Fiesta, using the laneways and Errol Street north, opposite the Auction Rooms, for a picnic area. The only impingement on Errol Street would be parking; food trucks would park in the parking bays between The Centre and the Lithuanian Club, facing the footpath. There would be a music stage for big bands this year, so why not a pub crawl?

With the main festival area contained within Errol, Raglan, Leveson and Little Errol streets and George Johnson Lane, the pub crawl would follow an outer circuit taking in the Town Hall Hotel, the Three Crowns, The Leveson and the Courthouse Hotel. Tom wasn't sure about using the interior of the Arts House but Lithuanian House and Club Voltaire would be available. Other ideas were using Eades Park and having a launch at The Comic's Lounge.

Q: The Spring Fling used to have a lot of community cake stalls — they've all disappeared.

A: It's impossible to do food stalls because of the licensing agreement. If you don't shut the trams off you have to install fencing, which costs \$10,000, and then there's security, traffic control at the entrances and having the St John Ambulance on stand-by. The City of Melbourne (CoM) is trying to roll everything into an event permit, but a building surveyor has to look at every structure. Whether you have 135 or 35 marquees the cost is still the same. The market-stall charges just cover costs.

Q: What do you envisage in the lanes?

A: For example, roving artists with a small footprint. Last year we had the National Institute of Circus Arts. The local restaurants weren't interested. The food trucks paid money.

Q: What about the community stalls?

A: We're working with NAC (North Melbourne Agency Collective). One idea is the ballroom at the Lithuanian Club. On the downside, the venue might be passed by. So we'd want more than tables and brochures. What will get community organisations talking to one another?

Q: Inside the Lithuanian Club, you could have an area set off for food where the microbusinesses supported by North Melbourne Language and Learning, which have catering licences, could set up. Then the Hotham History Project (HHP) and NWMA would be inside putting information about.

A: HHP is determined to have its usual place in front of the library next to George Johnson Lane. As the Spring Fling is shifting to Saturday, to close off the car-parking on the eastern side of Errol Street will cost money. We are hoping to get a monetary return by parking food vans along there.

Q: Who came to Spring Fling last year?

A: We tried to attract people from everywhere. Families come mostly in the morning, band-watchers in the afternoon. We'll be sorry to lose the grassed area. The site was too big last year.

Q: Jane and I do the legwork to set up the NWMA stall. The concept is getting a bit stale. Perhaps it's time for change.

A: Suitcase Rummage is not taking place this year as there won't be room in Raglan Street. Their presence brings visitors but we don't make any money out of it.

Q: What is the budget?

A: The budget for this event is about \$30,000. The CoM isn't interested in throwing more money on it. It's looking at better ways to spend CoM money. The North & West Melbourne Precinct Association will give less money this year and City West Water is not providing water trucks.

Q: With North West Patch as co-tenant, the NWMA made about \$1000 last year on the sale of plants and other donated items.

A: The Spanish Language Fiesta costs \$20,000 to put on and we make about \$16,000.

Q: It needs to be rationalised. From NWMA's point of view, it makes sense to continue in a similar way to before. Lithuanian House has good access.

Q: Will there be bands?

A: Yes. They will set up in the parking area in Raglan Street.

Q: What about the restaurants in Errol Street?

A: Everybody is doing very well. However, we have written to them three times and nobody is much interested. Maybe the restaurants will come up with their own ideas. The first thing proposed was to use Queensberry Street between Errol and Leveson but even that close they were going to divert the trams. Last year the festival felt sparse because it was so dispersed. We probably shouldn't have 'filled in' the space.

Q: Making it more contained will be good.

A: We will put in seating plus informal use of the boulevard stretch of Errol Street.

Q: To conclude — perhaps there's a general feeling that it's about time there was a review.

A: We'll be taking ideas as the year progresses.

Kevin said the Association would be happy to circulate information and a request for suggestions. He thanked Tom for his presentation. Tom departed and the meeting continued with the regular agenda.

2. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Moved Stephen Farrugia, seconded Jane Poynter:

That the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on 21 May 2019, having been circulated and taken as read, be confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

Carried.

There were no matters arising.

3. Committee report

(a) Injury to Committee member

It was reported with concern that Geraldine Suter had had a fall this afternoon. It wasn't clear what injuries she had sustained, as X-rays hadn't yet been done.

(b) Lord Mayor to meet community organisations

Lord Mayor Sally Capp had said she wanted to listen to all community organisations but she wasn't available on Tuesday evenings. The Kensington Association had already been asked. Councillor Capp wants to hear what issues concern us but doesn't have time to sit through a meeting. No objection to this idea was expressed and it was agreed that the Association would meet with Sally Capp elsewhere if necessary.

(c) Celebration of Enid Hookey's life

Kevin and Jane had taken the NWMA banner to Enid's wake on 15 June at the Kensington Town Hall, where it was hung at the front of the stage. About 250 to 300 people attended. The morning was very well organised, with many photographs spread out on tables, displays set up by groups Enid had been involved in, and a video compilation of photos from 1954 to 2019 playing. Enid had expressly asked for this event to take place and her husband, John Widmer, had done her proud. A number of people paid moving tributes, including an old friend from uni who described how Enid had come from the country to Newman and Ormond colleges, where they worked as maids, dressed in short black dresses and bibs, and waited on the blokes. A band made up of Enid's brothers and other family members played at the end.

