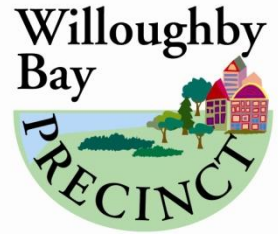


WILLOUGHBY BAY PRECINCT
PART OF NORTH SYDNEY COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY PRECINCT
SYSTEM



MINUTES OF MEETING HELD
THURSDAY 14th March 2024
COMMENCING AT 7.30 PM

ATTENDANCE: 15 people attended the meeting
APOLOGIES: 5 were recorded
GUEST SPEAKER: LH – Council's Director of Corporate Services

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes for the 8th February 2024 meeting were adopted.

Motion carried: 13 in favour, 2 abstentions, 0 against

Guest Speaker – LH, Council's Director of Corporate Services

Role of the Director of Corporate Services

With his team at North Sydney Council, LH looks after finance, governance, human resources and IT. LH has been at NSC for 10 months, previously at Blacktown Council for 5 years as Chief Information Officer. It was quite a culture shift coming from Blacktown to North Sydney for a number of reasons: mainly Blacktown being the largest Council in NSW by way of population with over 400,000 residents compared with North Sydney with 72,000 and a considerably different demographic as well in a much smaller area. LH feels there is a much greater opportunity to make a difference in a smaller area.

One of the first things that the new CEO Therese Cole, did was to look at the organisation and structure to see if it was effective. On that process, the organisation went from 6 directors down to 3 directors. Also management was trimmed down from 30 managers to 15 managers. North Sydney Council has just been through a very big recruitment round; 40 positions have been filled since the beginning of the year; a new Chief Information Officer commenced last week to help with technology.

Arts and Culture, the Libraries and the Events Team are now merged under one banner. Stanton Library has a huge community engagement. The biggest Event which NSC does is New Years Eve which is not necessarily enjoyed by North Sydney residents. LH worked as the site manager at Blues Point Reserve last NYE and he found very few North Sydney residents there.

Council is reviewing and developing a number of key strategies, including an Economic Development Strategy, regarding how Council supports its businesses in North Sydney, also a Transport Strategy, which aims to encourage different forms of transport and enable sufficient parking, and also Arts and Culture and Social Inclusion Strategies.

Questions from Precinct Members

Q: A Precinct member asked if Council had exhausted all avenues of State and Federal funding for the North Sydney Olympic Pool.

A: LH doesn't think Council has exhausted all opportunities. One option to fund the pool would be to sell assets but Council does not want to do this as assets that could be sold generate revenue.

Council is able to borrow from the State Government at a lower rate than a private sector loan.

Council is also looking at the business plan for the pool such as what will be fair and comparable fees,

investigating possible parking at Luna Park which is almost empty during weekdays. There was a Mayoral Minute at the Council meeting of 12 February 2024 concerning the management of the pool. LH encourages Precinct members who are interested to read the consultant's report on the project. LH is involved in preparing a new Council governance strategy.

Q: What is happening with the Harbour Bridge cycleway?

A: LH believes this is going ahead but this is a State Government project not a Council project.

Q: Is the West Street cycleway going ahead?

A: It will go ahead at some point but LH is unsure when this will happen.

Q: Is Young Street cycleway pedestrian upgrade mainly funded by State Government?

A: Yes. LH says a lot of these projects are funded by grants, usually for a set period.

Q: Where can Council improve?

A: North Sydney Council has the same number of development assessment staff as Randwick Council which is double the size of North Sydney Council. But LH feels that the systems don't help staff be productive. The systems are more archaic; there is more manual intervention required, also such as in Finance. A lot of the financial reporting is much more arduous and spreadsheet-based than you would expect so Council has just appointed a Chief Information Officer to implement new systems to make NSC a more efficient organisation.

Q: A Precinct member said he was pleased to see Arts and Culture, Libraries and Events combined. Can events be better publicised?

A: Council will be looking at how events are publicised, not just digital, but in newspapers and notice boards.

