

## **Northbridge Progress Association Inc**

### **Minutes of the General Meeting held at St Marks Hall, Malacoota Rd, Northbridge on Wednesday July 22 2009 at 8.05pm**

**Present:** 33 members and visitors.

**Apologies:** Gladys Berejiklian MP, Cr Adrian Cox, Cr Gail Giles-Gidney, Charles Alma, Julie Denovan, Jennifer McMonies, Don Wilson, Amanda Donlan, Peter McNair, Ron Hicks.

#### **Welcome**

The chairman, Vice-President John Lightfoot, welcomed visitors, including guest speaker Peter Delprado and Cr John Hooper.

He noted that an RTA representative had been invited to the meeting but had declined.

#### **Previous minutes**

The chairman noted that the minutes from the general meeting held on May 13 2009 had been posted on the Internet for several weeks and were available at the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the general meeting held on May 13 2009 are confirmed and can be signed by the chair.

#### **Community issues for Northbridge Public School**

The chairman introduced guest speaker Peter Delprado, President, Northbridge Public School Association.

- Enrolments at the school had increased from 351 in 2003 to 443 in 2007. More than 500 children were expected in 2010. The school had successfully applied for a Federal Government Building Education Revolution (BER) grant to build a new two-storey classroom block to replace four demountable units. It was also applying for a grant for a covered walkway through the school.
- A major safety issue was traffic and parking at the school. The highest safety priority was to prevent eastbound parents making a right hand turn (across double yellow lines) into the pavilion area in order to turn west. In addition, lighting was considered inadequate outside the school.
- A second safety issue was golf balls being hit into the school grounds. Northbridge Golf Club is being cooperative in trying to resolve the issues. New, higher netting would soon be erected along the 3<sup>rd</sup> fairway and a number of actions are being considered to prevent balls being hit onto the oval from the 1<sup>st</sup> fairway.
- Boys from the school are having difficulty finding places in local secondary schools. There is a need for more planning by NSW Government for secondary school places in the area, particularly for boys.
- The school would welcome flashing lights on the speed restriction signs outside the school.

### **The proposed Suspension Bridge safety barrier**

Consultant civil engineer and NPA Committee member Grant Sheldon summarised a recent RTA report and the outcomes of a meeting held on June 18 about the report, which proposed three options to prevent suicides from Long Gully Bridge (i.e. the Suspension Bridge).

- The Coroner had recommended that a safety barrier be erected, taking into account the significant heritage and architectural design values of the bridge.
- Dr Michael Dudley from Suicide Prevention Australia had told the June 18 meeting that barriers are a significant deterrent to impulsive suicides.
- The three options proposed for the barrier were high fences. The June 18 meeting considered that none of them benefited the heritage value of the bridge and all were unacceptable.
- There needs to be a new design which meets the Coroner's recommendations and acceptance from the community. A competition among architects would be one way to achieve this.
- The RTA's schedule calls for public display of a preferred option in July, followed by community feedback, with design and construction in late-2009.
- NPA is asking that the bridge be listed on the State Heritage Register.

There was good discussion from members present. Suggestions included the use of glass and the adoption of a very long term view of the heritage bridge. Cr Hooper said he wants the community closely involved in the process. One member said that the process should be slowed down to allow a better solution. A resident (who is a heritage architect) said that there is a need for an independent "Heritage Impact Statement". He said that no architect would accept any of the three options as appropriate for the heritage bridge. A Cammeray resident said that a new option needs to be developed which is not an adaptation of one of the three RTA options.

**RESOLVED** that Northbridge Progress Association considers that the RTA's three options for safety barriers on Long Gully Bridge do not meet the Coroner's recommendations in regard to harmonising with the significant heritage and architectural values of the bridge. The Association believes they devalue those values. The Association calls on the RTA, in close consultation with North Sydney and Willoughby City Councils, to develop new options which are more in keeping with this heritage bridge. The Association requests that the timetable be slowed down to allow a genuine community consultation process so that a solution can be developed which will significantly impede jumping, preserve the heritage and architectural values of the bridge for future generations and be acceptable to the community.

### **Report from Ward Councillor**

Cr John Hooper reported on Northbridge issues. He said the Northbridge Park Masterplan would be presented to Council in the next 2-3 months. Council is currently considering a DA for new nets to protect Northbridge Public School from errant golf balls. Council officers are preparing a report on the Northbridge Hotel modifications after which a Ward councillors' meeting will be held on site.

Cr Hooper noted that a Seniors Living development is proposed on six contiguous blocks between Sailors Bay Rd and Baringa Rd. The developer has so far acquired four of the blocks but two residents have not yet agreed to sell. A resident who lives in a semi next to the proposed development is concerned he will be “marooned” by it.

Council is discussing with the owners of Northbridge Plaza ways to improve the Council car park over the next 12 to 18 months. Council is also considering options for improvements to Willoughby Leisure Centre. These may include a hydrotherapy pool and a new 50m indoor pool.

The new Northbridge Library is now likely to be handed over in November. Council had received very positive feedback on its Warners Park redevelopment. The proposed Cliff Ave Seniors Living units development is currently stalled in Land & Environment Court.

### **Other Northbridge issues**

A resident who lives next to St Phillip Neri School said that she had been informed that the school had a Federal BER grant to build a two-storey classroom block overlooking her home. There was no Council DA process and she had no opportunity to comment on the imminent development. Cr Hooper said that unfortunately Council had no role in the BER process.

### **Next general meeting**

The next general meeting of NPA will be at 8pm on Wednesday September 30 2009 at St Marks Hall. The speaker would be social commentator and author Hugh Mackay speaking on “The importance of the community”.

The chairman closed the meeting at 10.10pm. Refreshments were provided.

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Chairman

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Date