4. Affordable housing

Jan Lacey said the Association had sent a letter on 6 June to the Lord Mayor and CoM councillors, copied to CEO Justin Hanney and Tallia Gilarry, Community Engagement Partner, asking what the Council was doing about affordable housing. There had been an immediate and detailed response from Councillor Rohan Leppert with a useful history but also expressing frustration with Council. Valerie Gerrand and Jan were suggesting we wait until the Lord Mayor responds and then present some formal ideas. As Council is reviewing its housing strategy, we should make some input. Jan said Glen Eira Council had done some incredible work and written a very good report, to which she could provide the link. They were trying to educate the community and listing ideas, such as:

- seek direct investment by government into affordable housing
- introduce a statewide mandate for inclusionary zoning
- funding ideas.

Jane Poynter said the topic had taken up considerable time at the NAC meeting. Inner Melbourne Community Legal had attended as well as two other organisations that were working with people in precarious housing or at risk of homelessness. The NAC thought affordable housing underpinned many of the issues for which their clients were seeking assistance, and all agencies were struggling to find suitable accommodation for families in particular. The term 'social housing' was used to cover both public housing and the private rental market with rental assistance.

Jan pointed out that we were discussing affordable housing, not public housing. There was further discussion and it was noted that the second Community Consultative Committee meeting for the Abbotsford Street estate was scheduled for Tuesday 25 June. Community and NWMA reps would be attending and could report to the next NWMA meeting.

Moved Jan Lacey, seconded Valerie Gerrand:

- (1) That this meeting endorse the actions of the Chair in sending the letter on affordable housing to City of Melbourne councillors, CEO and Tallia Gilarry.
- (2) That this item be deferred to the next NWMA meeting to await a response from the Lord Mayor.
- (3) That the Secretary write to Councillor Leppert thanking him for his comprehensive response.

Carried.

Jan further noted that the 'Victorian Government response to the Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues Inquiry into the Public Housing Renewal Program', which was due three months after the inquiry, had now come out 12 months after the event.

5. Reports from affiliated organisations

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

The next PCCC meeting would take place the following Friday, 21 June.

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

Bill Cook reminded us that CoRBA representatives had met with Robert Larocca, chief of staff of the Minister for Local Government, Adem Somyurek, as reported to the May NWMA meeting. The meeting with Gavin Jennings, Special Minister for State, was still to be confirmed.

It was also reported to the meeting that the day before, 17 June 2019, the Minister for Local Government had called a press conference and announced a wide range of local government reforms to come before Parliament. The Victorian Government had issued a press release headed 'Delivering a New Local Government Act for Victoria' at the same time. Kevin Chamberlin said an article on this issue by Adam Carey had appeared in *The Age* on the same day.

Councillor Jackie Watts had attended the above press conference and asked Adem Somyurek to meet with CoRBA directly. He agreed, and a time and date are to be scheduled. Jackie was reported to have said the reforms proposed are significant and a change of direction. Jackie had attended at her own suggestion, but she was the only Melbourne City councillor there.

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

Rachael Palmer had attended the last CRG meeting on 14 June and sent notes. The meeting had been chaired by James Tonkin in the absence of the regular chair, Chris Lovell.

A *Herald Sun* article had reported on the budget blow-out, to which Rail Projects Victoria (RPV) had responded that some items had been brought forward.

Work in Parkville was tracking to schedule. Police had been talking to residents about a plan to address speeding and rat-running by vehicles in Parkville streets.

At Arden, the ground has been excavated, and piles inserted to accommodate the new North Melbourne station. The first tunnel boring machine (TBM), 'Joan', will be assembled from July and will start boring the first tunnel to the western portal in South Kensington in August–September and continue for eight months. When finished, the TBM will be dismantled and part of it trucked back to Arden and the rest dragged back through the tunnel for reassembly at Arden.

RPV plans to stabilise the ground at Lothian Street. Jane reported that there are problems with drainage in Lothian Street when water collects after rain. The Crosscom building at 141 Arden Street is being demolished and recently the scaffolding collapsed.

In terms of strata divestment (40 metres beneath the surface) in the North Melbourne area, RPV had reported that pre-divestment letters were to be sent early–mid June 2019 to give relevant landowners a heads-up that acquisition/divestment was coming. The State Government wants to give affected residents at least six weeks' notice prior to the notice of divestment being published in the Victorian Government Gazette — which is now scheduled for mid–late July. At that time they would also write again to landowners to inform them that the land had been divested back to the state and outlining the process for making a claim of compensation if people believed there had been a true loss in value to their property.

Rachael had quizzed Barry McGuren (RPV) on whether people close to the alignment would be told if strata WAS NOT being acquired. He replied that people had already received a letter (sometime in the past two years) if there was a chance that strata would be acquired. The next lot of letters would only go to people who had already been notified, if they were still impacted. The only people who might be getting a letter for the first time were those who had bought a property in the area recently.

Jane noted that there is a second creek that runs approximately under Baillie Street, adding to the water problems.

(d) West Gate Tunnel Project Community Liaison Group

No response to our application to have a representative in this group had yet been received but all our documentation was in.

6. Discussion of correspondence circulated in the past month

Some correspondence had been circulated attached to the agenda or sent earlier. There was also a CoM letter dated 12 June to Yolande Leonardi, coordinator of CoRBA, about the announcement of an experimental Uber Air service in Melbourne using electric vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft. Correspondence relating to affordable housing was discussed at item 4 above.

7. General business

There was no general business.

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

Tuesday 16 July 2019 at 7.30pm, at the Bastow Institute, 603–615 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.