

WILLOUGHBY BAY PRECINCT
PART OF NORTH SYDNEY COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY PRECINCT
SYSTEM



MINUTES OF MEETING HELD
THURSDAY 8th June 2023
COMMENCING AT 7.30 PM

ATTENDANCE: 14 people attended the meeting
APOLOGIES: 9 were recorded
GUEST SPEAKER: EC, Council's Manager Traffic & Transport Operations

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes for the 11th May 2023 meeting were adopted

Motion carried: 6 in favour, 8 abstentions, 0 against

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Woolworths Rangers Road Planning Proposal PP 1/23

North Sydney Council considered the proposal on 22/05/23 and Chair spoke on the issue. Council voted 6 to 3 to support the recommendation, opposing the proposal in its current form and supporting the preparation a site specific Development Control Plan if Woolworths seeks to progress the proposal via a Rezoning Review through the Department of Planning. The DCP would address to address matters of concern, including podium heights and setbacks to minimise overshadowing, reduction of on-site parking and creation of a more generous and better proportioned public plaza and open-to-sky through site link. The three Councillors who did not support the recommendation were Crs Gibson, Lepouris and Mutton.

Woolworths requested a rezoning review a few days after the Council meeting.

Precinct authorises Chair to make a submission to Department of Planning and to email Precinct members on this issue.

Brothers Park

RL reported the Streets Alive Coordinator has forwarded a proposal for the Brothers Park Memorial to Council's historian for comment. Construction of the 'edging garden bed' has commenced. RL reported that the Streets Alive Coordinator is printing a flyer inviting Precinct residents to join the Brothers Park Gardening Group. The flyer is expected to be ready 9/06/23 for Precinct to distribute. The following dates are scheduled in the flyer (9.00 am start, subject to weather):

Tuesdays 13/06, 25/07, 22/08 26/09, 24/10, 21/11
Saturdays 24/06, 15/07, 12/08, 16/09, 14/10, 11/11

RL advised next weeding bee will be on Tuesday 13/6. Mulch is being delivered on 23/6.

Pedestrian Safety - Gerard St/Macpherson St Intersection

Council's Manager Traffic and Transport Operations accepted the invitation to attend 8/6/23.

Traffic Committee Meeting 21/4 — Item 5.1 - Young St / Grosvenor St roundabout

Chair addressed the Council meeting 22/05/23. Council resolved:

*"2. **THAT** Council notes that the Young Street and Grosvenor Street roundabout and intersection will be subject to a separate design and consultation & confirmed any change to roundabout to be subject of consultation." (Note: Young St cycleway is proceeding.)*

Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study Workshop

Chair made a report on the workshop held on 30/05/23 and presented slides of the plaza and height options which were the subject of workshop group discussions.

Walkway between Ellalong Road and Fernhurst Avenue

Council has rectified the trip hazard. **Precinct thanks Council for the prompt action on this item.**

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

- Council's Response to Precinct's May 2023 Minutes

Received but no change from April SOA

- **Traffic Committee Meeting (9/6)**

❖ Nil matters

- **Council Meeting (8/5)** Additional to items noted in the May meeting:

❖ **Item 10.4** – Memorial Plaques in Open Space Policy

*"1. **THAT** the draft Memorials in Open Space Policy be endorsed for public exhibition for a minimum period of 42 days." Memorial trees permitted for a person who:*

"a) has a recognised historical link with the locality of North Sydney or

b) is generally acknowledged as having made a significant contribution to the social, economic, sporting and/or cultural development of the community of North Sydney"

Have your say closes 16 July 2023. **Precinct will notify local resident who enquired on this issue.**

- **Council Meeting (22/5)**

❖ **Item 9.1** – Traffic Committee Minutes – Young St & Grosvenor St Roundabout

❖ **Item 10.5** – Planning Proposal 1/23 1-7 Rangers Road & 50 Yeo Street Neutral Bay

- **Council Meeting (5/6)**

❖ **Item 9.1** – Reducing waste & its impact on the environment

❖ **Item 10.3** – 12-14 Waters Road Neutral Bay – Voluntary Planning Agreement

Chair reported addressing Council regarding poor outcome re VPA contribution. Council resolved to seek a briefing re City of Parramatta VPA Policy, which includes:

"For proposed development and planning proposals outside of the CBD, Council 's primary position is that satisfactory arrangements for the provision of community infrastructure will be taken to have been made when the value of the planning agreement contributions is equivalent to 50% of the land value uplift."

Precinct agrees North Sydney Council should consider developing a policy which provides Council with a greater share of land value uplift.

