

## **Northbridge Progress Association Inc**

### **Minutes of the General Meeting held at St Marks Hall, Malacoota Rd, Northbridge on Wednesday February 27 2008 at 8.00pm**

**Present:** 30 members and visitors including Cr Mary Johnston, Inspector Jeff Bell (North Shore LAC), Nick Tobin and Stephen Head (Council), Simon Alder, and Alessandra Pinzone (KJA Associates).

**Welcome:**

President John Becroft opened the meeting and welcomed the visitors.

**Apologies:** Michael Conder, Bruce Wilson (Castlecrag PA).

**Previous minutes:** The President summarized the minutes from the previous meeting. **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on November 28 2007 be confirmed and signed by the chair.

John Holder noted that the suggestion by a resident at the previous meeting that NPA should deposit its funds with a bank with higher interest than CBA had been examined by the Committee. It had been decided that the convenience of the CBA outweighed the small advantage of a higher interest rate.

**Northbridge Neighbourhood Watch (NNW):**

Area Coordinator Howard Lardner noted that NNW had \$458 in the bank and, thanks to the sponsorship of AMP/Northbridge Plaza, planned three issues of the Crimebuster in 2008. He noted that an engraver was available from NNW for residents to identify their valuables.

Inspector Jeff Bell commented on the crime statistics in Northbridge for the past five months. They included 22 malicious damages (including six graffiti), 12 stealings (including four wallets stolen from shopping trolleys at the Plaza and two vehicles stolen from Coolawin Rd), three assaults and 24 stealing from vehicles. He mentioned the unsuccessful attempted armed robbery at Westpac in Northbridge Plaza. Three men have since been arrested and a pistol recovered. Inspector Bell noted that DNA testing is becoming very effective.

**Northbridge Hotel alterations**

Baringa Rd resident Simon Alder updated the meeting on the status of the DA for Northbridge Hotel. The application has been re-notified. There have been 41 separate submissions made by residents since September 2007. Council has issued a non-compliance notice in regard to the upstairs kitchen but has not pursued it because the owner has submitted an amended DA. The upstairs dining room proposed represents an intensity of use; there is a shortfall of two car parking spaces plus a goods loading area; there is no disabled access to the upstairs dining room; and allowable floor space ratio has been breached. A report will be reviewed by Council at its March 10 meeting.

Nick Tobin said it was likely that penalties would be imposed but these were minor compared with the cost of the works. Despite the non-compliance situation, Council's process will be to review the amended DA and present a report to Council.

### **Northbridge Plaza Masterplan process**

Mark Monk (Willoughby Residents Against Plaza Overdevelopment) updated the meeting on Stage 1 of the Plaza Masterplan process. He said that traffic studies are now complete; an economic and consumer report is under way; a community services survey is in progress and the Technical Working Group will shortly examine planning controls for the site. He said that the TWG had gained consensus on issues after robust debate. Stage 1 will end at around the end of March with reports on which we can rely. Stage 2 will comprise testing Masterplan scenarios.

Alessandra Pinzone (KJA) summarized the community consultation program, designed to understand community views about possible improvements to the Plaza and Council car park. The program includes an information brochure, distribution of 2500 feedback forms and three "Have a Say Days" at the Plaza.

### **Council's challenges for 2008**

Guest speaker Nick Tobin, General Manager of Willoughby City Council, outlined his background working for several other councils in NSW and noted some achievements during his time with Willoughby. In 2008, he said the main challenges would be the Civic Place project (where demolition has started and construction would begin in late May); Chatswood Mall upgrade; Chatswood railway station infrastructure; a L&E Court case for compensation from NSW Government for the Chatswood Interchange land; construction of a new Council depot; new sports training facilities; the e.restore3 program; Council's sustainability plans; the new Willoughby LEP; and a strategy to bring more business and life into the Chatswood CBD.

He said there were seven new community spaces planned in Willoughby including a new Northbridge branch library. A DA for the library was expected by mid-March. Plans for the library included a mezzanine study area, community space, a children's reading area, a "wet" area for art, and a small meeting space. The hall at the rear would be leased out as part of a Council policy to make all its assets earn an income. Council had agreed to re-classify the site to allow commercial use. He said that, in his view, parking was not an issue.

In terms of threats for Council in 2008, Mr Tobin mentioned the potential removal by NSW Government of S94 income from Councils; the removal of some planning controls from Councils; the difficulty recruiting sufficient engineers and planners; the threat of potential Council amalgamations; the proposed rezoning of schools to the zoning of adjacent properties; and the possible changes to Council policies following the September 11 Council elections.

Mr Tobin answered a number of questions from residents.

### **Other Northbridge issues**

John Hooper (Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations) and Cr Mary Johnston commented on the likely takeover by NSW Government of some of Council's planning controls.

### **Next general meeting**

The next general meeting of NPA will be at 8pm on Wednesday May 14 at St Marks Hall.

The chairman closed the meeting at 9.50pm.

Refreshments were provided.

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Chairman

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Date