

Minutes of the Bondi Junction Precinct Meeting held at Waverley Library on 19 February 2014

Chaired by Peter Lynch with Stephen B. Cohen taking minutes

The meeting opened at 6.30 pm

All current correspondence and notifications are available at the rear of the room.

Present

Councillor Angela Burrill; Councillor Andrew Cusack; Councillor Paula Masselos and 75 others present, as per the attendance sheets.

Apologies

Mayor Sally Betts and Jennifer Lynch.

Guest speaker: Peter Monks, Director of Planning & Environmental Services - Waverley Council - Addressing the meeting on the planning & consultative process for the future of West Oxford Street

The West Oxford Street Precinct Plan is an ideas-driven investigation project focussing on the western end of Oxford Street, Bondi Junction, in line with Council's strategic approach to planning neighbourhoods.

Council will start consulting with residents and other key stakeholders soon to explore what the possibilities might be for West Oxford Street and the surrounding area. Using an ideas-based charette and a range of community workshops and meetings, three concepts for the area will be developed so Council can visualise ideas and opportunities for the area's future. Council will work in conjunction with the Government Architect's Office, independent experts and professionals to help develop concepts.



The West Oxford Street Precinct Plan will consider the area shown above

The State Government has stated that the air space above a number of bus depots including Waverley would be examined for potential sale to private developers.

A landowner has also approached Council in regards to redeveloping a site on the northern side of Oxford Street and so rather than deal with ad hoc proposals Council wishes to work with the community to develop ideas for the whole area.

An information report for the February 2014 Council meeting notes the commission of Elton Consulting to assist with community engagement on the development of the plan. Read the report in full (from page 98) along with the community engagement plan:

http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/66838/Council_Agenda_-_18_February_2014.pdf#page=98

http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/66968/Elton_Consulting_community_engagement_proposal_FEB14.pdf

A number of questions were raised during the Precinct meeting:

The Precinct asked if a resident representative from each affected street could be invited to the stakeholders session. This was answered in the affirmative.

How much is this process costing Council? Approximately \$100,000.

Our DCP and LEP are not old so why aren't they sufficient to use for the redesign of West Oxford Street? The LEP was adopted 18 months ago and has already had numerous amendments. It is not a static document. People wish to do things in the area that were not conceived before, for instance no plans exist for the bus depot.

Will buses remain at the bus depot site? Yes there is a need to store the buses when they are not in service.

Will there be any protection for heritage buildings? Yes

There are some new developments underway in East Oxford Street. Have height limits been exceeded? Yes some of them have exceeded the limit, where the Council have accepted a VPA for improvements in the vicinity of the site.

What happened to the \$3,000,000 obtained by Council from the developers of 310 Oxford Street for exceeding the height limit? The money has not been spent yet and is in a reserve fund. The money has to be spent on community improvements.

A concern was raised that fuel is stored underground at the bus depot and contaminated land may have an impact on any redevelopment of the site. This was noted and to be further investigated.

Address by Councillors on West Oxford Street

➤ Councillor Andrew Cusack

Keeping an open mind.

The way the public has been told about this has been appalling.

Let's all come together and see what can be done to the area.

How are Councillors going to preserve residential amenity from the development on the northern side of West Oxford Street? There will be some trade-offs of building height and shadowing.

➤ Councillor Paula Masselos

The power of the community is very important. We need the residents voice.

The Councillors have ensured that we now have a much better community engagement process which will include meetings, surveys and focus groups.

➤ Councillor Angela Burrill

It has always been Council's intention to consult with the community and there will be many opportunities for residents to participate.

Would like to see an improvement in the area - more walkthroughs, green spaces and places to sit.

Motion

A motion was submitted by Jenni Mack to discuss how to select representatives of each street affected by the West Oxford Street redevelopment to attend the stakeholders meeting.

The motion was seconded by Kate Watson.

The motion was carried.

It was decided that the following people would canvas residents in their street in order to select a suitable person to attend the stakeholders meeting:

Denison Street: Joe Rede

Mill Hill Road: Kirsten Ludoe and Kate Watson

Leswell Street: Matthew Gain

York Road: Peter Maiden

St James Road: Joe Rede

Ruthven Street: Andy Bannister

Birrell Street: Gil Morris

Comments from the Director, Corporate & Technical Services in reply to statements recorded in the Bondi Junction Precinct minutes of 20 November 2013

Statement in the minutes

Residents in Lawson Street have been inconvenienced by people parking in their street instead of parking in

Eastgate since a \$1.00 charge was levied for the first hour of parking.

Comments from the the Director, Corporate & Technical Services

If parking demand is increasing in Lawson Street this is unlikely to be the result of the introduction of a charge for the first hour of parking in Eastgate. This is because Lawson Street is a reasonable distance from Eastgate and therefore unlikely to be regarded as a suitable short stay alternative, especially since:

- a. the Library (which is very close to Lawson Street) is still free for 1.5 hours,
- b. Officeworks is free for 45 minutes, and
- c. charges from the 3rd hour onwards in Eastgate have not been changed.

