

Minutes of the Fairy Bower Precinct Community Forum Meeting held at St Patricks (ICMS) on the 8th February 2017 at 7:00pm.

Attendance: There were 6 Fairy Bower residents present as per the written attendance list circulated to all present.

Apologies were received from (as per list).

Notes: The meeting was facilitated by Hugh Burns following the amalgamation of Manly Council into the new Northern Beaches Council and consequential resignation of the previous Precinct executive.

Welcome

The meeting formally was opened at 7:08pm and the facilitator welcomed everybody present.

As a preliminary it was also advised the meeting would be recorded for production of the meeting minutes.

Amalgamation Poll

Firstly the reason for the movement of the Precinct meeting date was outlined. This decision to delay the meeting was made in the middle of the initial state government announcement that polls may be held in amalgamated councils, to allow the dust to settle on the matter so the community could have a firm idea of what was intended to be done and the residents could then discuss this.

The context of this announcement was noted in terms of the political environment in which the Coalition State Government had lost a safe regional seat (Orange) in a recent by-election and faced political risk from two more by-elections - one for Manly and one for North Shore (which includes Mosman where the Council was fighting any amalgamation) .

An outline was made of a proposed "best practice" poll including neutral "for" and "against" cases being provided to the community and the polling to require a majority in each former LGA for the amalgamation to continue. It was noted the primary intention of the poll was to ensure the community had their say.

The poll outcome would be fairly permanent as it would be more difficult to undo the amalgamation as time goes on, due to reorganisation and staff making career decisions. It was considered that the poll should be done as soon as possible so Council can continue on with confidence knowing the community is behind it, or the reorganisation simply stopped if the community did not want it.

If the poll was delayed or blocked other options were reviewed. It was noted the changes to the Local Government Act that allowed the delegate amalgamation process (not the full boundary commission enquiry process) were passed in the late 1990s by the other side of politics to the present Government.

The decision for the community was should the residents push for an early poll or wait and see. Following some discussion the majority present supported going earlier.

Precinct Meeting Attendance

The number attending various Precinct meetings was discussed. The impact of Council advice in May and political interests was discussed. It was also noted throughout its history most of the Fairy Bower Precinct's 1800 residents are kept informed via the Precinct newsletter rather than attending meetings.

Representation Under Administration vs Under Elected Council

The issue of Manly and Pittwater getting more representation under the administrator than after a full election of councillors was discussed. Each former Council currently had two representatives on the top advisory committee assisting the administrator. Whereas after the Councillors are elected half will come from Warringah, so the current influence and treatment Manly has may not be the same after the Council elections.

Public Works Performance and Fairy Bower Amenities Block

The performance of Council on the Marine Parade storm damage rectification works was than raised. Some residents considered the long time taken the rebuild the toilet block as most unsatisfactory. It was noted the paving, retaining and fencing rectification was done to a high standard in a fair timeframe but took too long to start, and the question was then asked why was the toilet block not done at that time? It was noted the last news was Council proposed to rebuilt the block with the pool works in April. It was noted the value to the residents was the change room facilities the block offered, more than the toilet facility.

Several residents at the meeting reported receiving development application notification for the replacement Fairy Bower Toilet block. There seem to some confusion in the notification process concerning the location of the new toilet block as the residents consulted seemed to be between Cliff Street and Bower Lane and the notification sign was placed on Marine Parade in the wrong location near the fallen rock sculpture. (Post meeting examination of the plans online confirmed the structure is to be actually rebuilt in the existing location).

The issue of the new Council's performance on other works such as the continued poor presentation of other council buildings (such as the front of the Manly Art Gallery and the peeling paint on the exterior of the Manly Council Chambers (needing repainting)) was outlined. These had been reported months ago but no Council action has been forthcoming.

The concern was raised that if the new Council ends up being dominated by Warringah residents and interests, will they understand the need maintain what is the front door to the Northern Beaches at Manly?

It was outlined some of the issues included the chains of command are now longer and there is reportedly pressure on staff to reduce expenditure and defer non-essential works.

The extra money received from government amalgamation grants will likely be needed for IT and similar system upgrades. It was noted changing signage and branding was to be a priority for the new Council, at no-doubt quite a high cost. Some residents questioned replacement of logos/signage and letterhead being given such priority.

In response to a question it was outlined Manly will have 3 ward councillors in a council of 15. Currently even being 4 out of 9 in an unwarded Council gives minority Councillors some influence but with 3 (or less) in 15 its going to be much harder to be heard.

Water Dragons Sign Not Yet Replaced

It was noted the water dragons sign on Marine Parade walkway had gone missing in the storm and not yet been replaced - this was an outstanding item needing Council action.

Consultation - IAG and LRC

The role of the LRC and the IAG was discussed. From discussion with members, even the high level committee is not involved in all the Administrator's and GM's decisions. The importance of good political judgement in local government decision making was noted. Every time there is a major public outcry there currently appears to be a deferral. When Warringah was under administration previously, the situation was different as the Council had major corruption issues and with a longer term of administration, so difficult matters could not just be deferred.

Whistler Street Car Park Tender

The present situation with the Whistler Street car park tender was outlined to the residents present. Some recent news on this matter was given. Beyond the Whistler St negotiations it was agreed we need to do something to resolve can parking in Manly. It was noted that what was apparently resolved in an hour in Council might take two years to clear up. The impact on planning and ethical issues were discussed.

Precinct Issues

A response was requested from council on the pool, toilet block and Bower Street parking signage but none was received prior to the meeting. The notification on the toilet suggested this was afoot.

