

Record of Meeting

5 May 2010

1. The Acting Chair, David Menzel, welcomed attendees, including Caroline Le Couteur MLA and Jeremy Hanson MLA. Apologies were received from Jenny Stewart, Shane Rattenbury MLA, Steve Doszpot MLA, Peter Pharaoh, and Nancy-Louise McCullough.

2. Bill Smith moved and Henry Hatch seconded that the record of the WVCC meeting held on 7 April 2010, be accepted. The motion was carried.

Redistribution of Electoral Boundaries for ACT Elections

3. Mr Phillip Green, ACT Electoral Commissioner explained that the next electoral redistribution for ACT elections would be undertaken after October 2010. Under the ACT Electoral Act the ACT was divided into three electorates: Molonglo with seven elected members; and Ginninderra and Brindabella each with five elected members. With a total of 17 members the quota for Molonglo was 7/17 and for Ginninderra and Brindabella, 5/17 of the total ACT enrolment. He said the aim of a redistribution of electoral boundaries was to ensure, as far as possible, that the number of electors in an electorate at the time of the next legislative assembly election (2012) was within +/- 5 per cent of the quota—that is, close to one vote, one value.

4. Mr Green explained that in addition to the numerical criteria, other factors considered when drawing electoral boundaries included: the community interests within each proposed electorate, including economic, social and regional interests; the means of communication and travel within each proposed electorate and the physical features and area of each proposed electorate. However the numerical criteria took precedent over those factors.

5. It was pointed out that the Council believed that social issues should be considered not just statistical data in determining electoral boundaries. It was suggested that on the Redistribution Committee (appointed by the Electoral Commission and consisting of the Electoral Commissioner, ACTPLA and the ACT Surveyor-General) there should also be a social planner.

6. A number of attendees pointed out that the current division of Woden into two electorates had reduced residents' influence on Assembly members as well as affecting priorities for government funding in Woden. The current budget illustrated the lack of political interest in the Woden Valley with, for instance, funding for bus stations in Erindale and Gungahlin and a new bus interchange for Belconnen—but again nothing in this regard for Woden.

7. Mr Green explained that once the Redistribution Committee had been formed, the public would be invited to make comment and after the Committee made its recommendations (which would be in the media and on the Electoral Commission website at: www.elections@act.gov.au), the public would be able to lodge objections to the proposed redistribution.

Redevelopment of Borrowdale House, Woden Town Square

8. Matthew Blair from BVN Architecture and Chris Young-Wright from Young-Wright Architects presented concept plans for the proposed redevelopment of Borrowdale House (which currently contains the post office) on the western face of the Woden Town Square. It was envisaged the development, which would comprise three tower blocks of varying heights (18-20 storeys) on a three-storey podium, would have around 150 apartments plus 50 serviced apartments, retail facilities, and parking for 250 cars in the basement and around the podium.

9. While there was support at the meeting for high-density development in the core areas of the Woden Town Centre rather than on the periphery or in suburban areas, concern was expressed about the development's proximity to the Lovett building that will make an unattractive corridor between the two buildings. In response to concerns that the development had the potential to exacerbate the wind tunnel effect in the area, already a problem for the town square, Matthew Blair said an aim of the development was to ameliorate the wind conditions. Other concerns expressed were the impact shading would have on the surrounding area that includes the town centre, the library and the health centre; and the orientation of the main tower block that was not optimal for solar access. In responding to a comment on the importance of having First Fleet elements incorporated in the Borrowdale House development as occurs in other redevelopments in the area (eg. Scarborough House), Chris Young-Wright said that could be done.

10. A development application would be submitted in the near future.

Red Hill Regenerators' concerns about the proposed Federal Golf Club development

11. Dr Michael Mulvaney from the Red Hill Regenerators presented the group's concerns to the meeting about the proposed Federal Golf Club housing development. He said that the proposed development would be in an area of high fire danger, be inefficient to service and be dependent on the private motorcar. The development would have a significant impact on the Red Hill Nature Park woodland and its wildlife and bird species. He added that the Red Hill Regenerators were not opposed to the Federal Golf Club, but considered the proposed development to be inappropriate, both environmentally and socially. A core issue seemed to be the ongoing financial viability of the club and whether the golf course could be effectively drought proofed.

12. The Federal Golf Club President, Mr David Nelson, who attended the meeting, said the sale of the land to the developer was the only way to ensure viability of the club that was a not-for-profit organisation. He said the club had planted many trees over the years and he outlined measures that had been taken towards drought proofing the club (such as two irrigation ponds and converting the fairways with hybrid couch). He added that the Red Hill Generators had circulated a lot of material about the club and the proposed development that was inaccurate and misleading. Most of the trees that would be removed from the development site were introduced species or noxious weeds. The important trees had been identified and they would be preserved.

13. The Chair, David Menzel said that the WVCC neither opposed nor supported the Federal Golf Club's proposed development. The issue for the Council was to ensure the Federal Gold Club remained a viable concern. He said the Council looked forward to further discussions on the issue.

Planning report

14. The Planning Officer, Gina Pinkas, said that the review of the Change of Use Charge system and the development of a codification model for the majority of lease variation applications was about getting a better deal for people in the ACT, although it could increase the cost of housing. Comments on the draft report (at www.actpla.act.gov.au) were to be submitted by 21 May 2010.

Cabinet in the community

15. Chris Erett reported that the Woden/Weston Cabinet in the Community was held on Saturday, 17 May at Stirling. Departmental representatives and a number of ministers were available to provide information on various projects and to respond to questions on an informal basis.

16. The next meeting of the WVCC will be held on 2 June 2010.