

Woden Valley Community Council
Record of Meeting, Southern Cross Club, Woden
7 pm Wednesday 1 November 2017
MLA in attendance: Caroline Le Couteur

Also in attendance: (Representatives of) Pedal Power, Curtin Residents Group, Hughes Residents Group, Farrer Residents Group and the Phillip Business Community

- 1 Acknowledgement of country.
- 2 President, **Fiona Carrick**, welcomed attendees. There were no apologies. Minutes of the last meeting, held on 4 October 2017, were approved.
- 3 To open this **Annual General Meeting for 2016-2017**, there were three topics: The **Chair's Report**, the **Treasurer's Report** and the **election of Committee Members**.
Fiona Carrick's Chair's Report covered a number of submissions from the WVCC that had been submitted during 2016-17 for the: 2017-18 ACT Budget, Curtin and Mawson Group Centre precinct codes, Woden Town Centre precinct code, Light Rail Stage 2 and development applications for Borrowdale House, 15 Bowes Street and Bradley Street. It was noted that eight Townhouses had been finalised for the Mawson Public Housing Renewal project. The proposed new cemetery was discussed with the CEO and Chair of ACT Cemeteries. It was emphasised that while the WVCC supported the Light Rail Project and residential development (in the right places), there were several outstanding issues to which the ACT Government needed to give their attention. These included: community facilities, an arts centre, the Canberra Institute of Technology site and related issues, a multi-purpose sports facility and, among other pressing issues, the demolition of two derelict office blocks. A number of other meetings to do with youth issues, sporting facilities and the proposed mural were documented.

There has been no Government response to the "Placemaking" project for the Woden Town Centre. "Vinnies" were implementing a night patrol in the Woden Valley. Media coverage of issues of local interest included the NCA proposal for Commonwealth Avenue, the Geocon development on the Tradies site, the reports of children sitting on the tops of the derelict Albermarle and Alexander Buildings, the loss of some 720 public service jobs from the Valley and reported bashings at the Woden Bus interchange.

Reported events included a "wellness" presentation by Woden Community Services at Eddison Park on 19 October and a proposed youth band competition in the Woden Town Centre sponsored by the Woden Youth Centre on 17 November.

The **Treasure's Report** was detailed on screen. Key items were: Income, \$12,821.00 with Expenditure (on a variety of administrative, advertising, technical, insurance and project grants to residential groups) totalling \$15,000.74. Monetary assets were given as \$33,252.86. **Mike Reddy** moved the report be accepted subject to audit clearance and this was approved.

4 Presentations – Law enforcement

Sergeant Harry Haines, Officer in Charge of Woden Valley Police, presided. Main topic for discussion was the recent death of an individual who had been "Tasered". It was emphasised that the cause of death had yet to be determined and that the fellow, apparently

psychologically disturbed, had only been Tasered because he was self-harming himself with a knife; the Tasering minimised further self-harm. **Questions:** Why not use darts? (Any use of force requires detailed consideration. Darts use drugs which could interact with other substances. Tasers, on the other hand, do not. The five-second shock – 50K volts at a very, very low amperage – worked by blocking nerve messages to the muscles and thus incapacitated the person targeted. The five-second shock could be repeated if required and the contacts were still attached. All his Officers were thoroughly trained in the use of this item); Are all front line police issued with Tasers? (Large number are issued and training is provided); Are Tasers used more often? (Use of the Tasers has seen a drop in the police use of guns and batons. Police have to produce reports on any firing of these devices); How often is equipment checked? (Every shift); Different from ordinary guns? (Yes. Aim is to body, legs).

Police have arrested a couple of juveniles regarding a recent attack on Chinese students. The juveniles involved were described as “troubled”, so it was emphasised that the attack was not racially motivated. China views Canberra, and Australia generally, as a safe place for education. An interpreter has been engaged and police are visiting schools and talking to students. **Questions:** Cameras installed around Woden? (Yes. Up and running. And police patrols increased to coincide with school times); The derelict Albermarle and Alexander Buildings are an eyesore. What can be done? (The hope is that they will soon be demolished and the site redeveloped); Is security adequate for both buildings? (No. It should be upgraded).

