

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

Chaired by Marcella McAdam with Stephen B. Cohen taking minutes

The meeting opened at 6.30 pm

Present

Councillor Andrew Cusack; Councillor Angela Burrill; Councillor Paula Masselos; Arthur Kyron, General Manager; Peter Monks, Director, Waverley Futures; Dan Joannides, Waverley Council; Sharon Cassidy, Waverley Council; Mark Woods, Director Waverley Renewal; Roberta Ryan, Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Governance; Alex Lawrie, Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Governance and 55 others present, as per the attendance sheets.

Precinct Committee: Matthew Gain (DA Rep); Howard Parry-Husbands (Traffic Rep); Gil Morris (Executive)

Apologies

Mayor Sally Betts; Bruce Notley-Smith; Danielle Ecuyer (Committee - Licensing Rep); Mike Bonney; Tien Bonney; Phil Cargakis; Amanda Cargakis; Charles Agius; George Paxinos and Don White.

Council amalgamations - Arthur Kyron, General Manager, Waverley Council

Council amalgamations are an Australia wide trend. The NSW State Government would like Council's to become stronger and more sustainable and have launched a programme called "Fit for the Future".

Councils are being asked to assess their current position and submit a "Fit for the Future" proposal by 30 June 2015.

The State Government is offering incentives to Councils that amalgamate.

Waverley Council has so far conducted two workshops with Councillors to determine how they would respond and how the community would be consulted. The final proposal on community engagement methods will go to Council in December 2014. There may be a number of different methods used to gauge opinion including surveys and focus groups. A resident put forward the option of the possibility of a referendum to be held at the time of the next State Government election on 28 March 2015.

The Council has not made a decision on amalgamations yet but suggested a number of options that need to be analysed:

- ☐ Maintain the status quo
- ☐ Greater Sydney option (including Sydney City)
- ☐ 3 council option – Waverley / Woollahra / Randwick
- ☐ 2 council option - Waverley / Woollahra
- ☐ 2 council option - Waverley / Randwick
- ☐ 4 council option – including Botany Bay
- ☐ Resource sharing combined with status quo option
- ☐ Boundary adjustments instead of any other option

There will be impacts on different Councils that amalgamate. One major impact will be that rates will need to be equalised.

Paul Pearce, Member for Coogee briefed the meeting and stated the “Fit for the Future” document was available on the web:

<http://www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au/sites/fftf/files/Fit-for-the-Future-A-Blueprint-for-the-future-of-Local-Government.pdf/>

The State Government is pushing for a global city and a major concern is that if we amalgamate with Sydney City Council, we come under the City of Sydney Act rather than the Local Government Act. A disadvantage of this is that business owners are given two votes, whereas residents are entitled to one vote.

Paul maintains that both Waverley Council and Randwick Council have resolved not to amalgamate and that any benefits of amalgamations are quantitative (economic) rather than qualitative (democratic). He stated that as part of the Local Government Act, a constitutional referendum on the issue must be held. Arthur Kyron responded by saying Council is not in favour of a referendum as we are not looking for a yes / no answer but opinions on a range of options and prefers to have the options ranked.

Sentiment around the room was that amalgamations would diminish residents’ ability to have their views heard on local issues including new developments. Marcella McAdam questioned the delay council were taking in going out to the wider community seeking their input – Arthur Kyron confirmed this would be done around March/April 2015 and agreed that timing was tight as councils proposal is to be submitted in June. General consensus was the delay was neither ideal nor necessary and that residents were smart enough to participate and were not happy to be left out of the conversation.

The Bondi Junction Cycleway and Streetscape Project - Dan Joannides and Sharon Cassidy - Waverley Council

As part of Complete Streets, Council has provided funding (with the former RTAs assistance) to construct a cycleway through Bondi Junction along with street tree planting and footpath reconstruction. There are currently many complaints about cyclists in the mall and the intention is to divert them to Spring Street. Footpaths on both sides of Oxford Street will be reduced in width by 40 cm in order to provide two bike lanes on the southern side. The area adjacent to Waverley Bus depot will be a shared zone with pedestrians, as buses will still need to stop at the curb in that location. There were concerns raised about this shared zone due to the danger of children crossing at the traffic lights and passengers trying to catch a bus and stepping into the path of cyclists approaching from the west whilst they are looking at approaching buses from the east.

