

# Woden Valley Community Council Inc.

## Record of Meeting in Apollo Room, Hellenic Club

Wednesday 2 April 2014

- 1 The Chair, Jenny Stewart, welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies were received from Noel and Archana Boniface.
- 2 Minutes of the last meeting, on 5 March 2014, were accepted.
- 3 Architect Lydia Frommer presented an extensively-researched, well-illustrated and thought-provoking survey of inner-city housing around the world. In particular, she explained the interaction of “negative space” (between buildings) and “positive space” (within buildings) in a variety of places, including, most-tellingly, Paris, where an acceptable high density had been achieved with a maximum of seven stories with buildings typically wrapped around a central courtyard; this was compared with Canberra, where quite high rise developments actually achieved a lower density of habitation per unit of land mass.

Various parameters bearing on the quality of housing developments, such as the ratio of street width to building height, management of traffic flows and parking, were explored. It was noted that the present practice of block-by-block release was not in the long-term design interest of the city. ACTPLA appears to be under some pressure to maximise Government revenues at the expense of good overall planning.

Numerous questions and comments about high rise developments in Canberra followed upon this excellent presentation. These included issues related to fire protection, a profile of the product mix of high-rise apartments and market demand, the high level of building defects and whether Ms Frommer had given this same presentation to ACTPLA itself (yes).

It was especially noted that the issue of warranty insurance for developments in Canberra that exceeded three stories has yet to be resolved (and should be pursued).

Ms Frommer agreed to make a copy of her presentation available on the WVCC website and was thanked in the usual way.

- 4 **Elements of the Master Plans** for the Mawson Group Centre and the Woden Town Centre were canvassed. **For Mawson:** the potential uses of the strip of land east of Athllon Drive, extension of the southern end of Mawson Place, and the possible linking of Mawson Place with Athllon Drive. **For Woden:** it was noted that Eddison Park needs a lot of attention, especially the ponds, and that connection between this park and the WTC was difficult; that the bus interchange had still not been resolved. Comment from the floor suggested that Lydia Frommer’s concept of negative and positive spaces and building height to street width ratios could be applied in Woden, to good effect. Other comments touched on local speed limits and the trialling of a new road surface.
- 5 **Local Member Spot:** Nicole Lawder, a Liberal Party MLA, confirmed that the Liberal Party supports having an Assembly with five electorates of five members each. Ms Lawder addressed the issue of population density and the possible implications for the determination of electorate size. She also drew attention to the

high vacancy rates in high rise developments throughout Canberra as well as the issue of the aging of the buildings themselves.

- 6 General Business: Drawn to attention were the build-up of vegetation on the slopes of Mt Taylor and possible amendments to the Block 15 Tradies development: the 23 storeys proposed are to be reduced, but the new height has not been specified.
- 7 Other Business: No other business.
- 8 The meeting closed at 9:08pm, with next meeting of the Council scheduled for 7:30pm on Wednesday 7 May at the Hellenic Club.

**Timoshenko Aslanides**

Minutes Secretary            22 April, 2014