

## Northbridge Progress Association Inc

Minutes of General Meeting held at St Marks Hall, Northbridge  
on Wednesday, May 12 2010 commencing at 8.05pm

**Attendance:** 46 members and guests

**Quorum:** The President noted that a quorum was present.

**Apologies:** Cr John Hooper (overseas), Grant Sheldon, Jenny Roxburgh, Pam Clifford, John Becroft, Shirley and Peter Wilson.

**Welcome:** The President welcomed Ward councillors Gail Giles-Gidney and Adrian Cox, guest speakers Nick Tobin (Council general manager) and Kate Day (Willoughby Leisure Centre manager), Council director Steven Head and other members and visitors.

### Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the general meeting held on February 24 2010 were tabled by the President who noted that they had also been available on the Association's website for more than two months. **RESOLVED** that the minutes are confirmed.

### The Concourse (formerly Civic Place)

The President introduced guest speaker Nick Tobin, Council's General Manager. Using slides, Nick described the various facilities in the new centre. Construction was 8-9 weeks ahead of schedule. The facility is expected to be completed in mid-2011 and opened in September 2011. A tender for venue managers would be released shortly and retail leasing will also start soon. The facility construction cost is on budget but the project is "about \$25 million short on cash flow", mainly as a result of the impact of the Global Financial Crisis, and a short term loan has been taken out. Nick expected five sites in the CBD to generate \$15 million in S94 contributions in the next 18 months. He also reported on recent Council developments in other Willoughby suburbs. He said that The Incinerator restoration project had proved more difficult than expected and was now scheduled to be completed by end 2010.

### Questions and discussion

In response to questions, Nick said that there would be 400 spaces for parking under The Concourse. Traffic management in the CBD would be changed for the facility. He is very confident that Council could afford the ongoing maintenance and operating costs of the centre. In the next 4-6 weeks, he expects to provide news about a hotel development on the site. He agreed that traffic access through Chatswood from west to east (and vice versa) was not easy. A broad traffic study of Chatswood is currently in progress and he hopes to report its findings to Council in the next two months. He encouraged residents to support the new Loop shuttle bus and hopes it will develop into a city-wide transport system for Willoughby.

In regard to questions from residents about the **draft WLEP and WDCP** currently being exhibited, Nick said that potential traffic congestion in Northbridge "is on the agenda".

Steven Head noted that a traffic study was not carried out before the WLEP and WDCP proposals because Council already had a good understanding of traffic flows in Northbridge. In regard to a question about Council's degree of flexibility in the proposals, Nick said that Council was forced to meet the State's demand for increased population density and "the increased population has to go somewhere". He agreed that Northbridge does not have the infrastructure to handle an expanding population and changing demographics.

A resident said that the new **Northbridge library** was an excellent building but did not have enough books in it. Nick undertook to look at the issue. The President noted that NPA was concerned that Northbridge's local history was held in Chatswood library, not in Northbridge library.

### **An aquatic strategy plan for Willoughby**

Guest speaker Kate Day, Willoughby Leisure Centre manager, used slides to speak about the strategy study carried out on aquatic facilities in Willoughby. She listed Willoughby's aquatic assets and reviewed competitor facilities in nearby LGAs. She described priorities for the Leisure Centre, which included a learn-to-swim pool and a hydro health pool. (The lowest priority was a 50 metres pool.) Among non-aquatic priorities were car parking, public transport access and fitness gym space. She said that a final report, including recommendations and business plans, would be presented to Council at the end of June.

### **Questions and discussion**

In response to questions, Kate said that an outdoor 50 metres pool was not being considered because it could not be used all year round. Surveys had been carried out with 400-500 users, key stakeholders and a non-users group. Steven Head said there would be no impact on Northbridge Baths and that significant Council funds were being spent maintaining and operating the Baths. Nick Tobin said that there were no financial projections on a major expansion of the Leisure Centre but "we can afford it". Steven Head noted that a Masterplan for the Leisure Centre would give Council the opportunity to review traffic and parking changes at the facility.

### **Reports from Ward Councillors**

- Cr Gail Giles-Gidney thanked the Council officers for their time and contributions to the meeting. She reported on her attendance at Northbridge Rotary's excellent Pride of Workmanship Awards dinner and noted that there would be a Bushcare Major Day out at OH Reid Reserve on May 30. She said that she had been in office for more than one year and had learned that local government involves a lengthy consultative process. She noted that a Ward councillor can achieve results for residents. She recommended that residents write individual letters to Council about an issue, as petitions are less effective. Gail reported that Council's draft non-smoking policy in public places would shortly go to full Council. If approved, it would be introduced in stages. She said she believed Council's policy on tree "murdering" needs to be strengthened and that unauthorised developments should be penalised.

In response to a question, Cr Giles-Gidney said “amalgamation of some Councils would happen” but they would lead to reduced individual service for residents from Ward councillors.

- Cr Adrian Cox reported on Council’s Bike Plan under which 3.1kms of new bike paths had been installed last year. He noted that Willoughby had experienced 10% more cyclists each year but that accident rates were low. He reported that Council’s Recreation Plan was a major document and that Willoughby’s libraries were intended to also be sustainability resource centres for residents.

**General business**

A resident noted that a meeting of concerned residents had been held before the NPA general meeting to discuss the **draft WLEP and WDCP** documents being exhibited. He asked what NPA’s committee intended to do about a submission. The President said the re-zoning proposals in the draft WLEP and WDCP were of great importance to Northbridge. He said that a report had been commissioned by the NPA committee from BBC Planners and had recently been received. NPA would be making a submission to Council, based on the report. In response to a query, the President gained approval from NPA committee members present to release the report to NPA members. The secretary said NPA may request an extension of the May 20 deadline for submissions.

**Next general meeting**

The President advised that the next general meeting would be held on Wednesday July 21 at 8.00pm. Guest speakers would be Steven Head, Council’s Infrastructure Director speaking on “Traffic and parking: Is there any solution?” and Paul Storm, President of Willoughby Historical Society, speaking on an aspect of Willoughby history

The President closed the meeting at 10.05pm and members joined in refreshments.

Chairman: ..... Date: .....