

WAVERTON PRECINCT MEETING

7 November 2023

MINUTES

The meeting commenced at 7.38pm at the Waverton Uniting Church Community Hall.

Chair: IG

Minutes: DL

Attendance: 32

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGY

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting, and welcomed Mayor Zoë Baker, Mayor of North Sydney.

Apologies from BD and MP

2. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The confirmation of October 2023 was moved by KA and seconded by VY
“That the October 2023 Minutes be accepted”.

Carried unanimously.

3. GUEST SPEAKER

IG introduced the guest speaker, North Sydney Mayor Zoë Baker.

The Waverton Bowling Club site.

The Mayor recognised that Waverton residents remain interested in the Waverton Bowling Club site and said that when there was a gap in tenure, it became the subject of a successful Aboriginal Land Rights claim. Her and other senior Council personnel had attended the site for three in-person meetings which did not go ahead on account of the Aboriginal Land Council personnel not attending pre-arranged and confirmed appointments. The Mayor wanted to emphasize to the gathered Waverton residents that it was not due to lack of care, involvement or initiative by Council that there has been little information brought forward on the future of that site.

The Mayor recognised that the Council and the residents share a desire for the site to remain as public open space. It is currently zoned as recreational space and should remain that way, although the previous State government had put in mechanisms for Aboriginal land to more easily ‘fast track’ changes to zoning of their lands so concerns remain. There is a Local Government Conference on the weekend (following this Precinct meeting) where she said she

had hoped to approach senior members of the Aboriginal Land Council to open more meaningful dialogue.

A resident asked why the Mayor thinks that the communications recently in the press have been adversarial rather than co-operative. The Mayor answered that she did not know, as communications have always been respectful. Whatever takes place, the site is surrounded by open public space. We are in a council area where all public space is precious.

Other public open space around Waverton (Balls Head, Berrys Bay)

The State government is keen for the Berry's Bay plan to keep moving forward as it is seen by them as compensation for the loss of parkland at Cammeray.

The Mayor asked all residents to engage in the Open Space and Recreation Needs study survey. This is the early stages of the shaping of our open space needs for the next decade. The survey contributions will be used to form a brief to a consultancy.

[Open Space & Recreation Needs Study | Your Say North Sydney \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/open-space-recreation-needs-study)

You can also find this survey by accessing the menu options on the North Sydney Council website. In that menu, choose "Have Your Say" and then "Open Space and Recreation Needs Study". The survey will close on December 3.

Housing and residential development

The lack of progress with new housing developments is not with Council - the approvals are taking place, noted the Mayor. The issue is with the developers delaying commencement. North Sydney Council has met all the targets it has been set by the State government but there is ongoing pressure on Council. Ministers have not yet amended the targets but this is expected before Christmas. There is medium density housing being built all over the LGA and the Mayor expressed a view that simply re-zoning will not translate into affordable housing in the next decade. By way of trying to deliver affordable housing, the Council are prioritising funds to utilise a site behind the Orpheum cinema in Parraween Street for this, with underground car parking and a park included. Thirdi Group are developing the site over the Metro at Crows Nest in which it is proposed to include residential with 120 units for health workers at the nearby hospitals. This has support from three health unions. The Council is keen not to change the existing envelope to deliver affordable housing - greater density will occur around the transport hubs. The Mayor said that the Council wants developments that have already been approved to commence.

A question was asked if the Council can protect the area around Waverton station from high rise development. The Mayor said that the focus for this kind of development is around the Crows Nest/St Leonards precinct. Other areas such as Waverton would be better suited to townhouse/villa/manor development. The Mayor noted that Neutral Bay and Cremorne are changing rapidly and there is a lot of medium density development occurring there as this reflects market appetite.

Woodleys Shed

The Mayor said that there is an obligation to make the site safe and this is the most pressing concern. The Harbour Tunnel consultants recommended it be demolished. The Mayor made clear this is not an option. The Council commissioned its own structural engineer to make an initial report. The consultant reported that while there are rusting steel columns and iron, they said that these are tasks that can be undertaken, the site be saved and the site made safe. The Mayor said the Council may request a full report on the back of these positive findings. In addition, the Mayor has approached John Graham, the Minister for Tourism, and Transport NSW to say that Woodleys Shed needs to be made safe and for it to return it to the Council. The Mayor noted that she has been inside it recently and felt strongly that the Shed has heritage value and is worth saving.

A detailed design is underway. However, we don't know the details.

The Olympic Pool

The Mayor raised the issue of the Olympic Pool. This project has had a full review. It was poorly planned from the outset and always difficult to budget for. The new Council General Manager has engaged an external project manager and they have managed to reduce variations by about 50%. The new GM & Director of Infrastructure and Open Space have very good experience with similar projects. The team to bring this project to a successful conclusion are now in place and it will be a fantastic result, when completed.

The Mayor said she went on a site visit recently and confirmed that the pool area is still a beautiful place to be and that those who used it in the past will recognize the traditional features.

