

LAUNCESTON RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

MINUTES OF MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING, MONDAY 19th May, 2008
AT BRUCE DAVIDSON COMMUNITY CENTRE 2 Guy St Kingsmeadows.

Meeting opened at 7.30 pm, Lionel Morrell, Vice President in the chair. Ald. Sands, Andrew Smith Chris Moore & Harry Galea from LCC welcomed. Bruce Davidson Community Centre Committee thanked for allowing use of the meeting room.

Apologies were received from: Pam Butler, Wayne Van Noord, Jenny Gill and Di Tement.

Minutes: Minutes of the April 2008 meeting were distributed to members and visitors.

Moved by Max Plummer and seconded by Kelvin Jowett and that the Minutes be accepted as a true record.

Motion passed without dissent.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

Australian Productivity Commission Research Report – The Chairman reported that the Executive had met to review the Report and found the Association's input had made a significant influence on the Commission's findings.

Northern Tasmanian Development – Following correspondence to LCC dated 18 April the Executive had met with Mayor on 16 May 2008 (see separate report).

LCC assistance with provision of monthly meeting facilities - Matter still awaiting advice from Ald. Norton.

Meeting with Mayor – Chairman reported that the following matters were discussed – Rates and water charges ; Northern Tasmania Development; Launceston's Air Quality; Silting of upper reaches of Tamar River; Levee construction and Lindsay St land acquisition; Council Budget 2008/09; Communication with Association.

Review of Allowances for Local Government Councillors – Submission tabled and overview presented by Chairman. Meeting noted that Councillor's allowances are proposed to be increased from \$13,000 to \$30,000 and in future would be adjusted each year by CPI. Concerns expressed about the escalating costs for Aldermen and impact this would have on ratepayers who are already struggling to pay high rates.

Treasurer's Report:

Financial Report indicating a present balance of \$158.63, was reported to members and visitors.

Resolved that the Report be accepted.

Correspondence:

Inwards: Letter from Mayor responding to Association's request for a meeting dated 28 April 2008 (see Matters arising above).

Outwards: Nil.

RESOLVED that the Inwards Correspondence be received.

Business arising from the Correspondence: See particular Agenda items.

Guest Speakers:**MACHEN'S RESERVE**

Chairman introduced Andrew Smith, LCC Manager Parks & Recreation & Chris Moore LCC Parks Manager, and invited them to address the meeting concerning Machen's Reserve.

Andrew Smith spoke to the Plan that had also been discussed at the March meeting of the Association held at the same venue, and the summation of that meeting that had been provided to him.

He acknowledged that whilst more funding and community assistance would be much-appreciated and allow more work to be done, Council was actively working to keep the Reserve maintained as recognized in the Management Plan. The present 2-person crew work to agreed plans within the separate management zones and fire hazards were monitored with the last fire reduction burn being carried out in 2006. The next burn offs would be in 2009 & 2014, with action only necessary each 2-3 years unless unusual build-up occurred.

Mr. Smith stressed that it is important to recognise that unmown areas comprise native grasses that are important to maintaining a balanced environment and that retention of wattle trees are a natural factor in promoting a natural environment that will support the birdlife and minor species of wildlife that comprise the important habitat in the Reserve.

He agreed that the frog pond was cherished by users of the Reserve and it is important that it be kept clean and not become polluted. He is concerned about issues of public safety and keeping people away from the steep bank above the pond, however previous attempts at fencing off the top of the bank were affected by vandals pulling sections down, but agreed to re-visit the issue in light of fresh concerns. He said that he had obtained engineering advice about 15 years ago and was satisfied that the present incline was stable.

The 6 seats referred to in the Master Plan had been lost/destroyed and more durable replacements would be considered in key positions. The removal of gorse and blackberries requires concerted effort over a long period of time, as gorse seeds can survive in the soil for 100 years making eradication difficult.