Residents Group Presentations: The **Geocon Development** was outlined: 800 apartments on the 1.1ha Tradies site in four towers, one being 24 storeys. The public and private amenities were noted. Issues raised about this development included a season-by-season shadow diagram analysis and overshadowing of Bellerive, the proposed building heights and their alignment with the Woden Valley Master Plan. Questions which needed to be asked of Geocon include: actual height in metres of the towers, parking arrangements for both guests and residents, balcony privacy, modelling of traffic flows, demographics of the market appeal, availability of places for school access as well as access to rain gardens and the contribution of the development to the wider community.

Robin Stanton noted that the **Beyond Q Bookshop** had moved to Weston; some other businesses had also been given notice to leave the Curtin Shops.

Eric Glass said that the Farrer Residents Group still has concerns about the Goodwin Development, in particular, that the proposed five-year period allocated for the construction was much more than the ‘default’ period of two years. A question on the provision of space for a public square was noted, as was the destruction of some 200 metres of footpaths. Also: some 200 signatures had been collected requesting a new playground for the Farrer Shops. **Question:** Where would the playground go? (On the eastern side, in the gap between two apartment buildings).

Robert Issell, representing business owners on the south side of Hindmarsh Drive, said that dealings with the ACT Government were ‘difficult’. With a business catchment area including some 38 thousand people, he noted that Queanbeyan, with a catchment of some 36.7 thousand

people, was much better served. The 78 business owners that he represented comprised some 30% of the 270 businesses in the Valley. Open spaces, he noted, were being neglected. His members have long been asking for playgrounds in Colby Court and in Dundas Court, without effect. He then added that “there were no shaded areas and no gardens: just dirt, dust and neglect.” Rates collected were not being ploughed back into the area; there was no indoor pool and “all tertiary education was located on the north side of the lake.”

The **Hughes Residents Group** discussed developments involving the local golf course and the need to protect the Red Hill environment and the Nature Reserve. Section 66, it was noted, was the subject of a major development application; there is a proposal to rezone the area as ‘mixed use’.

Presentation of the **Healthy Waterways Project** by Gina Pinkas was held over.

- 5 **MLA Caroline Le Couteur** observed that “there were too many golf clubs in Canberra”. Regarding the proposed Federal golf course development, she added that ACTPLA “could not really do anything without the support of the majority of the community”. The Federal Golf Club, she said, was trying to find water underground. “Come Summer”, she added, “there would be problems”. The financial viability of the club was also in question: it was “slowly going broke”.

The operation of a “citizens’ jury” on 3rd party insurance was discussed.

She also noted her objection, and community objections, to proposals to install billboards in the ACT. **Questions:** What will happen if CIT Woden is closed? (She will try to find out); Is it true that the CIT will be closed in July, 2018? (All interested groups should get together to present a united voice to the ACT Government regarding the future of the complex).

- 6 In **Other business**, **Mike Reddy**, reporting on the Planning and Development Forum, noted that Little Eagles had been observed in Ginninderra and were feeding on the local rabbits. Also, a new bus timetable had been operating from 9 October, 2017. At this point **Caroline Le Couteur** added that “in 2018, networks will have more rapid routes”. **Questions:** Why not consult the bus drivers themselves? Shouldn’t they be involved? (Yes; and the ‘MyWay’ data was proving very useful); Was feedback from the “Better Suburbs” initiative useful? (Yes).

The meeting finished at 9:27 pm. The next meeting of the WVCC, for which refreshments will be provided, will be at 7pm on Wednesday 6 December 2017 in the **Canberra Southern Cross Club**.

Timoshenko Aslanides,
Retiring Minutes Secretary
18 November, 2017