



**North & West Melbourne Association Inc.
PO Box 102, North Melbourne, Vic 3051**

**Ordinary General Meeting
Dewey Common Room, Bastow Institute
603–615 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne**

Meeting Chairperson: Kevin Chamberlin

**MINUTES
Ordinary General Meeting, Tuesday 20 June 2017, 7.37pm**

Present: Kevin Chamberlin, Mary Chapman, Bill Cook, Wendy Cook, Stephen Farrugia, Valerie Gerrand, Janet Graham, Susan Greer, Michael Horscroft, Rosemary John, Mary Kelleher, Jan Lacey, Liam Lenihan (guest), Colin Long, Kath McPherson, Helen Michell, Jacques Péril, Jane Poynter, Barbara Ring, Duncan Rouch, Dick Standish, Carolyn Thompson and David Worthley

Apologies: Emmy Chung, Ray Cowling, Jenny Danielson, Melanie Del Monaco (Community Engagement Partner, CoM), Cecilia Gason, Margaret Péril, Mark Stewart and Geraldine Suter

Chair Kevin Chamberlin welcomed attendees and introduced Liam Lenihan, a Community Engagement Partner in the City of Melbourne's new Placemaking and Engagement team, who would present for the first part of the meeting. Following this Duncan Rouch would report on the Abbotsford Street public housing renewal project.

Presentation by Liam Lenihan, Community Engagement Partner, Placemaking and Engagement, City of Melbourne, with questions from attendees and answers by Liam

Liam said he and Melanie Del Monaco (a late apology for this meeting) were part of the new Placemaking and Engagement team at City of Melbourne (CoM). He had previously worked with Steven Weir, the former local Neighbourhood Development Officer, and hoped he could have a similar relationship with the NWMA.

Liam said he could provide an update on some CoM projects. He said there were 13 people, including five Community Engagement Partners, getting to know the community — a learning phase. Otherwise it was “business as usual”.

Q: What do you do, Liam?

A: With organisations like yours, we work together to achieve common goals. Where goals are not aligned, we see how we can address issues by exchanging insights. We help you navigate Council if you have questions or problems. Jane provides input via NAC meetings.

Q: Is your internal role to act as a conduit for discussions? Is your remit to encourage other departments to engage? What's the mechanism?

A: For example, with the C258 heritage amendments, we advise on the best way to engage with the community and enable access. We evaluate responses, above and beyond legal requirements.

Q: You instigate this or they do?

A: As a project is getting ready to deliver X, they ask how they should go about it.

The Chair interposed to tell Liam he was welcome to attend any Association meeting, that they are public meetings. The media monitor our website and minutes. People can follow the minutes or get on our emailing list. We get approaches from the Victorian Planning Authority, West Gate Tunnel Project (WGTP) and developers regarding matters such as the Australia Post development site.

Q: You represent North Melbourne and Kensington. Who is the West Melbourne person?

A: Melanie.

Q: Once a project is going to be launched, in my experience usually the community engagement is over. I hope you do get involved with the NWMA to help ensure the community is consulted before it's too late to provide input.

A: “Engage early and engage often” — that's what we strongly advocate. We will be honest with the community.

Q: What does “Placemaking” in the title mean?

A: A place to live, work and play where everyone can enjoy themselves. To join the dots in the Arden Vision, Amendment C190 — we can coordinate a lot of things.

Q: You have nothing to do with the WGTP Authority?

A: Yes — we ran a meeting last week. We will append any feedback we get to our submission on the EES. We need responses well before 4 July, when it goes before Council. You can submit feedback on the Participate Melbourne website.

Q: Is there a relationship between the engagement and resilience offices?

A: Yes, we have relationships with all divisions.

Q: It was nice to talk to you before, Liam. What role can you play in the Abbotsford Street Estate Renewal?

A: Council will be making a submission and we also anticipate holding a similar event to the WGTP forum.

Q: What’s the date of Council’s submission?

A: I will provide more detail later. The forum hasn’t been worked out yet. We need to hear from you guys first.

Q: When we talk to the ministry, they need to know about social housing etc. I got the feeling they weren’t looking at the big picture.

A: We were asking similar questions. They didn’t have the detail about the mix of tenure etc.

Q: They’ve already appointed a planning authority. That normally happens after consultation.

A: Yes, things are moving very fast. You’ll be able to make submissions through a process similar to an EES. There will be a mechanism for developers to tender against.

Q: The process is flawed — the towers are not for families. We all know what happens with a PPP. We will have to tackle the ideology. We were told the government is putting up money for developers.