Issues in Spring Street centred on parking with concern that there would be a loss of parking and no spaces for emergency vehicles or for tradespeople who would be forced to park within Eastgate. This fear was partially alleviated by Dan who stated that loss of parking would be minimal and emergency vehicles would still have access to Spring Street and would be able to park in the short-term spaces. He also stated that the current loading zone is being used inefficiently and there are currently a number of drop-offs for the railway station which will have a dedicated area once the project is completed.

It was unclear how cyclists would be encouraged to use the Spring Street cycleway instead of continuing along Oxford Street and through the mall. Would it be policed or just signposted?

Discussion on the future role and function of Bondi Junction - Roberta Ryan

Peter Monks, Director, Waverley Futures, introduced Roberta Ryan, Associate Professor, Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Governance at UTS, discussed "A vision for Bondi Junction". Waverley Council is currently working on a suite of projects that will transform Bondi Junction into the most sustainable, liveable and vibrant urban centre in Sydney.

Roberta has been tasked with seeking community feedback and presenting the community's views to Council and to find out what residents would like to see in the future for Bondi Junction.

The objective of the engagement process is to:

- Provide Council with a better understanding of what the current and future community feel is missing from Bondi Junction now, and what might be needed in the future
- Understand the views on Council, cultural, civic and community services and facilities that might enhance the role and function of Bondi Junction and benefit the community in the near, medium and long terms
- Develop a narrative vision that draws on the best of Council's existing projects and programs to articulate where Bondi Junction is going, what it should be like in 2031 and what can be done to enhance Bondi Junction's future role and function
- Inform development of consultant technical briefs to prepare, in consultation with the community, a master plan for the street block bound by Newland, Ebley, Denison and Spring Streets

The main areas of concern at the meeting related to the final point above. What would happen to Council owned properties in Bondi Junction (Officeworks, The Boot Factory, Spotlight, The Mill Hill Centre and The Library)? Some or all of these would be sold and / or demolished to make way for a more cohesive civic precinct. Council argues that this is necessary as currently Council staff is located at a number of different locations, which is very inefficient.

Roberta was asked if she was aware of the background of the above and how Council acquired these properties, however she was unable to give an answer.

Currently this area is quiet, neighbouring residence. If a new Civic Centre is built in this location, the area will become more like the commercial centre of Bondi Junction.

Frank Cahill raised the concern that Mayor Sally Betts has already stated that Council would build a large Civic Centre in this area and Council staff would park in neighbouring streets. He expressed his deep unhappiness at having council personnel via a large administration centre working close to his and other people's homes, which was greeted with much support from other attendees.

Frank Cahill also confirmed the Mayor would not rule out any future development or re-use of the library site at a previous precinct meeting.

Gil Morris feels Council already has a vision for this area, which includes turning The Library into a multi-story Council building. He directly asked Roberta to tell us what Council's intentions are in relation to these properties.

Howard Parry-Husbands said that there is no democracy as Council is not sharing all the relevant information with us and what they are planning is an overdevelopment of the area.

Roberta said there is no firm agenda and it is up to the community to tell Council what they think should be done with the Council owned buildings. The community will have an opportunity to have their say via walk-ups, surveys, focus groups, online and at Precinct meetings.

Roberta will not be making any recommendations to Council, but will feed Council the views of the residents. It was evident that the attendees were not happy with the proposed vision and development Council had for properties in Spring and Denison St. Discussion arose re previous drawings & images that had been done during the time of the previous GM (approx 2012) by development company Leightons which clearly showed high rise apartment buildings on the site of Officeworks, the Mill Hill Factory etc.