Short stay customers for Eastgate might consider patronising the Library or Officeworks if they wish to stay for less than an hour in Lawson Street.

Statement in the minutes

Eastgate Centre Manager Daniel O'Connell stated that Eastgate pays Council a large amount of money for the use of part of the parking station owned by Council

Comments from the the Director, Corporate & Technical Services

ISPT, the owners of the Eastgate shopping centre used to pay Council approx \$210,000 per annum to retain the first hour of parking as free parking. This was part of a 30-year old agreement. The agreement resulted in Council foregoing much more income than contribution we received from ISPT. However, the 30-year agreement expired on 21 August 2013. ISPT is now paying no contribution at all towards the provision of free parking.

Statement in the minutes

This money should be going towards the maintenance and cleaning of the carpark, however it is not being well maintained.

Comments from the Director, Corporate & Technical Services

Council devoted ISPT's full \$210,000 contribution to maintenance and cleaning of the car park and picked up significant extra costs to fully and safely operate the car park for 30 years. By the end of the 30-year period, ISPT's contribution covered well less than 20% of Council's costs in running the car park. As such, ratepayers were foregoing significant income and incurring significant costs. Council has proposed alternatives for cost sharing. To date the only party willing to contribute to the cost of provision of free parking is Harris Farm Markets. Patrons wishing to have an hour of free parking in Eastgate can do so if they spend >\$30 in Harris Farm.

Statement in the minutes

Councillor Andrew Cusack stated that as Council owns some of the carpark, they expect a return on their investment and this money would be spent in other areas. This would be the same with any property owned by Council.

Comments from the Director, Corporate & Technical Services

Correct.

Motions from the 20 November 2013 Bondi Junction precinct meeting

Motion 1

A motion was submitted by Peter West requesting Waverley Council to make strong representations on behalf of Waverley residents to stop the Centennial and Moore Park Trust from holding concerts in the park which subject residents to loud and excessive noise which can be heard within residents' homes.

The motion was seconded by Gil Morris.

The motion was carried.

Response

Motion was forwarded to Craig Easdown at Centennial Parklands. His reply follows.

Like all great urban parks of the world, Centennial Parklands has an active and engaging events program to support the needs of the community.

Our broad program of events attracts more than 200,000 people every year to enjoy a diverse number of arts, culinary, sporting and performance events. Events such as Moonlight Cinema, Taste of Sydney, Nike She Runs, The Color Run, Polo in the City, Australian Garden Show Sydney, Listen Out and Relay for Life are just a number of regular events enjoyed throughout the year.

All events are managed within the parameters laid out in the Centennial Parklands Noise Management Plan. This plan was developed in 2009 in conjunction with the regulator, the Environment Protection Authority, and the community. It is available to view at <http://www.centennialparklands.com.au/nmp>

As outlined to Mr West at a meeting with him last year, we communicate with the community in the lead up to any event using a mixture of approaches:

- Letterbox drop
- Website and eNews communications
- Social media communications
- In-park signage

In addition to communications with surrounding residents, we liaise with the four local councils and NSW Police prior to all events.

We would encourage any residents interested in events in the Parklands to subscribe to our eNewsletter, follow us on social media or visit our website. All details and links are available at:

<http://www.centennialparklands.com.au>

Centennial Parklands is proud to support the community through the hosting of these wide ranging events.

Motion 2

A motion was submitted by Enid Hokin:

On behalf of the Bondi Junction Precinct, I wish to oppose the DA to extend the trading hours for the brothel at 22-26 Bronte Road Bondi Junction from 12 am to 2 am. Although the entrance is in Gray Street,

it's only metres from a very busy bus stop, used by school children, in Bronte Road and the popular shops at the corner.

We believe that it would create a dangerous precedent for the Waverley LGA.

The motion was seconded by Gil Morris.

The motion was carried.

Response

Motion was forwarded to Records and to Development Assessment for noting and consideration.

Motion 3

Joanne Sully submitted a motion:

Could Council demonstrate the consultation it had with major stakeholders regarding the intended increase in the parking fees at Eastgate?

The motion was seconded by Mike Bonney.

The motion was carried

Response

Motion was forwarded to the Director, Corporate & Technical Services.

Council complied fully with the Local Government Act by foreshadowing a \$2 charge in its draft Pricing Policy for 2013/14. This draft was placed this on public exhibition for the required period under the Act from April to May 2013 and comment was sought from the public by advertisement. This is the same level of consultation done about all Council's prices. No submissions on this matter were received. A \$1 charge was eventually introduced.

