

NEUTRAL PRECINCT MINUTES

Tuesday 13 April 2021, commenced at 7:00 pm

1. Attendees were reminded of the current procedures for holding Precinct meetings in the COVID-19 Pandemic Period.
2. All attendees provided contact details for attendance sheet
3. Apologies: JL
4. Additional items added to the Agenda
 - i. North Alfred Street parking (see agenda item 9)
5. Business from minutes of meeting held on 13 December 2020
 - i. March 2021 minutes. Following review, moved and seconded as read and correct: Moved: DM; Seconded: SW
 - ii. Proposed raised pedestrian crossings in Ben Boyd Rd at Hardie St and in Clarke Road at Margaret St.
Discussion points:
 - Noted Council's Traffic & Transport Engineer advice that Council uses low planting in these kinds of locations.
 - Noted 'Lollipop' people are now located at three crossings at start and end of school days at Yeo St/Bydown St intersection, Bydown St and Ben Boyd Rd at Hardie St.
 - LS stated that the plastic slow down signs installed by Council throughout the LGA were now looking somewhat 'worn and tatty' and some have disappeared, in particular at the intersection of Lindsay St. and Premier St. It was suggested more permanent signs be investigated.
6. Military Road Corridor Future Directions Plan
EC provided the following feedback from the Committee's meeting with the Mayor on 9 April.

The Mayor invited the Committee (EC,GC & CP) to meet with her following an exchange of emails regarding Neutral residents' concerns at Council's decision of 22 February to include a 12 storeys building height on two sites in the Plan, being Rangers Road (Site 3) and Military Rd/Grosvenor Lane (Site 2). The key discussion points were:
 - The Committee re-stated that 46% of respondents to the community consultation had supported moderate development but had not supported 12 storeys and that 8 storeys would probably be more acceptable.
 - The Mayor's indicated that she held a different view and to achieve the community facilities needed in NB that Council's planners had taken what she believed was a conservative approach in order to make the area attractive to developers and for developers to pay for required community facilities. The Mayor identified two such community facilities being the creation of a park/plaza in Grosvenor Lane by re-locating the current carpark underground; and re-locating the Community Centre from Grosvenor Lane to Rangers Rd with a pedestrian walkway between Rangers Rd and Yeo St.
 - The Mayor confirmed that after a Council site meeting that Site 4 (Barry St Carpark / 40 Yeo St and Bydown St cottages) had been removed from the Plan because the

Planners' equation of building heights did not provide for the cost of community facilities on this site. She acknowledged that Bydown Street is a beautiful street.

- The Mayor also acknowledged that NB does not currently need additional commercial space but does need additional residential space.

We also discussed other topics:

Young Street Plaza Trial.

- The Mayor advised that her view is that the Plaza should stay but be redesigned and fitted out as a 'classy' open space, general meeting area for the community.
- The Committee said the Precinct residents held mixed views but were mainly in favor of a Plaza. The Committee had noted families, children and individuals regularly using the Trial area facilities.
- The Committee pointed out the closure of this section of Young St had greatly increased the amount of traffic using the Grosvenor Lane shared zone between Ben Boyd Road and Young Street. We were sitting in a cafe with the Mayor opposite the Lane and observed traffic for more than an hour. The Mayor agreed many vehicles were not obeying the speed limit nor stopping at the stop sign on the corner of the Lane and Young St. We witnessed several near misses between vehicles and pedestrians.
- The Mayor said she had fought hard for a shared zone in this Lane and didn't want any major changes such as the Committee's suggestion to remove the car parking spaces and the concrete installations at the Young St end to improve pedestrian safety.
- The Mayor agreed to raise the issue with Council's Traffic Engineer with a view to installing some traffic calming devices. The Committee suggested that strips of 'ripple buttons' (such as those used to indicate a freeway is ending) placed at intervals along the Lane and that vibrate through the vehicle would probably be more effective in reducing speed than raised humps that trucks and SUVs can negotiate at speed. The strips of ripples would not need to extend right across the road surface, so they do not impede prams and trolleys etc.