Q: A recent report says the Carlton estate renewal has been a disaster.

A: Council officers will make their recommendations and put in a submission. I can’t say what Council’s position will be.

Q: Richard Smithers was presenting at the WGTP forum on 8 June.

A: Council reserves the right to oppose it.

Q: There’s a State Government policy behind public housing. I’d like to see CoM’s policy around this.

A: We have a housing officer — I can speak to him tomorrow.

Kevin thanked Liam for his presentation and invited him to stay for the rest of the meeting. He chose to do so.

Report by NWMA member Duncan Rouch on the Abbotsford Street Estate public housing renewal project

Duncan introduced the topic by saying the proposal was to raze all buildings on the estate to the ground. He and others then described the plans as mapped out in brochures supplied at DHHS-run community meetings in Melrose Street on 22 and 23 May. A treed laneway was to run west–east from Abbotsford Street, opposite Wood Street, across the site to Molesworth Street. According to the sketch plan ‘for discussion’, high-rise buildings would fill most of the estate, seemingly almost up to the boundaries, with the highest tower, towards the middle of the estate, being 10–12 storeys. Other towers would be 8–9 storeys along Abbotsford Street and 5–7 fronting Haines Street, reducing to 4–5 at the Harker Street corner. Fronting Molesworth Street the height would be only three storeys to defer to the heritage houses opposite.

Duncan expressed the generally agreed opinion that the estate should contain only public housing and affordable housing and nothing else. There was a need for 3–4-bedroom dwellings for families, not more single accommodation. The site needed more open space for children including an adventure playground. Four-storey heights should be sufficient to get the extra 10% public housing guaranteed by the government, and dwellings should be integrated and available to everyone in the area. As an aside, Duncan mentioned that in Chicago similar towers were being pulled down because gangs were hiding in them.

He added that walking paths were not compatible with ground-level parking, so he thought car parks should be underground, but that suggestion had been rejected as too expensive. The buildings needed a community room for communal activities, to get people mixing. There needed to be immediate planning for a new school. We needed affordable housing for disadvantaged families. Duncan cited Katrina Kincade-Sharkey's explanation in her article in the June edition of the *News* that a lot of residents lived on the estate because of its proximity to hospitals where their various illnesses were treated. He noted the *Herald Sun* (16.6.17, page 29) quoting Kevin and *The Age's* article (12.6.17, page 8) on Dr Kate Shaw and Abdullahi Jama's University of Melbourne report, which had investigated the Kensington and Carlton estate renewals and found them to be a bit of a disaster.

Discussion followed. One concern was that the government intended to divest itself of responsibility for public housing. A woman who had attended one of the meetings in Melrose Street had said she had been offered a place in Wangaratta. There was a belief that no one knew the real number of people living on the estate, as had been the case in Grenfell Tower [high-rise council flats in London destroyed by fire in June]. When asked who the one-bedroom flats were for, the presenters had said for older women. But taking families out would undermine our community.

Duncan said he was going to email the architect and also speak to Councillor Rohan Leppert, who had been very responsive.

A comparison was made with La Trobe Close. That development does not have much open space, which is needed with tall buildings. Funding was per apartment — that could be what is driving it. The La Trobe Close housing has integrated and is working quite well now but is not ideal. A mix of home types might have helped. More families would create a better mix.

All nine planned renewals are concurrent. The Ashburton estate has already been demolished. Kevin noted that the North Melbourne site had been rezoned in March this year with a maximum height of 11 metres and asked rhetorically where the strategic view of planning was. Suggestions were made that we ask Kate Shaw to speak at a meeting, that the Association formulate its own policy based on members' diverse opinions, and that we seek Council's view and take a common approach.

The General Residential Zone established the mandatory height limit of 11 metres, which applies across Victoria, but Council can vary this if necessary. It was noted that tenders had already been advertised, which suggested the estate renewals were rushing ahead. The document currently out was a registration of capability (*The Age*, 10.6.17).

Liam added that the government would bring in a planning amendment and agreed that the NWMA should send a delegation to the Minister for Housing and the Minister for Planning. It was also suggested we should contact the Public Tenants Union, which must be liaising across all nine sites. One member had approached Senator Gavin Marshall, and noted that housing projects in Richmond and Fitzroy had been abandoned because of protests. Jane suggested inviting Adam Bandt and Ellen Sandell to the next NWMA meeting, or Kate Shaw if Ellen was still absent on maternity leave.

