

Northbridge Progress Association Inc

Minutes of the General Meeting held at St Marks Hall, Malacoota Rd, Northbridge on Wednesday 23 July 2008 at 8.00pm

Present: 25 members and visitors.

Welcome:

President John Becroft opened the meeting and welcomed the visitors, who included Crs Trevor Morgan and Adrian Cox (from 9pm), Angelina Yeung (WCC) and Russell Hand (BBC Planners).

He introduced candidates for the September 13 Council election, who each spoke briefly. Brian Moran said that he was “glad to be able to support NPA”. John Lightfoot noted that it was very important to “keep Northbridge the way it is” and John Hooper said that “Northbridge needs better representation in Council”. Cr Morgan said that “there is no issue about the 10% Plaza expansion limit from Council officers or Councillors.”

John Becroft noted that a “Meet the Candidates” meeting would be held at Willoughby Public School on September 3 at 8pm.

Apologies: Cr Mary Johnston, Michael Conder, Jenny Roxburgh, Peter McNair, Bruce Wilson (Castlecrag PA), Mark Monk.

Previous minutes: The President summarised the minutes from the previous meeting. **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the General Meeting held on May 14 2008 be confirmed and signed by the chair.

The President thanked members for their generous response to the Association’s recent request for donations. \$9400 had been received, making \$14,400 raised for the Plaza campaign in the past year.

Treasurer’s report

Pam Clifford gave a brief financial report for the year ended June 30 2008. In broad terms, income was \$33,000 and expenses \$27,000, giving a surplus of more than \$5000. Income had been boosted by donations of more than \$14,000 for the Plaza fund, of which \$13,000 was paid to our planning consultants. NPA has more than \$19,000 on term deposit with CBA, which earned \$1200 in interest.

RESOLVED that the Treasurer’s report is accepted.

It was noted that an application for membership had been received from John Hooper, and that it required the approval of a general meeting because he lived outside Northbridge. **RESOLVED** that John Hooper’s application for membership of the Association is approved.

Pam also advised that Council would be seeking further names for unnamed lanes and reserves in Northbridge and members should contact her with any suggestions.

Northbridge Neighbourhood Watch (NNW):

Secretary/treasurer Ron Hicks noted the increase in house break-ins in Northbridge in the past 18 months. There were 38 in the April-June 2008 quarter compared with between eight and 20 in previous quarters. He said that Chatswood Police don't know the reason or whether the perpetrators are a couple of people or more. He suggested that NNW could have more support from residents - only one-third of streets in Northbridge had Street Coordinators.

Northbridge's new branch library

Guest speaker Angelina Yeung, Library Outreach Services Manager, described the features of the new, improved Branch Library to be installed in the former Presbyterian Church at the corner of Namoi Rd. She said the fit-out would be completed in late 2008 or early 2009. The new library would have 210 sq metres of space, compared with 64 sq metres at the current building. It would have a bigger collection and be open 16 hours per week (8.5 hours longer than the current library), including a Thursday evening session. The library would contain community areas, a multi-function room, an enclosed outside area, an open lounge/reading area, photocopying and on-line facilities. It would cater for young people, with a study area on a mezzanine level. A donation of \$2000 from NPA would help fund a local history section. She noted that the new library would not retain the name Norman Landers Memorial Library but that a plaque honouring Mr Landers would be re-located to the new library.

Northbridge Plaza Masterplan

Russell Hand of BBC Planners, who is the Association's technical consultant for the Plaza Masterplan process, spoke on the status of the Masterplan technical work to date. He said that Stage 1 – the research phase – is nearing its end. Consultants' reports had been completed and there was a good understanding of the opportunities and constraints of the site. A technical paper is being produced which summarises the outcomes, principles and guidelines for Stage 2, when development scenarios will be produced. The major issue remains Council's resolution that retail expansion must be limited to approximately 10%. NPA is not against testing scenarios with this 10% retail constraint. The outcome of Stage 1 will be reported to Council and Russell's personal view is that the 10% limit will be re-affirmed.

Stage 2 of the project will include a community consultation program in the latter part of 2008 or early 2009. A Masterplan is unlikely to be produced until later in 2009.

In response to questions, Russell said that one of the principles for the project was sustainability and that open space for the community would be a requirement.

Brian Moran said that AMP seemed "not to be listening to the community" and would want more than 10% retail expansion. John Hooper said that he had been amazed at "the antics of AMP at the committee meetings – all parties have been determined to adhere to the 10% limit but AMP has been determined to ignore it." He said that he hoped that the new Council would stand behind the community on this issue.

Cr Morgan said that his conflict of interest ended on July 7 and he could now participate in the Plaza discussion. He said that every Councillor and Council officer was strongly behind the 10% constraint. "I assure you that I'm 100% behind NPA's position," he said.

John Holder moved a vote of thanks to Russell Hand and also noted that it was vital that Council retained ownership of the car park land, otherwise AMP might gain the ability to seek the Planning Minister as the consent authority for any redevelopment.

Shore playing fields

Cr Cox raised the problem of the shortage of playing fields in Willoughby. A member asked whether Shore would allow Northbridge soccer teams to use their playing fields. Cr Cox said that Shore had not made its Northbridge playing fields available to the wider community. He noted that Shore was now “back-peddalling” on the undertakings it had agreed with Council on car parking and on its new tennis courts. There was discussion of the issue. **RESOLVED** that this Association writes to Shore, with a copy to Council, deploring Shore’s attempts to back out of its commitments to Council to park cars on one of its playing fields. Furthermore, the Association points out to Shore that the traffic and parking problems it generates are a Willoughby-wide issue; Shore is an important member of the community and the Association urges the school to become a “good citizen”.

It was agreed that NPA would copy its letter to Castlecrag and Willoughby South PAs and also inform the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations about the resolution.

Northbridge Hotel

Cr Morgan was asked what Council was doing about the flagrant disregard of Council’s controls by Northbridge Hotel, which had redeveloped the hotel without any approvals from Council. Despite penalty notices being issued by Council, there had been no action for almost one year. Cr Morgan said that the development needed to be assessed by Council and that a Ward Councillors’ meeting on site was expected shortly.

Next general meeting

The next general meeting of NPA will be at 8pm on Wednesday September 24 at St Marks Hall.

The chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm. Refreshments were provided.

Chairman

Date