

## **Northbridge Progress Association Inc**

### **Minutes of the General Meeting held at St Marks Hall, Malacoota Rd, Northbridge Wednesday May 14 2008 at 8.00pm**

**Present:** 70 members and visitors.

**Welcome:**

President John Becroft opened the meeting and welcomed the visitors, who included Crs Judith Rutherford, Wendy Norton and Stuart Coppock, Inspector Jeff Bell (North Shore LAC), Greg Woodhams (WCC), Progress Association representatives Ken Rutherford (Castle Cove), Bob Taffel (Willoughby South), Kevin Fitzpatrick (Naremburn) and John Hooper (Chatswood East), Simon Alder, Mark Monk and David Synnott.

**Apologies:** Gladys Berejiklian MP, Cr Mary Johnston, Cr Kate Lamb, Ron Hicks, Helen Deegan (AMPCSC).

**Previous minutes:** The President summarized the minutes from the previous meeting. **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the General Meeting held on February 27 2008 be confirmed and signed by the chair.

The President thanked members for their generous response to the Association's recent request for donations. More than \$8000 had been received or pledged to date.

**Northbridge Neighbourhood Watch (NNW):**

Area Coordinator Howard Lardner introduced Inspector Jeff Bell of North Shore LAC. Inspector Jeff Bell commented that Howard was standing down as Area Coordinator and noted that a volunteer was needed. He said that crime in Northbridge was generally down; there were only 13 Break and Enters for the past five months. He warned that one perpetrator was carrying out robberies with people in the house and asked residents to lock windows and doors day and night. He emphasized the need to report all incidents to Police. In August, the Community Safety Committee will be re-named the Precinct Committee and will host participants from over the LAC area. Howard Lardner thanked those who had supported him as Area Coordinator, including NNHW's sponsor, Northbridge Plaza.

**Northbridge Hotel alterations**

Baringa Rd resident Simon Alder updated the meeting on the status of the DA for Northbridge Hotel. Discussion of an amended DA at the March 10 Council meeting was deferred at the request of the applicant. The matter was delegated to a Ward Councillors' meeting but the Mayor undertook that residents would have the opportunity to address Council before any decision is made. In the meantime, the applicant has submitted revised plans to overcome the car parking and FSR shortfalls. The hotel plans to operate two kitchens. There is still no access provided for disabled persons to the first floor.

**Guest speaker: “An update on the Northbridge Plaza Masterplan”**

Mr Greg Woodhams, Environmental Services Director, Willoughby City Council summarised the background and structure of the current Plaza Masterplan process. Two joint Council/AMPCSC and community committees (TWG and RC) have been formed. The project is in Stage 1 – gathering data, compiling information. There are five main consultants, who have been engaged by the TWG and are paid by AMPCSC. Consultants’ reports are at draft stage but are very comprehensive. Mr Woodhams then read out some facts from the consultants’ reports. The findings of the consultants are currently being summarized by a TWG sub-committee into agreed outcomes, conclusions and facts that will be used to generate options in Stage 2. Mr Woodhams noted that AMPCSC wants to improve the shopping centre but Council has imposed a limit on retail expansion of about 10%. Council has the ultimate power to control the outcome but there cannot be a decision without wide community discussion.

Cr Rutherford said that Council must retain control of the car park land. She said that Council’s “about 10%” resolution still stands, no matter what AMP wants.

Cr Coppock said that the original conceptual plan was too large and would create “horrendous traffic problems”. He said that he “will ensure that the 10% rule holds”. He noted that AMP “doesn’t seem to be listening: 10% is 10%”.

Cr Norton noted that no Councillor had so far indicated that he or she wanted to change the 10% resolution. She asked whether the project was protected against a Part 3A takeover by NSW Planning Department. Mr Woodhams responded that AMPCSC would need Council’s consent as Council owned the car park land, which is classified for community use. Also, Council would need to agree to extinguish covenants. The Minister does not have power over the car park land or the covenants. He noted that the car park needs improving and that the shopping centre is tired and could do with refurbishment.

Mark Monk (Willoughby Residents Against Plaza Overdevelopment) said that the TWG was working well, but the Masterplan will be a very lengthy process and residents should not expect quick outcomes. For example, it will take two months to compile a report on Stage 1 results, which would then require consensus from participants.

John Hooper (Chatswood East PA) commented that he sat on the RC and looked forward to reviewing the reports. He assured attendees that community views would be well represented. Peter O’Shaunessy (Northbridge Gardens) said that no-one was opposed to some improvements to the shopping centre and car park.

In response to questions, Mr Woodhams explained that a 10% increase in Plaza retail space would be about 700 sq metres, or about seven additional shops. He said there was no limit imposed by Council on residential expansion. In reply to a question whether NSW Government could override Council’s decision, he said that the State could do anything it wanted, ultimately.

Michael Conder commented that, as Council had mandated the “about 10%” limit on expansion, the RC should reject any proposal from AMPCSC to expand by a greater amount. Mr Woodhams responded that RC doesn’t have power to reject a proposal; it can only report its views to Council. In answer to a question why AMPCSC was spending so much money with the 10% limitation, Mr Woodhams responded that he expected that AMPCSC believed it could convince Council and the community that a larger option would be preferable to a “do nothing” option.

One resident commented that AMP has a serious lack of credibility. He noted that, at the last meeting about the Plaza, an AMP representative had said: “We will take into account the views of the community” but now he understands from quotes in *The 202* that AMP is seeking greater than 10% retail expansion. John Hooper confirmed the accuracy of the quotes. A resident commented that a compromise may have to be reached with AMP to get the car park fixed, because Council would not do it. However, Mr Woodhams said that Council may well fund repairs to the car park. Cr Rutherford urged residents to “keep the pressure up” by lobbying Councillors about the Plaza. “Don’t give up, don’t be worn down” she urged. Michael Conder said that he had heard that mention of flexibility in the 10% limit had been discussed in the RC. He questioned whether RC should repudiate any flexibility. He asked whether RC could refer back to Council a plan that exceeds 10%. He suggested that Council should re-affirm its 10% position. Mr Woodhams noted that the RC Chairman, Martin McCurrich, had already re-affirmed the 10% resolution. In reply to a question from Cr Coppock, Mr Woodhams said that customer and community concerns about the car park included traffic circulation, physical condition, weather protection, pedestrian safety and stormwater run-off. He noted that the car park was considered highly convenient and its convenience should be maintained. He also mentioned that he would like to see the car park more accessible to the strip shops in Northbridge Junction.

### **Other Northbridge issues**

#### **Proposed Cliff Avenue units**

A resident pointed out that, if the proposed units in Cliff Ave were approved, there was a proposal before RTA for pedestrian traffic lights to be installed on Strathallen Ave immediately before the Suspension Bridge with adverse visual impact.

#### **Euroka St roundabout**

Stewart Truswell noted that a large power pole on the footpath on the north-east side of the new roundabout represented a traffic hazard. The Secretary was asked to bring the pole to the attention of Steven Head, Council’s Infrastructure Director.

#### **Northbridge golf course dam**

A resident asked whether a temporary fence at Roche Lane would be removed and whether a fence would be constructed around the main dam on Northbridge golf course. Mr Woodhams replied that Council and the Golf Club is still considering the best kind of fence. He would advise the Secretary the situation.

### **Next general meeting**

The next general meeting of NPA will be at 8pm on Wednesday July 23 at St Marks Hall.

The chairman closed the meeting at 9.45pm. Refreshments were provided.

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Chairman

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Date