Q: Mosman Council has 2 half pages in *Mosman Daily*. Could NSC get something like this?

A: LH says Council is looking into this issue.

Q: A Precinct member asked if there is a communication strategy happening where Council pushes information out instead of residents having to search for information on websites.

A: Council does not have a customer relationship management system at the moment and something like email mail-out is quite challenging. LH says that one of the primary goals for this year is to implement something.

Q: Does the Precinct system fall under your governance function?

A: It did until Monday 11 March 2024. In the realignment and restructure of 2023, communication was elevated; it is now in the GM's office.

Q: Has the Coal Loader Cafe closed down permanently?

A: No. It is between tenancies at the moment.

Q: The chair referred to the proposal to turn the Grosvenor Lane car park into an open space public plaza potentially with a cafe pavilion in the middle. This would be a Council asset. How would Council lease it and make sure they got the right tenant?

A: Council would use Colliers a third party who manage all of Council's properties.

Q: Is Council self insured?

A: No, Council is not self insured and Council pays significant amounts towards insurance each year. Workers compensation is through icare.

Q: Where does Council stand with Affordable Housing?

A: Definitely a priority. An Affordable Housing Review is underway. It is being carried out before the Heritage Review as a priority issue. Council owns quite a number of affordable housing dwellings managed by not-for-profit community housing provider Link Wentworth.

Q: Is there a plan for Affordable Housing as part of the new development?

A: The State Government has brought in policies that provide bonuses for developers that provide a proportion of Affordable Housing.

Q: What would be the nature of the Heritage Review?

A: It will have full community engagement. After that, there will be a plan presented.

Q: What will happen to the Cammeray Parkland not used in the Warringah Freeway Upgrade?

A: Council is in litigation with the State Government over the land in Cammeray Park. Council believes that the community should be reimbursed for the disruption and lack of ability to utilise the park. The Council is also negotiating for the return of as much of the park as possible to the management of North Sydney Council.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

State Government Housing Reforms

Chair reported she addressed Council at its 12 February 2024 meeting. Council resolved to make a submission to the State Government objecting to the blanket one-size-fits-all approach to increasing housing density and calling for proper place-based planning led by Council. The motion specifically addressed concerns raised by Precinct and specifically provided that the submission would have regard to submissions made by community members including those made at the community information evening. All Councillors supported the motion, except for Cr Gibson who expressed concern about the amount of time she had to assess the motion and Cr Lepouris who said he supported the State Government's proposals for increasing density.

Chair reported attending the community information evening on 14 February 2024 and advised a very informative presentation was made. It is available to view on Council's website at:

yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/housing-reform

Chair advised that at Brightmore Precinct's meeting on 13 March 2024, the Mayor advised she is continuing to lobby the Minister and other State Government members to argue for the Department to provide housing targets and to allow Council, with input from the community, to plan where the increased density should go.

Care of Native Gardens in Fifth Ave and Brothers Park

Could the Head of Parks and Gardens contact Precinct representative RL (as she has coordinated involvement in the past) following the handover of care from Streets Alive and Willoughby Bay volunteers to Parks and Gardens. The areas are in urgent need of attention and Precinct seeks to engage with Parks and Gardens.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

1. Council Summary of Actions Arising

- Nil

2. Development Applications

- 1 Prospect Avenue — modification of DA
- 2 Lloyd Avenue (corner Ellalong Rd)- new vehicular crossing, driveway and hardstand

3. Traffic Committee Meeting (15/3)

- Young St and Grosvenor St- cycling and walking upgrades

Motion: THAT (Regarding the Young St and Grosvenor St crossing plans)

Precinct is unconvinced that the removal of the roundabout is an appropriate solution for the intersection especially in the context that the closure of Young St at Military Rd has not been determined.