These plans/diagrams have caused much suspicion and concern already in the community and this was conveyed to Roberta. Peter Monks acknowledged that a process had been underway some years ago.

Marcella McAdam commented that the short notice residents received to read the briefing Vision document prior to the meeting was not ideal and this was acknowledged by Ms Ryan as a fair & reasonable criticism.

Kate Watson wants Roberta's report to convey the overall mood of anger within the community towards Council.

There has been a lack of traffic planning and the process is being rushed. Residents stated they haven't seen any long-term plan for the management of an increase in population in the area. To relocate Council administration to the centre of Bondi Junction would just increase this problem with the influx of more cars and people.

A need for a transport and land use study has been recognised and will be presented at a December Council meeting. Peter Monks confirmed this.

Information on "A vision for Bondi Junction" can be found at <http://haveyoursaywaverley.com.au/bondijunctionvision/>

Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting on 20 August 2014

There were responses to the motions presented at the 20 August 2014 meeting:

Motion

Howard Parry-Husbands proposed the following motion (relating to West Oxford st):

That Council works with the Bondi Junction Precinct committee in the design, scripting and analysis of the statistically valid survey and that all data, analysis and reporting is transparent and publicly available for all residents to access.

Response

Council officers met with Howard Parry-Husbands to discuss the survey and many of his suggestions have been incorporated into the survey methodology. As advised to Howard, it was not considered appropriate to further involve the Precinct Committee in the design and analysis of the survey in order to maintain its Independence. Five research firms were invited to quote on the survey and Newgate Research were appointed. The survey will be occurring over the next 2 months and the results will be publicly available.

Motion

Howard Parry-Husbands proposed the following motion:

That Council recognises that the community can not clearly understand the impact that the recommendations will have on their neighbourhood and demand that Council prepare a 3D image or model that clearly shows the likely impact of all of the recommendations including heights and shadow diagrams in order for residents to clearly give feedback on the recommendations.

Response

Shadow diagrams for each design scheme were displayed on the website following the Precinct Committee meeting. These models do not represent true built form as they are only building envelopes which cannot take into account design or other planning controls. The images can be found at: http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/building/current_projects/bondi_junction_projects/west_oxford_street_precinct_plan/

The recommendations as per the GAO report have not been modelled as these are not detailed enough to model accurately and may be misleading. For example "Varied FSR's to modulate built form along Oxford Street" will need site specific feasibility testing. The three design charette schemes show maximum development from the ideas generated and the impacts on neighbouring residences. The Waverley 3D model was recently commended at the 2014 Planning Institute Awards for excellence in the category "Improving Planning Processes and Practices".

Voluntary Planning Agreements

A register of the four VPAs approved by Council including details of the variations requested, the extent of the contribution associated with the VPA and where the money is to be spent has been prepared and included on the Council website:

http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/54071/Planning_Agreement_Policy_OCT14.pdf/

The minutes were accepted by Howard Parry-Husbands and seconded by Matthew Gain.

Motion 1 - Name change for the Precinct

Frank Cahill moved the following motion:

Chair, the Bondi Junction Precinct covers an area which extends from York Road in the west, Birrell Street in the south, Council Street and Bondi road to the east, and Syd Einfeld Drive to the north.

Prior to 1995 this area was represented by two precincts, the Mill Hill precinct covering the area from York Road to Bronte Road, and Waverley park Precinct from Bronte road east to council Street.

Towards the end of 1995 or early 1996, these precincts were amalgamated to form the Bondi Junction Precinct which, among other things, brought the whole of Bondi Junction into the one precinct.

However, the view has been expressed that removing Mill Hill from the name may have diluted the residential and heritage character of parts of the precinct. This may be partly restored by an appropriate minor name change. Many feel affection for and identify with Mill Hill and returning these words to the title may help to restore the residential and heritage character in the precinct's name. Retaining Bondi Junction in the title will continue to reflect the Bondi Junction we know including high rise and the commercial reality of the CBD.

There are other precincts which have double-barrel names including Vaucluse/Diamond Head Precinct and South Bondi/Watson Precinct.