The meeting discussed the mayor's feedback and unanimously agreed the following motion:
Neutral Precinct requests that the Council undertake urgent work in Grosvenor Lane to improve pedestrian safety.

Development in Neutral Bay

- The Mayor was surprised to hear from the Committee that there has been a significant number of developers approaching owners to purchase, in the Kurraba Road, Kurraba Point and Hayes Street areas including to an owner of a heritage listed house.
- The Committee suggested that it was time to review the heritage and conservation listed properties/areas in Neutral Bay to ensure protection of all buildings of character which may not already be currently covered.
- The Mayor said she would look at the suggestion but suggested this work would be expensive, estimating \$300,000.

Precinct Review.

- The Mayor advised that the Precinct System was costing Council \$440,000 per annum, with two full time staff servicing the System and other staff spending time on preparing responses to precinct committees and attending precinct meetings. The Mayor's view is the Precinct System, in the context of all consultation initiatives, does

not benefit the Council. In particular the Mayor would like to see the Combined Precincts Committee (CPC) cease.

The Precinct meeting discussed the feedback from the Mayor on the Precinct System and made the following points:

- Neutral Precinct agrees with the proposal to amalgamate precincts and has supported the residents of adjacent inactive Hayes and Kurraba Precincts for many years.
- Precincts will always have some negative comments about Council proposals/actions. That is the nature of democracy.
- In the interests of providing greater value for money. If Council gave some advance notice of issues, they would like feedback on then we are always happy to discuss at meetings and canvas our email list asking for feedback. This would be quite simple at Council's end and could bring in a decent volume of genuine, thoughtful feedback.
- We don't think the Precinct System's input - definitely in Neutral's case - is being correctly attributed. When we email to our email list on a subject, e.g., Young St Plaza, we provide them with direct links to the subject on Council's 'Your Say' section on the website to make it easy to respond. We also provide a link to Your Say on our meeting agendas. We do this to save double handling of responses, but also to make sure Council gets the fullest answers and feedback possible with no truncating or amalgamation from the Precinct Committee. We now realise that feedback is probably being attributed to the effectiveness of Council website - when in fact it should be put down to being made aware and given the link through the Precinct System.
- Neutral Precinct is always amenable to anything we can do to add more value to the Precinct System for Council.

The meeting with the Mayor concluded with an agreement that we held different views on some issues.

7. Precinct E-News items this month:

- i. Liveability Census - Closing date 30 June. The Mayor has indicated that the Council will be taking notice of the results of this survey. The Committee will send a link to the Precinct email list with encouragement to complete the survey.
- ii. The call for expressions of interest for Non-Executive Director North Sydney Retirement Trust with a closing date of 16 April* was noted.
- iii. Reminder - Women in Local government - stand for your community at the September LGA election was noted. It was pointed out though that support is for women councillors already in local government.

8. Development Applications (DAs) - nil

9. General Business - additional agenda items added at the meeting.

- i. North Alfred Street parking. GC reported that 75 car spaces had been removed together with one lane between the Ridge St pedestrian overpass to Merlin St. A further 35 car spaces will be removed over the next 3-6 years. This is causing significant distress to residents in the area as many do not have off-site parking.

The meeting re-stated:

- a. concerns at the monumental traffic and pollution impacts in the NB area while the Warringah Freeway widening, Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link projects proceed over the next 10 years; and that
- b. not one of the multiple concerns/issues raised by residents changed either the design or decisions of the State Government to proceed with these projects.

10. Upcoming meetings/events. The meeting noted the following meetings and events:

- i. Neutral Precinct meeting - 11 May
- ii. Combined Precincts' Committee meeting - 20 April then 22 June
- iii. Council meeting - 26 April
- iv. Traffic Committee meeting - 30 April
- v. Sunset Series musical performances moved to Waverton Park, due to wet weather, 23, 24, 25 April.
- vi. Australian Heritage festival - 18 to 19 May at the Coal Loader
- vii. Green events - Native Bee Talk, 20 April 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Meeting closed at 8:10pm

*New closing date 30 April 2021