Moved Jane Poynter, seconded Duncan Rouch:

That the feeling of this meeting be noted as one of deep concern about the government's proposal for the Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne, site, and that the Committee be authorised to take the following actions:

- (i) attempt to raise the level of public awareness and enlist the support of other groups;
- (ii) approach Minister for Planning Richard Wynne and Minister for Housing Martin Foley with a request that they meet an NWMA delegation to discuss this site.

Carried.

Members interested in forming a delegation to meet the MPs were Kevin Chamberlin, Valerie Gerrand, Duncan Rouch and Rosemary John, with Susan Greer to do some background work.

Janet Graham asked that the record acknowledge Duncan Rouch's excellent report.

1. Confirmation of minutes of previous meetings

Moved Jane Poynter, seconded Michael Horscroft:

That the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on Tuesday 18 April 2017, as amended to record the location of the cafe on Flemington Road in the VincentCare project, be confirmed.

Carried.

Moved Valerie Gerrand, seconded Jan Lacey:

That the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on Tuesday 16 May 2017 be confirmed.
Carried.

2. Committee report

The Committee had met on Thursday 15 June.

(a) Spring Fling Festival 2017

The Association has been given access to a power supply for a TV screen to be installed on the outside wall of the library to run a rolling display of Graeme Butler's historic photographs. We now need to work out how to frame the photos.

(b) Financial matters

Due to Council's grant limit to operational funding, the Committee had changed the archive storage shed to a smaller one that meets the purpose and costs much less.

Consumer Affairs had asked NWMA to produce a current assets register. Some assets are very old and need to be revalued or written off. For instance, Bill Cook is storing a projector belonging to the Association.

The Committee had decided to transfer \$600 from the main NWMA account into the term deposit to take advantage of the new higher interest rate on investments above \$10,000. This had been made possible by the saving on the archive locker.

Moved Jane Poynter, seconded Michael Horscroft:

That the financial report be accepted.
Carried.

(c) NWMA 50th anniversary dinner

Members were asked whether \$60 for a three-course meal was acceptable. The Committee was suggesting the City of Melbourne Bowling Club as the venue and proposing that Richard Wynne be asked to be the speaker. Did the members have any other suggestions? August or September were being considered. Kevin thanked Jane for doing the research on this.

(d) Community garden

There was a question about the status of the North West Patch community garden project. Jane said she wasn't sure but that Nicholas Atkins was working with Bridget Macwhirter on this.

3. Reports from affiliated organisations

(a) Melbourne North Police Community Consultative Committee (PCCC)

Jan Lacey said the PCCC had met since the last NWMA meeting. They are building the relationship between schools and the police. School representatives are now attending meetings regularly and there is an ongoing anti-bullying campaign. Although North and West Melbourne don't usually feature strongly in criminal statistics, Jan reported a recent increase in break-ins in Melrose Street. Bikes were also still being stolen.

4. West Gate Tunnel Project (WGTP)

Because of NWMA's opposition to the project, Kevin had had the opportunity to chair a meeting in Spotswood and was also going to MC a meeting in Hoppers Crossing on Monday 3 July. The WGTP EES is a 10,000-page report and Kevin said the Association didn't have the resources to read it all. NWMA had therefore agreed to join with IMPA (Inner Melbourne Planning Alliance), which had obtained professional advice and was working on a submission. This would be signed with other members of IMPA. Jan suggested members use the draft on Colleen Hartland's (Greens MLC Western Region) website as a resource when writing their own submissions.

Bill pointed out that Hawke Street was one of the worst affected roads, with EES modelling predicting a 5000 increase in vehicles in 2031 in the 'with project' scenario. Kevin suggested we reaffirm our opposition to the WGTP.

Moved Bill Cook, seconded Mary Chapman:

That the NWMA reaffirm its opposition to the newer West Gate Tunnel Project.

Carried.

5. Discussion of correspondence circulated in the past month and received by hand

None discussed.

6. General business

(a) 17–37 Abbotsford Street, West Melbourne (Gadsden development site)

Janet noted that the recommendation from the CoM planners was to take two storeys off the higher part of the proposed 11-storey development, making it slope down towards the heritage area. The proposal was on tonight's Council planning meeting agenda. Marshall Waters reported by phone from the meeting that the proposal had been passed unanimously with the officers' suggested amendments — two storeys off the Adderley Street and Dryburgh Street frontages. Marshall said two councillors would have been happy with the original higher proposal.

7. Time, date and venue of next ordinary general meeting

Tuesday 18 July 2017, 7.30pm, at the Bastow Institute, 603–615 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne.

The meeting closed at 9.33pm.