Attendees expressed concern that only 14 people were directly interviewed by Council as part of the consultation process to prepare the Master Plan. Mr. Smith assured the meeting that other consultation by Council's staff and contact with all immediate neighbours had been carried out and that a meeting had been held at the Bruce Davidson Community Centre which was well attended. The response to Council's letterbox drop was very good at 50%.

Residents adjoining the Reserve expressed concerns about the development of the Chifley St car park; snake population; onion weed; erosion; condition of the rock drains; more timely reviews of grass cutting, particularly for early December; necessity for new plantings; need for additional dog bag dispensers and bins; more regular mowing of grass in the upper area; improved signage particularly to discourage off-leash dog exercising; need to be mindful of the unpredictability of children when protecting the pond/bank area; need for boundary fencing along northern side and discouragement of dumps for garden waste; desirable virtues of solar lights being placed along the pathway and above seats so as to improve safety and improve after hours access; and the virtue of changing arrangements so that the regular general maintenance work could be improved by privatisation.

There were many positive comments expressed about Council's efforts to maintain and develop the Reserve (albeit with severe budgetary restrictions), and offers to help with the task on a voluntary basis – see later agenda item. Residents of The Manor, the manager of Brampton on the Park and residents of Gascoyne Street, all indicated their appreciation of the existence of the Reserve and the birdlife it attracted; other residents complimented Council for providing a pleasant pathway walk through the Reserve that connects to the business areas and shops in Kingsmeadows, and connects on to Punchbowl Reserve, and there was general

agreement that the situation from what was a very derogated industrial site had been much-improved in recent years.

KINGSMEADOWS SHOPPING AREA PARKING AND TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Chairman introduced Harry Galea, LCC Manager Transportation & Development, and invited him to speak to the topic.

Mr. Galea explained that:

Guy St had 2200 vehicles per day with a carriageway 7.5M wide.

The standard traffic level for such a street is 1000 vehicles per day (acceptable) compared to 3000 vehicles per day which is too high.

Riseley St is a short cut with a traffic level greater than 3000 vehicles per day.

Guy St research shows that the maximum speed of vehicles is 41KM/HR.

Hobart Road has 16000 vehicles per day, which is almost at saturation level being 18-20,000 vehicles per day.

The last upgrade was 4/5 years ago which aimed to reduce RH turns – partly successful (still some, controls are tried).

With regard to employee parking, Council had taken a fairly uniform approach, but it was not that complex an issue and was not only an issue in Kingsmeadows, but also in the CBD.

He said that it was not evil for people to park on the street, or to park there all day. The issue was the need to minimise risk and to maintain safety standards.

He also said that roads are actually meant to be used for parking although current levels indicate that additional parking would need to be found, but opportunities to achieve that do exist.

Parking restrictions are designed to encourage a higher turnover for Banks and the like, and to discourage all day parking habits.

Guy St has parking on one side only leaving the minimum carriageway being 7.5M wide. Council has had a recent request to prohibit parking in Guy St., however this would only encourage parking in the next street and be likely to increase traffic speeds.

In relation to managing issues in the business section of Hobart Rd., he explained that a safe crossing situation had been created by having traffic lights at both ends of the shopping strip and the installation of intermediate pedestrian refuges between them. Although another strategy would be for pedestrian operated lights to be installed, such installations are a matter for State Government, not Council.

A number of questions and issues were raised by attendees, which were responded to by Mr Galea-

- The RH arrow to turn into Riseley St seems to restrict the ability of through traffic that wishes to continue along Hobart Rd.
- It is unreasonable for business to establish in areas that cannot cope. Over the last 20 or so years, Kingsmeadows has grown but the planning coped with parking. People didn't buy into Guy St to allow strangers to park there. The present situation is dangerous, and it makes it very difficult to reverse into or out of driveways. Speeding practices can be as high as 80KPH, particularly in nearby Bond St.