- **CPC Meeting (20/6)**
- ❖ CPC Agenda yet to be issued
- **Council Memoranda**
- ❖ **24 May** – Draft Bush Fire Risk Management Plan – submissions close 30/6/23
- ❖ **26 May** – Neutral Bay Alive Community Consultation Group – EOI closing 12/6/23

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

2/50 Macpherson St Alterations & additions including swimming pool
Alterations to strata lot at rear of property within Montague Road Conservation Area

4-6 Macpherson St Modification to reduce apartment numbers from 11 to 7, remove car lift

GUEST SPEAKER – EC, COUNCIL’S MANAGER TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT OPERATIONS Improving pedestrian safety at Gerard Street / Macpherson Street intersection

EC attended to collect information and to discuss the problem with people from the local area. He is new to North Sydney and not familiar with the local roads and issues.

Chair noted a response to a request for signalisation as raised by Precinct in October 2020 and resolved by Council in November 2020 was received by Precinct and discussed at the April 2023 meeting. This is a letter dated 27/2/23 from (the former) NSW Minister for Metropolitan Roads via Tim James and Mayor Baker. The letter states *“Unfortunately, this location does not meet the required warrants for the installation of traffic lights at this time. I am advised TfNSW suggests that other potential treatments at this location, such as raising the crossing, are more appropriate. As Gerard & Macpherson Streets are local roads under the care & control of North Sydney Council, these treatments are a matter for Council to consider”*. Precinct in its April meeting endorsed consideration of raising the crossing as a potential treatment.

EC said that the pedestrian crossing is considered non-compliant as it crosses 4 lanes of traffic. Because it is non-compliant he cannot recommend changes such as a raised crossing. Signalisation, if it can be achieved, would be the appropriate solution. Council tried to get a black spot listing but there was no traction as there have been no fatalities on the Gerard Street / Macpherson Street crossing. Signage improvement and refreshment of line marking including zebra marking and zig zag markings as well as advanced warning signs, improvements to lighting have been undertaken.

There was considerable discussion and concern expressed by Precinct members on how dangerous this crossing is and how this has been an issue for years. Pedestrians have to negotiate 4 lanes of traffic on a blind bend where motorists are speeding and reluctant to stop. AC, a local resident and university researcher in injury and safety, including transport and road safety, said it was one of the worst configured pedestrian crossings he had seen.

EC recommended continued lobbying including a petition. A petition could be helpful in pursuing signalisation.

Reinstatement of Young Street / Grasmere Road Roundabout

EC cannot put in a proposal for a roundabout as there is insufficient space for a roundabout which complies with today's standards, such as pedestrian islands to suit a person with a pram.

A Precinct resident advised speed bumps at this intersection only slow down small sedans and not 4WDs. There is a very large number of 4WDs in this area and they tear across speed bumps without slowing down whereas a roundabout would require a slowing down. Residents noted that the cycleway is designed with families and children in mind, but it is confusing, especially for children, as to who has right-of-way where cyclists cross Young Street on the north side of Grasmere Road.

Young Street / Grosvenor Street Roundabout

EC said the design option for the cycleway extension across Grosvenor Street was not meant to be attached to the report to the Traffic Committee. It was one of a number of options and not a preferred option. EC noted that it is difficult to design for where a separate cycleway rejoins a road.

Young Street Plaza

EC said he was not aware of what may happen with the Young Street Plaza. Chair advised that Mayor Baker had told the Neutral Bay Streetscape Committee meeting in February that discussions are ongoing with TfNSW as to whether the Plaza will be removed and Young Street reopened and there will be community consultation.

Thank you to guest speaker

Precinct thanked EC for sharing his time and expertise. He in turn said he would welcome Precinct getting in touch with any concerns we may have.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Flyers littering Macpherson/Gerard Streets

Several Precinct members have reported flyers littering nature strips and footpaths along Macpherson & Gerard streets, not in letter boxes just strewn along the ground. They may be a bitcoin scam.

Update on 2 Items in Precinct May Minutes

Could Council please provide an update on the following 2 items

**a) Construction site issues – 15 Richmond Avenue & 4 Tobruk Avenue
Precinct asks Council what is happening at these two sites? There is no signage at either site.
The footpath at 4 Tobruk has been given over to construction. Is this authorised by Council?**

**b) Regarding Council Meeting (26/4) Item 10.04 – Draft Operational Plan & Budget 2023-24
Precinct asks what is the total annual amount of the Neutral Bay Mainstreet Levy,
what is it spent on and who manages the expenditure?**

Precinct 50th Anniversary Lunch 21 May 2023

Precinct members reported enjoying attending the anniversary lunch and hearing from a number of informative speakers. Agreed a copy of Mayor Baker's speech should be attached to the minutes.