Accordingly, I would like to propose a name change to restore the words Mill Hill to the title of the precinct in the following motion:

Motion

That the name of the Bondi Junction Precinct be changed to the:

Mill Hill/Bondi Junction Precinct.

The motion was seconded by Paula Gallagher.

The motion was carried. (Marcella McAdam explained that the Motion would go to the Precinct Review Committee for discussion and consideration)

Motion 2 - Referendum on Council amalgamations

Kate Watson proposed the motion that the precinct requests Waverley Council conducts a constitutional referendum under the Local Government Act to decide the outcome of an amalgamation at the next State Government election.

The motion was seconded by Gil Morris.

The motion was carried.

Motion 3 - Public meeting for residents of Mill Hill/Bondi Junction

Marcella McAdam proposed the motion that Waverley Council holds a widely advertised and promoted public meeting for residents of Mill Hill/Bondi Junction on the Bondi Junction civic presence, and that this public meeting be presented by consultant, Roberta Ryan. We request this action due to the fullness of our precinct agendas and to give residents a better chance to comprehend the breadth and depth of such a complex project.

The motion was seconded by Gail Walker.

The motion was carried.

Reports

DAs: Matthew Gain outlined the 7 submissions the precinct have made since the last meeting:

1. Bondi Beach Underground Car Park
2. Extended night time trading hours of a fast food outlet in Bronte Road
3. Proposed removal of trees in Grafton Street
4. Rezoning of 105 Wellington Street Bondi
5. Rezoning of Waverley Bowling & Recreation Club
6. Bronte RSL development
7. West Oxford Street Precinct planning proposals and charette designs

Matthew provided a quick overview of upcoming submissions:

1. The Spring St Cycleway & Streetscape plans
2. Traffic and parking changes proposed for Ruthven Street
3. DA for a bottle shop in The Forum on Oxford Street, Bondi Junction
4. Planning proposals for St Catherine's School, Waverley

Combined Precincts: Howard Parry-Husbands & Marcella McAdam attended the last meeting on 5 November 2014 – Amalgamations was discussed and also an update on major planning matters in Waverley. Bronte Beach tabled the issue of Gateway development which bypasses local decisions especially in regards to the Bronte RSL planning proposal and Charing Cross tabled the impact of major developments.

TRAFFIC - Howard Parry-Husbands gave an update on data he had received and that he was pleased to hear that Mayor Sally Betts had instigated an integrated traffic study in the Waverley LGA.

ALCOHOL & LICENSING - On hold till next meeting due to Danielle Ecuyer's absence

General Business

Next year 5 Precinct meetings have been proposed by the executive – still waiting on confirmation of dates.

It is proposed we hold a “Meet the Candidates” forum as part of our first meeting in February 2015 – this will be just prior to the NSW state elections.

Centennial Parklands events - residents are encouraged to keep note of when events are on.

Council E-waste Collection Day this Sunday 23 November 2014 in the Syd Einfeld Carpark.

Access Advisory Committee – Council is inviting residents to be involved.

A new environmental group in the Mill Hill area has recently taken shape – LIVING JUNCTION. An inaugural meeting was held on 16 October 2014 with about 20 residents attending and by all accounts there was a great deal of enthusiasm and a positive vibe. The initial aims are to promote walking, cycling, traffic calming and divestment from fossil fuel assets and to oppose development that is hostile to our community creating overcrowding, congestion, noise, heritage erosion. Over the next few months the group will formulate their full agenda and we hope to have them present at a meeting next year.

Marcella McAdam thanked our Lawson ward councillors for the support during the year and hoped that they will listen to the community and strongly advocate on our behalf on all matters relating to our area.

Thanks to Mary Shiner, our community liaison coordinator for all her assistance this year especially helping the new executive team learn the ropes of precinct protocols! There is more work than one realises and her patience had not gone unnoticed.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

The next meeting will be held at Waverley Library at 6.30 pm on Wednesday Feb 18, 2015