Mr Galea responded, explaining that these concerns raised issues that overlapped the responsibility of different departments. Development standards are administered, but operators have a choice, and that most car parks were usually kept full. Parking requirements are based on the needs of the original developments. The speed in Guy St is 40KPH. Courtesy is favoured to local needs. He denied that there was a sprawl of shopping developments and that in relation to big businesses such as Woolworths and Coles, there was a level of gumption necessary. He advised that parking attendants are not dedicated to outlying zones such as Kingsmeadows, but didn't know if these parking attendants visited as frequently as daily.

- There is an endorsement for forward planning, but when this results in restrictions on local residents, stronger methodologies were required.

Mr Gallea advised that Council offered a Residents' Parking Permit Scheme where less than 2 parking spots were available on site.

- The 2hr parking limits are not policed and it ought not be the responsibility of residents to report non-compliance.
- Stephenson Toyota does not provide any on-site parking for employees, so cars are parked in Shirley Place.

Mr Gallea undertook to further communicate on this issue.

- There is a lack of forward planning, leading to bandaid solutions.
- How do situations come about where businesses are allowed where areas can't take the pressure?
- There is support for parking areas provided by Council.

Mr Gallea advised that parking was an issue to be addressed in the next Planning Scheme review.

- A resident of Blaydon St expressed concern about a new bus stop recently positioned in front of her residence and asked what could be done about it.
- There are problems with large trucks and the milk delivery truck.
- What are the consultation procedures for bus stop locations? Should Metro inform residents?
- Ald. Sands, who is also a resident of the area, alerted others to a plan for the demolition of 4 houses in Blaydon St for car parking expansion. He avoided travelling along Guy St for fear of losing wing mirrors due to the car parking congestion and narrowness of the street. He encouraged residents to speak with Council's Parking Manager Andrew Frost about parking concerns. He had observed traffic changes that avoided Guy St since the speed reduction measures.
- There is a need for a comprehensive traffic study to be done for Kingsmeadows, and investigation of improvements to the Hobart Rd/Riseley St intersection involving land acquisition to allow slip lanes.

Mr Gallea agreed to take the ideas back to Council.

- In instances where there is no right turn such as in Hobart Rd at KFC, where then does traffic go in order to turn to head in the other direction?
- The KFC exit to Hobart Rd has been modified, and the entrance is now northward opposite Machen Street. This has caused a very dangerous situation to arise and serious collisions look a certainty.

Chairman thanked the guest speakers for their time and interest in attending the meeting and looked forward to feedback from Council in due course.

General Business:

Land Use Planning System Review – Chairman briefed members concerning the review and how the Association's view was being expressed.

Establishment of a 'Friends of Machen's Reserve' by Lynne Mockridge – Chairman introduced Mrs Mockridge and invited her to speak to the establishment of a volunteer group, which would be independent of the Association.

Lynne explained her interest in the Reserve and sought a positive response from people who are interested in contributing as volunteers. Andrew Smith has advised that as volunteers, insurance cover would be provided, and that Council's head gardener would be available in daylight hours on weekdays, to advise the group and support them with resources and equipment. New plants were available from Council's nursery, and ongoing advice would be sought on native species from Herbert Staubman. Punchbowl Reserve could be regarded as a palette for the types of plantings possible and mulch for planted areas is available.

There was general accord and encouragement offered by those attending the meeting, and a sheet was circulated for people to provide contact details for Lynne to utilise.

Chairman said how pleased the Launceston Ratepayers Association was to facilitate a process that would establish a volunteer group and thanked Mrs Mockridge for her efforts in establishing the 'Friends of Machens Reserve' and wished them every success.

Mrs Mockridge extended her gratitude to the Association for the assistance given.

Possible new rating systems and methods for charging for Council services – Chairman briefly referred to the Association's ongoing efforts to address ratepayer's concerns, most recently by meeting with the Mayor. Details of submissions by the Association are available on the website, and should anyone not be able to access that information, they are encouraged to contact the Hon. Secretary.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and invited attendees to join members for a light supper.

Meeting Close: 10.15 pm

Next Meeting: 7.30 pm, Monday, 17th June 2008, at
Dilston Hall,
East Tamar Highway, Dilston.