



NWMA General Meeting

15 July 2008

7:30 PM

Meeting Room 1

North Melbourne Town Hall

521 Queensberry Street

North Melbourne

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1) Welcome & apologies

Present: Bill Cook, Alan Ashley, Alba Gatto, Lorraine Siska, Ingrid Hardie, Maureen Peck, Geoff Leach, Conrad Cunningham, Madeleine Scully, Gabrielle Stannus, Janet Graham, Craig Ross, Scott Hilditch, Frank Barrasso, Michael Horscroft, Denys Harraway, Michael Murphy, Heather Harper, Kevin Wong Hoy

Apologies: Nan Nankervis, Mary Kehoe, Kevin Chamberlin

2) Business Arising

- Report on 401 bus –
- Errol Street future –
- Report from “Backlash meeting” -

3) Correspondence

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4) Committee Report

The Committee meets each Wednesday morning:

- a) The major focus has been planning the next meetings: tonight’s session on graffiti, the August focus on the North Melbourne Station and the September focus on strategic planning.
- b) There has been progress on the Memorandum of Understanding with Sustainability Street.
- c) The Committee has approved and purchased a new computer.

5) Scott Hilditch “Graffiti Hurts Australia”

Graffiti Hurts Australia was founded in 2007, stemming from the lack of response by government at all levels to the problem of graffiti. There have been many conferences on this issue, but none has discussed implementing a community approach, which encompasses educating the community to understand the motivation and hidden costs and a focus on prevention rather than cure.

Scott provided a range of statistics and outlined various issues including:

- Aerosol art, in any setting in any community, contributes to “broken window syndrome”: contrary to the views of some Councils, issuing street art permits might prevent further graffiti on one particular site but precipitates attacks on neighbouring sites;
- Graffiti vandalism is a gateway crime and creates other anti-social behaviour (eg Hosier Lane);

- As well as the high costs to community and the significant impact on safety/perceptions of safety, there is an upwards trend in serious incidents of injury/death to graffiti vandals/artists;
- Cost to local government is now \$260m per annum in removal, up from \$150m ten years ago;
- New Victorian legislation from 1 July 2008 enables on-the-spot fines (ranging from \$500 to \$2000) if the culprit is caught on public transport land (within 50 metres of the boundary);
- Until this year Connex was not permitted to remove graffiti from railway property;
- Councils can now direct individual property owners to remove graffiti in sight of any public land;
- The Federal Community Crime Prevention Program (\$63m) has been replaced by Save Our Suburbs (\$6m);
- It is important to get the community involved through initiatives such as Community Paintbrush Murals (examples can be seen on the Graffiti Hurts Australia website), which can be made off-site on backing so as not to damage the building or require maintenance;
- We must remember graffiti is not a teenage or low demographic crime, but people trying to rebel and seek fame - the prime motivation for graffiti vandals is fame;
- GHA strives to educate government and their agencies in developing and implementing policies (eg City of Melbourne web site talks about graffiti but doesn't mention the street art program that encourages it) and want to establish partnerships with local associations such as this one;
- There is no nationwide or statewide data base of graffiti/offenders – each local station has their own data base in Microsoft Access and each Council also has their own data base. Sharing photographs does not breach the Privacy Act, but this doesn't happen. It was estimated a 44 year old man was responsible for \$1m damage to public buildings, but suffered not serious penalty because he could only be charged with the crime he was found to be committing. The City of Melbourne spends \$1m plus on removing graffiti and GHA expects that will increase due to the street art program;
- Remember, concerned people should use 131 444 to report to police anyone loitering with spray cans, etc, particularly in groups – and call 000 if we see anyone in the act.

Questions and discussion

- GHA is endeavouring to create an online national public reporting system where people can photograph and log graffiti and within 3 hours the report will go to the appropriate local council and their graffiti contractor;
- The biggest single issue is non-reporting of graffiti.

6) Work Group Reports

a) Heritage - nil

b) Environment

Saturday 26 July – collection of toxic chemicals etc – G Stannus will provide some written notices

Saturday 26 July – Moonee Ponds Creek planting

Action: G Stannus to forward material about collection of toxic chemicals etc

c) Business - nil

d) Social issues

Elizabeth Street accommodation

A letter has been sent to David Wilson asking him to facilitate discussion of a PCCC issue.

Arden Lodge

Mary Lockley has written regarding a proposal for construction of a larger facility on the Arden Street Lodge site.

Homeless Action Group

West Melbourne PCCC will include the recently re-incorporated parts of North Melbourne.

e) Transport - nil

f) Planning

Chetwynd Street, Victoria Street

Seem to be several educational facilities opening up in the area, particularly in hospitality training.

33-35 Arden Street

This site is currently vacant. The proposal is to waive parking and erect three stories of small offices, modern design, largely glass, right on street frontage, with no attention to the neighbouring heritage houses. Council refused a permit; developers are appealing to VCAT. NWMA support could involve attending the hearing and/or endorsing and supporting a position adopted by nearby residents.

Action: A Gatto will coordinate NWMA support to residents

Hawke Street

The proposal is to demolish an existing building (next to Apollo Gym) and construct a five storey building. Possible issues include height, overlooking, amenity, waiving off street parking.

Action: A Gatto to co-ordinate follow up with residents and NWMA

7) Democracy

Still pursuing issues through Legislative Council representatives, with some success.

The Victorian Government is now legislating to reduce the ability of owners of car parks to vote in Council elections.

A meeting with Bronwyn Pike is scheduled this week.

Councillor Snedden moved at this evening's Finance and Governance Committee meeting that: *the Finance and Governance Committee resolve that the Minister for Local Government be requested to postpone the Melbourne City Council elections from November 2008 to early/mid 2009, with the exact date to be determined by the Minister, to allow for the electoral representation review supported by Council at its meeting on 24 June 2008 to be undertaken.* The motion was lost: Councillors Snedden, Clarke and Shanahan voted in favor and Councillors Ng, Jetter and Wilson joined Deputy Lord Mayor Singer in voting against.

8) Tunnel update

Submission went in today.

Kevin has put in separate one in his own name.

G Stannus has submitted on behalf of Friends of Royal Park

9) General Business

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10) Meeting close – 9.30 pm