An elected Mayor

A resident raised the idea of a directly elected Mayor. The Mayor said that there would need to be a referendum and elected mayor after that. It would mean changing the number of wards we have now. The Mayor expressed a view that it was advantageous for Mayor to be elected by peers, as it means they must have a good relationship with other councillors. It is not a "presidential" type of role. The best decisions are made collaboratively and a Mayor elected by peers will have those skills. Her experience is that directly elected Mayors are not always successful but conceded this depends largely on the person. The Mayor would prefer to support review of the number of wards, because more wards improves the level of representation. This will happen regardless due to population growth.

Western Harbour Link and Other projects

The Mayor said that land owners in North Sydney are keen advocates for the **Millers Place** project but Transport NSW/State government are not willing to commit to a decision yet.

Victoria Cross Metro station is arriving soon, with expected commuter numbers in the 10-16,000 range using it daily - but the streets surrounding the Metro will find it hard to accommodate that many people. The creation of 'Millers Place' should coincide with the Metro opening but time is running out for being able to organise that properly.

We are risking late decisions, which are executed half baked, and then we are stuck with them.

Transport NSW have given up on **scrubbers on the WHL tunnel**, but the Council's view is that air quality is important - but it is falling on deaf ears with the State Government at the moment.

With the Northern Beaches Link now not progressing, the Council have requested that the worksheds in **Cammeray Park** be removed and the land returned to public use but Transport for NSW have not moved on this request.

Both the scrapping of the Northern Beaches Link and the change to the subterranean tunnel under the Harbour floor means that there is an opportunity to **change some negative aspects** of the traffic impact to North Sydney CBD, but she noted also no progress there with the State government agencies.

Transport NSW approved its own project - the **Milsons Point bike ramp**. Transport NSW have completed testing in Bradfield Park north. Construction is due to commence 3-4 months from now.

4. EXISTING BUSINESS:

Road surface hazards continue

Quality of finish of new road surfacing is generally very poor. It was requested that the Precinct ask Council to include into contracts a repair clause which will require the contractor returns to the site after 12 months or so to fix any issues to ensure quality control. The Mayor said she will seek a response to this request.

Frequent closure of Larkin St

Council response to motion - Council doesn't always know when Larkin St will be closed and will return with a more detailed response.

Coal Loader Market - falling foot traffic

Council response to motion - Leader of Events and Manager of Events and Communication will be investigating this issue and will return with further information.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

Nicholson Street car park

A resident pointed out that Nicholson Street Car Park in Crows Nest has designated spots for Mater Hospital employees, which are often empty. The Mayor said she would investigate and get back to the Precinct on this matter.

Waverton Park hazard

The upper level of Waverton Park has some access points/caps that finish well above the grass level, thereby creating a hazard for park users. The Mayor will refer this matter to the Manager of Parks and Manager of Health and Safety.

Dolphin wharf/Berry's Bay area

The budget for Berrys Bay Masterplan is tight so the precinct will remain diligent to ensure that the project does not need to become unduly commercialised to make up for any shortfall.

The Precinct supports the demolition of Dolphin Wharf as part of the BBMP. Vessels have been moored alongside it for a few decades. There has been no work on the *South Steyne* at all while it has been there. Transport NSW are pushing to get rid of Dolphin Wharf and to that end, we investigated who owns the lease of the Wharf, which revealed that it is owned by the Noakes Marine. This will be a matter for the Precinct to revisit in 2024 and probably step up a new campaign in cooperation with other relevant Precincts.

End of Larkin Street - trees blocking viewing platforms

It is requested that the Council thin out trees (not remove them).

The original idea was to revegetate the area but has resulted in a blocking of the some views and the near blocking of others as trees steadily grow. It was noted the long view to the City from Waverton Park has been entirely obliterated. A nuanced answer needs to be provided. The Precinct will take this issue up with Director of Open Space and Infrastructure, Gary Parsons. We have an agreement to do a "walk around" and we can raise this item then, while directly pointing out the specific areas that are of concern.

Wood St /Balls Head Rd Pedestrian crossing visibility

A resident requested that the vegetation around the junction on Balls Head Road needs to be cut back as it is dangerous and you cannot see pedestrians when driving. The Mayor will have appropriate Council personnel act on this request.

Noisy Naval boats at Waterhen.

The noise from boats moored at the Base is 24 hours a day. The Precinct can contact Base Commander. It was noted these are visiting US vessels which maybe cannot connect to the

shore power on the site. Another resident offered that her information was that the boats will be moved on the weekend.

DA's:

No DA's this month.

A resident brought forward 17 King Street, as he is the Architect on this residential project. An additional storey has been rejected by Council on the grounds of streetscape impact. There was a request to confirm the Precinct had no original objection to this project. The Committee will refer the plans to MP for formal Precinct response.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 5 2023 at the Coal Loader Hall, Waverton. This will also be the Precinct's AGM and anyone interested in contributing to the Committee are most welcome to put themselves forward at this meeting.

END.