

Woden Valley Community Council

Committee Meeting 2 March 2005

Orpheus Room Hellenic Club

Record

Deputy Chair Mike Reddy opened the meeting and advised that apologies had been received from President David Menzel and Committee Member Dolores Holmes.

Mr Reddy said that the first hour of the meeting would cover the proposed new bus interchange for the Woden Town Centre. Rod Baxter of the ACT Planning and Land Authority was present to provide a presentation on the history and proposals and would take questions after the presentation. Public transport engineering firm Connell Wagner had a contract with the ACT Government to design the new interchange and Anthony Dick, consulting engineer with Connell Wagner, was also present to answer questions.

Rod Baxter advised the meeting that ACT Planning were seeking community consultation and feedback on proposals for the interchange. Mr Baxter said that the Woden bus interchange occupied a relatively large area of the Woden Town Centre and that a combination of design faults and changes of use of the surrounding area over 20 years had resulted in a less than optimum facility. Mr Baxter noted that the future expansion of Woden Town Centre would preclude many workers driving to work in Woden and that improved bus transport would be required to take commuters to and from work. A light rail proposal was not economical at this stage and was unlikely to be economical for at least the next 20 years.

A number of options and routes had been considered for buses arriving and departing from the town centre. He said that 1400 buses a day pass through the Woden interchange with 80 in a northerly direction and 40 in a southerly direction during peak hours. The interchange had become isolated from the shopping precinct with the move of a number of shops away from the interchange surrounds, particularly the move of supermarkets away from the area. There was now a requirement to include a viable shopping component adjacent to a rebuilt interchange. Mr Baxter presented a number of options for routing buses through the new interchange based on the concept that trunk services would proceed straight down Callum Street with local services going into the interchange. Extensive redesign of the area would take place, starting with the Police station being demolished mid 2005. The taxi rank area would become a forecourt for the town square. It was noted that the current interchange had a micro climate in winter and the new design would need to counteract the wind tunnel effect of the present structures. The proposed new retail edge of the interchange would incorporate canopies to provide protection from the weather.

Mr Baxter said that the new interchange was a large scale project and that an interim interchange would be required for a period of approximately two and a half years. The redevelopment would take place in three stages with the first stage demolishing current structures, the second stage would see the construction of an interim interchange and the third stage the building of the permanent structure. The interchange development would take place in

conjunction with private sector development. The proposed design would also include enhanced public spaces. Discussions would be held with the building owners and commercial groups with a preliminary draft plan to be produced for public comment.

Westfield has announced that it will take over management of Woden Plaza from Lend Lease and it was not possible to predict the impact that this might have on interchange redevelopment proposals.

Mr Baxter said that the redevelopment had been included in the formal ACT government planning and budget proposals. Funding had been provided for the design element of the redevelopment in the 2004-05 financial year with the consultation process to take one year. The construction phase would be included in the budget process in 2006-07 with construction proposed to start in July 2007.

Mr Baxter concluded his presentation saying that preliminary plans would be available for public consideration in mid 2005.

Warwick Pearson reported to the meeting on his attendance at a Canberra International Airport meeting on noise problems to be caused by an expansion of activity at Canberra airport, including a proposal for night operations.

Mr Pearson advised that turbo prop aircraft caused the most noise disturbance over urban areas as jet aircraft flight paths were programmed to avoid overflying suburban housing. Mr Pearson said that there were no representatives from the Jerrabomberra residents association nor from the developers of the proposed Tralee estate. He said that there was little support at the meeting for developments built under established flight paths. The meeting agreed to maintain a watching brief on airport noise and the impact it might cause for the Woden Valley if affected resident associations lobbied for noise sharing over other suburbs.

The meeting agreed to invite Russell Watkinson the new CEO of Canberra Urban Parks and Places to a meeting of the WVCC. It was noted that the budget for maintenance of parks and public spaces was decreasing at a time when many trees were reaching the end of their natural life span and extensive replacement were now required.

Treasurer John Kain said that the WVCC bank account balance was under \$2,000 and the ACT Planning would pay for the costs associated with the establishment of the internet site. Site development was almost complete with most WVCC documents to be placed on the site.

The meeting noted that a submission had been sent to the ACT government on Woden Valley funding requirements for inclusion in the ACT budgetary process.

The meeting noted concerns about a proposal for development near the corner of Melrose Drive and Parramatta St in Phillip on the former motor registry site. The owners of the site proposed 14 parallel car park spaces on the curve in addition to two driveways on Melrose Drive. The notification process of the development had been unsatisfactory with very few neighbouring property owners being advised of the proposals. It was agreed that the proposals would create significant traffic hazards because of the parallel parking on a major road and access and egress onto the same road. The meeting noted concerns about the lack of adequate community consultation and it was agreed that the WVCC would write to ACT Planning objecting to the proposal.

Mike Reddy advised that he would be making further progress on the implementation of an alcohol free zone for the park adjacent to the Woden Valley Senior Citizens club in discussions with Woden Police. He further advised that the convenor of the Woden Art Show was unable to take on the task this year due to ill health. He was having discussions with another person interested in becoming the 2005 convenor.

Adrian Roberts requested that the Police be invited to address a WVCC meeting on policing issues in the Woden Valley.

Mr Roberts also noted that graffiti was increasing in the Curtin/Lyons area as well as a number of other public spaces in the Valley and that the ACT government anti graffiti campaign was not proving to be effective. Graffiti removal was the responsibility of individual government organisations and there was no coordinated general response which exacerbated removal problems. As graffiti removal was not the responsibility of a central body it was necessary to write to individual departments to request removal of graffiti on their premises.

John Kain said that North Walk in the town centre was not being maintained as the contractors were not aware of their maintenance responsibilities. This was a common problem with many contractors being unaware of their landscape maintenance responsibilities.

MLA Deb Foskey said that she should be copied in on requests to individual departments as MLAs could often get responses more promptly than the general public or community organisations.

The meeting agreed that a letter be sent to Urban Services Minister John Hargreaves noting that action was taken on specific requests but that government mechanisms created layers of bureaucracy with many departments having responsibilities for diverse areas.