Motion carried: 12 in favour, 1 abstention, 1 against

4. Council Meeting (12/2)

- Item 10.2 — Draft Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study
- Item 10.3 State Government Planning Interventions to increase housing density

5. Council Meeting (26/2)

- Item 10.6 — Cremorne Plaza and Langley Place Consultation Outcomes & Preferred Concept

6. Council Meeting (11/3)

Nil

7. CPC Meeting (20/2)

- CPC meeting 20/2 – discussed the State Government's housing reforms.

8. Council Memos

- 23 Feb Precinct eNews — Current consultations
- 26 Feb Neutral Bay Village Planning Study — Consultation
- 1 Mar Precinct eNews — Current consultations
- 11 Mar DCP Administrative Amendment
- 12 Mar Precinct eNews - Current consultations

GENERAL BUSINESS

Chair reported that a representative of Coles attended the Brightmore Precinct meeting on 13 March 2024. The representative advised that in response to the RFI from the independent planner assessing the Coles DA and submissions from around 100 residents against private parking being built on public land, Coles is now developing and testing the feasibility of amended plans which incorporate all residential parking on the Coles site (with the construction of an additional basement) and removing the sixth floor of residential accommodation. A revised elevation to Grosvenor Street was presented aligning with the height of the Pienza Apartments and incorporating additional setbacks to Cooper Lane, changes which were advised as aiming to achieve a development more in keeping with surrounding development.

Chair gave a presentation on the Neutral Bay Village Planning Study and the feedback provided by the Neutral Bay Alive community consultation group on 24 October 2023 (prior to the release of the draft planning study). The key proposals of the planning study are:

North of Military Road

- a 3,000 m² new Grosvenor Lane plaza retaining existing London plane trees;
- a new community centre located east of the Priceline Pharmacy on the first floor facing the new Grosvenor Lane plaza, with a ground floor lobby off the plaza;
- three open-to-sky through-site links from the Grosvenor Lane plaza to Military Road.

Military Road

- improving pedestrian crossings through realignment with Young Street, light phasing and timing (which needs to be discussed with Transport for NSW);

- potential consideration of additional signalised crossing at Rangers Rd;
- footpath widening through building setbacks at bus stops;
- hedges to shield pedestrians.

South of Military Road

- a 1,000 m² new Rangers Rd plaza;
- additional ground level contribution to Rangers Rd plaza on 183-185 Military Rd to provide a more usable open space;
- open-to-sky through-site link from Yeo St to Rangers Rd plaza;
- lower building heights and setbacks of the higher levels of buildings on Yeo Street to preserve solar access to residential properties.

General

- increasing building heights to 21m (6 storeys) from (16m) 4-5 storeys allowable under the current LEP, plus 28m (8 storeys) on five "key sites" controlled by major landowners Coles (Grosvenor St supermarket), Woolworths (Rangers Rd/Yeo St), Equitibuild (Rangers Rd / Military Rd) and Arkadia (between the Grosvenor Street carpark and Military Road);
- changing the floor space ratio for non-residential uses from the current 0.5:1 (roughly half a floor) to 1.2:1 (roughly one and a half floors) and 1.5:1 for the central portion of the mixed use zone to encourage more commercial space;
- two and three storey podium heights with upper-level setbacks for a human-scaled street frontage;
- sufficient parking, improved cyclist facilities and pedestrian amenity with new shared streets (including Waters Lane and Grosvenor Lane).

Motion: THAT

1. Precinct has considered a presentation on the Neutral Bay Village Planning Study and the Neutral Bay Alive feedback and thanks Council for supporting a planning study to address revitalising Neutral Bay Village and thanks Council staff for a comprehensive planning study document.