Meeting closed at 9.35pm

Next meeting will be on Thursday 13 July 2023

Council Contact Details:

Phone: 9936 8100

Fax: 9936 8177

Ranger Services 9936 8100

WEB: www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au

Precinct 50th Anniversary Draft Speech

Good afternoon. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Cammeraygal people of the Eora Nation, and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

I also acknowledge and welcome Crs Welch, Lamb and Bourke [insert any others], former Mayor, Genia McCaffery, former Councillors Robyn Read, Michel Reymond and Veronique Marchandeanu, Precinct Office Bearers past and present and to all who participate in the Precinct System and contribute to the robust local democratic traditions of North Sydney.

Cr MaryAnn Beregi and Cr Godfrey Santer, both of whom served as Precinct Office bearers before becoming Councillors, give their apologies.

We all know that the North Sydney council area is an exceptionally special place. Beyond the precious access to the foreshores and urban bushland, it is the character of our community that attracts and sustains us.

On this 50th anniversary of the Precinct System we celebrate our community and our collective commitment to citizen-led local democracy.

The American political scientist, Robert Dahl, said

“The prospects for stable democracy in a country are improved if its citizens and leaders strongly support democratic, ideas, values, and practices. The most reliable support comes when these beliefs and predispositions are embedded in the country's culture and are transmitted, in large part, for one generation to the next. In other words, the country possesses a democratic political culture.”

Surely, this particularly applies to North Sydney and is embodied in the Precinct system – public participation by citizens, transmitted from one generation to another is the bedrock of our local democracy.

In 1966 the United Nations adopted the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the civil rights movement around the world was in full swing and in the following years, citizens around this country challenged the conventional order at all levels of government. It is not surprising that the establishment of the Precinct system was part of that changing face and culture of Australia. The formation of

resident action groups in response to increasing development pressures and the election of progressive councillors like John Woodward, Robyn Hamilton (now Read), Phyllis King, Judith Ambler and, my mother, Carole Baker brought a commitment to transparency, public participation and excellent town planning.

In 1971 North Sydney Council imposed a moratorium on all new residential flat development and commissioned town planners, Wellings Smith and Byrnes, to undertake a review of Council's planning controls. Those young planners (and it is wonderful to see Terry Byrnes here today) revolutionised community consultation by inviting 240 residents to assess planning issues for the development of a draft planning controls.

The Council then resolved to establish the Precinct System more formally. Initially there were 56 residential precincts and seven commercial precincts, many met in private homes and all addressed strategic planning issues.

In 1974 Council received the A R Bluett Award (the most prestigious award in local government) in part due to the model of public participation in the Precinct System.

The Precinct System has not only been awarded and lauded, but copied both across the country and even in Japan. Today, there are precinct systems in Randwick, Waverley and Kiama and Manly residents still mourn the loss of their precinct system following amalgamation into Northern Beaches Council.

Since those early days, the Precinct System evolved but remained an important source of both public participation in Council's policies and practices and, perhaps even more importantly, a place in which bonds of community are made and sustained.

The late British politician and celebrated diarist, Tony Benn said "*Every generation must fight the same battles again and again. There's no final victory and there's no final defeat*".

Nothing could be truer in North Sydney. The early Precinct System was formed partly to address overdevelopment. 50 years later, the Precincts spend considerable time and energy on development issues including the impacts of major infrastructure projects like the WHT and WFU, State Government planning for increased density like

the Crows Nest/St Leonards 2036 Plan, or to preserve the scale, character and heritage of Neutral Bay and Cremorne.

Throughout the last 50 years, Precinct Committees have championed issues big and small – keeping elected representatives and Council staff accountable.

Today marks the end of National Volunteers week, with this year's theme "the change makers". There is no more perfect example of that theme than the Precinct System – every one of you volunteers your time to participate sat meetings, advocating on behalf of your local community, with the primary purpose of improving and enhancing the North Sydney community.

Individually and collectively, the Precinct system is truly inspirational – dedicated to speaking up for your local area and the LGA as a whole, hard-working, energetic, strategic and creative in your approach to issues large and small.

Precinct members, past and present, have contributed greatly to the character, to the heart and soul, of North Sydney.

On behalf of Council, it is my honour, to thank you and congratulate you on this milestone.

As the American activist Abbie Hoffman once said:

"Democracy is not something you believe in or a place to hang your hat, but it's something you do. You participate. If you stop doing it, democracy crumbles."

May North Sydney residents continue to participate for the next 50 years.