Council also informed ISPT of the intention to introduce a charge several times commencing December 2009 and by letter dated 24 October 2012 and other correspondence. Council has been attempting to negotiate with ISPT on the matter of the charge for some years. No proposal put to ISPT has, to date, met with their acceptance but dialogue remains open on this matter.

Motion 4

A motion was submitted by Eric Scott:

This Precinct Committee calls on Waverley Council to support local business and assist the convenience of residents by withdraw the \$1.00 parking fee at Eastgate and reintroduce one hour of free parking.

The motion was seconded by Gil Morris.

The motion was carried

Response

Motion was forwarded to the Director, Corporate & Technical Services.

There are arguments for and against this proposal but decisions require some understanding of the unusual history of this matter and the inequities that were caused for the Waverley community.

Free parking has been provided to all visitors to Eastgate by Council since 1983 under an Agreement between Council and the then owner of the shopping centre, Coles. This 30-year Agreement was struck in relation to construction of the car park. When ISPT bought the shopping centre from Coles they became party to the Agreement. The Agreement expired on 21 August 2013.

The effect of the 30-year Agreement has been that Waverley residents have in reality paid both for their own parking in Eastgate and for that of all others from outside the LGA. Parking for the first hour may have felt like it was free, but Council, and hence the community, were actually being obliged both to:

- bear much of the cost of providing access and safe operation of the car park (now around \$1.4 million per annum excluding capital), and
- forego income that should, in equity, have been paid by the Eastgate shopping centre owner and/or retailers (to the extent that they benefitted from the free parking).

By contrast, other shopping centres such as Westfield pay the full cost to provide their customers with parking and can choose to negotiate to recover or share their costs with their tenants. In effect, ISPT could do the same at Eastgate, but historical arrangements have resulted in Council feeling that ratepayers have in recent years been bearing a disproportionate share of the costs for parking provided to all, even people from outside the LGA. Additionally, in being obliged by the Agreement to forego substantial income, Waverley residents have also missed opportunities to invest in some public works for Bondi Junction in a timely manner.

In the final year of the 30-year-old Agreement, ISPT was paying Council about \$210,000 a year for provision of free parking but was obliging Council and the community to forego anywhere between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000 in income per annum from the first hour of parking (depending on the price that might be charged). Council was also bearing the full cost of operation of the car park. This is considered unfair and it was not the original intent of the 1983 Agreement between the Coles and Council (which envisaged that Council would charge for all hours).

In anticipation of the expiry of the 30-year Agreement with the shopping centre, Council attempted for some years to establish a new fairer arrangement for the cost of parking. Council is still keen to negotiate fair arrangements which would restore some free parking and is maintaining an open dialogue with ISPT about options for ethical agreements. Most recently we have suggested that ISPT facilitate a three-way dialogue with Council and the Eastgate retail tenants to discuss options for more fairly re-distributing cost burdens for provision of free parking. Council suggested a parking validation scheme to be paid for by retail tenants with the retailers' costs perhaps being offset or partially offset by a rent reduction from ISPT and increased sales. No agreement has yet been reached on this but dialogue remains open.

It should be noted that Waverley Council has for many years made a profit from Eastgate car park, as it should. These profits have always been returned to the community and surrounding local businesses in full in the form of street maintenance and upgrades and other services such as place management, event management, business development and awards. This in turn stimulates economic development. Investment in a variety of road, landscape, mall, footpath and event programs over the years in the western end of Bondi Junction has enabled the western end of the CBD to continue to compete alongside the Westfield shopping centre.

Council is committed to making Bondi Junction one of the most attractive regional centres in Sydney capable of sustaining economic development and local business. We are implementing major programs for Bondi Junction including:

- Complete Streets public domain improvement program
- Complete Streets pop-up demonstration projects
- Eastgate Car Park space and façade upgrade
- Light rail feasibility study
- Bondi Junction Urban Design Review
- Rowe Street Interchange improvements
- Economic Development Strategy
- Green infrastructure planning including a distributed energy and water network and automated waste system
- Events and business development programs.

To do that, funds are required from Eastgate car park and other sources.

One of the ways to support businesses particularly in the western end of Bondi Junction is to ensure parking is charged for at an affordable rate and the income is returned to the Waverley community in the form of public domain improvements and other stimulation initiatives. Increased earnings from Eastgate car park that will now be possible will provide a major injection of funds for this community and business benefit. It is anticipated that some of the extra income may be used in the near future for an upgrade of the internal parts of the car park including painting and a parking guidance system, subject to Council approval.

Commercial businesses outside the Eastgate building should inform their customers that parking fees for the 3rd hour upwards remain unchanged. Therefore longer stay customers visiting local shops and services outside Eastgate will have experienced no increase in their total parking fees.

General business

No general business

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

The next meeting (AGM) will be held at Waverley Library at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 21 May 2014