2. Precinct supports:

- **provision of a fully pedestrianised public plaza in place of the Grosvenor Lane Carpark,**
- **undergrounding of the Grosvenor Lane public parking;**
- **ensuring the Site 1 (Coles) loading dock does not come off Grosvenor Lane plaza;**
- **the retention of the existing number of through-site links to Military Rd;**
- **improving pedestrian crossings across Military Rd with realignment of crossing and improved light phasing and timing;**
- **provision of Rangers Rd plaza including contribution from 183-185 Military Rd (Equitibuild) and open-to-sky link to Yeo St;**
- **human-scale podiums and upper level setbacks;**
- **increased building height of 21 metres.**

3. Precinct opposes:

- **using Voluntary Planning Agreements to try to secure benefits because these lack certainty, the negotiation process lacks transparency; the final say rests with the Department and Minister, not Council, the process takes longer and is more expensive for landowners, significantly higher maximum building heights than 8 storeys are likely to be sought and significantly reduced benefits are likely to be secured;**

- increased non-residential FSR requirements without planning controls to ensure that high quality above-ground commercial space is provided (as opposed to underground retail space);
- through-site links that do not provide access for the disabled with dignity (maximum grade steeper than 1:20, reliance on a lift which can break down);
- all three through-site links to Military Rd being open-to-sky;
- cafe pavilion in the Grosvenor Lane plaza;
- provision of more than four on-grade disabled parking/drop-off spaces in the Grosvenor Lane plaza as this reduces landscaped area and encourages unnecessary parking search patterns;
- loss of fine-grain retail space, especially in the vicinity of Grosvenor Lane plaza as a result of mixed-use development which entails ground-level space loss for vehicular access, residential and commercial lobbies and service spaces;
- any new loading dock or any carpark entry to larger carparks (retail or residential) off Grosvenor Lane plaza (vehicular entries should come from Waters Rd with encouragement for amalgamation of properties, or from Grosvenor Lane, but not through the plaza);
- the line of London plane trees through the middle of the Grosvenor Lane plaza — a proper landscape design using local native trees and plants should be developed;
- mandating a new community centre without development of a brief justifying space needs;
- use of a graphic on page 19 of 559 of the draft report which represents an 8 storey development incorporating the Neutral Bay Community Centre when the feasibility study states that a ten storey development would be needed to achieve this (the graphic shows windows and balconies on the boundary with the Community Centre site);
- leaving the existing Neutral Bay Community Centre as a stranded asset that Council will have to pay to renovate or redevelop (as envisaged in the feasibility study for an 8 storey Arkadia West development);
- lack of controls to ensure that development sites are of a reasonable size and small sites cannot be left as isolated sites;
- lack of controls to ensure that driveway entrances are not located where activated frontages (fine-grain retail) are desired;
- increased whole-of-building setbacks to Site 1 as this will result in a smaller supermarket or loss of active frontages.

Motion carried: 13 in favour, 1 abstention, 0 against

Fox Sighting

Chair reported a resident reported a fox sighting in Earle Street above Primrose Park. She advised the resident contacted Council and was advised by Council's Bushland Management Co-ordinator at NSC, who said sightings of a fox in this area, and across the linked corridor of Tunks and Northbridge bushland, is not uncommon. However, there is nothing that they can do except to register the sighting. He did say that generally the bush is monitored as being healthier than some years ago, with

bushcare, greater general public interest, and Council programs, which indicated that foxes are doing limited damage. While this is somewhat comforting, it is a difficult situation. It would obviously be far better to eradicate foxes actively if possible, whilst understanding the difficulties for park users associated with baiting.

Hedges Encroaching on Footpaths

Chair reported that a Precinct member has advised that the hedge at 18 Montague facing Fifth Avenue has recently been trimmed back to take over a little more than half the footpath and asks:

Would Council consider concreting the verge to the kerb to allow safer pedestrian thoroughfare as it has done for 58 and 60 Macpherson St where hedges are also encroaching on the footpath?

Bitumen Corner of Ellalong and Lodge Roads Cremorne

Can Council investigate the recent bitumen filling (approx. 2.5 x 1.5 metres) at the corner of Ellalong and Lodge Roads (left side downhill) as it is not even and is dangerous due to its location?

Meeting closed at 10.15pm

Next meeting will be on Thursday 11 April 2024 at 7.30pm

Council Contact Details:

Phone: 9936 8100

Fax: 9936 8177

Ranger Services 9936 8100

WEB: www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au