Bower Street Sub-division and Development Issues

The Bower St subdivision proposed for 32 Bower Street, from one to three dwellings, was outlined - the site is adjacent the Manly Side of the park with the steps going down to Shelly Beach. No resolution was made as the facilitator noted he had a potential conflict of interest in terms of his location (even if not directly affected).

The scale of the excavation for a new development in Bower Street at Fairy Bower was discussed. The it was likely the original form of the land was a sandy area behind the now missing beach feed by a natural water coarse in the line of Reddall and Bower Lanes surrounded by a natural rock amphitheatre. It was noted the excavation reduces view loss but changes the natural form of the land. The guide DCP limits on excavation are merit offset to minimise view loss. The issue of Councils and the LEC normally approving development, and the importance of approval consistency was discussed.

The issue in the eighties was simply do you consider tall buildings appropriate or not (e.g. Mona Vale and Manly) but these concerns are now complicated by claimed shortage of housing and housing affordability issues ("where are your children going to live") being used to push more of the public into accepting high rise (used in the Mona Vale Place Plan).

East Esplanade Reserve

The issue of building sites being fined for not taking actions to prevent runoff sediment entering natural areas after rainfall was raised, with a comparable situation being all the soil and grass being similarly washed into the harbour from the East Esplanade reserve. The issue being council has not followed residents requests to installed a low wall to arrest all this material.

Resolution That the Precinct recommends to the general manager that works to install a low retaining wall along the harbour edge of the east esplanade reserve grassed area be carried out by Council as an urgent priority. This should include adding drainage behind the low wall.

The generally poor presentation of the grass within this reserve was also noted.

Marine Parade Storm Water Pipe and Storm Water Issues

Another item raised was the storm water pipe crossing marine parade and discharging at the side of the Fairy Bower pool. In heavy rain the pipe is proving too small as the pressure in the pipe is forcing up the pipe inspection concrete panel - like they are being lifted off like cardboard.

Resolution That the Precinct recommends to the general manager that the size of the storm water pipe crossing Marine Parade at Fairy Bower and its hydraulic performance is reinvestigated to determine its adequacy, given the covers repeatedly blow off the piping due to excess hydraulic pressure at times of heavy rain.

The issue of the storm water pipes discharging on the main Manly Ocean Beach was discussed. The various history and issues of the pipe was outlined. The push by surfers to retain the pipes at North Steyne was noted.

The issue of increased feed to the pipes due to the Montpellier Place development with new roads and hard surfaces (e.g. roofs) being drained was discussed.

The issue of seepage of water from the cliff face crossing marine parade was raised. Rebuilt houses with automated watering systems could be more of an issue. The council had tried to intercept the seepage by installing bunding. Previously there was a considerable work to identify sources of faecal-coliform when this was found in Cabbage Tree Bay some years ago. This involved Council and Sydney water working to achieve a number of plumbing rectifications.

Off Leash Dogs Needs Enforcement

The issue of off-leash dogs harassing the public lying on the Fairy Bower "beach" rocks was reported by a resident. The issue of ensuring visible signage was the usual start point. If there was insufficient signage we can request this be fixed, or if the signage is adequate then we need to request some ranger enforcement.

Upper Bower Street Traffic

The issue of the traffic jams in upper Bower Street was raised by the facilitator (who noted he lived beyond this section of Bower Street). There is a parking passing area two thirds of the way up the hill that people are parking in, due to lack of awareness and enforcement. Filing this area with parked cars makes the street harder to negotiate, given upper Bower Street has to be operated as self-managed alternate one-way street, due to parking on both sides on busy weekend and holiday days.

Resolution That the Precinct recommends to the general manager that the no parking zone two thirds the way up the upper bower street hill on the Ocean-side be more prominently marked by means of a yellow line near the kerb, to better deter illegal parking in this location.

The issue of visitors not knowing the procedure of waiting until there was a clear line of sight was raised. If the marking fails to keep this section free, then the Precinct will request a program of enforcement from Council. The issue of speeding in Bower Street was also noted to remain an issue.

Resolution That the Precinct recommends that the police be requested to conduct speed enforcement in Bower Street.

General Business

The secretary of the Little Manly Precinct asked if the Fairy Bower Precinct was doing anything for clean up Australia day. The Precinct normally does not but friends of Cabbage Tree Bay and some residents continuously pick up stray items like litter and bottles. The difficult of cleaning next to the Bower Reddall steps.

A resident has raised the issue of the large full height graffiti mural on the side of the Fairy Bower surf equipment shed. The mural is visible from the pool and has been photographed to confirm the issue

Resolution That the Precinct recommends to the general manager that Council or the surf club as occupier clean the side of the building facing the Ocean and the non-roller door end and ensure the building remains clear of graffiti by means of regular inspections and prompt removal of any found.

Some members of the community felt if the building was not maintained then the building should be removed.

An esky was reported containing sand and eggs with a thermometer visible at the top of the Bower Street steps late in November. The issue of adolescents chasing and trying to catch the water dragons was noted to be an issue. The water dragons at the top of the Bower Street steps are noted to be rather tame.

The issue of the impact of noise from ICMS College events was raised, together with the installation of tents for rent over the holiday period. Some residents raised concerns about the use of the St Patricks grounds for holiday camping. It was believed vouchers were issued for catering.

Resolution The Precinct requests that the College of Management ensures local residents and the Precinct are advised of any plans for summer holiday camping next year.

The truck was noted to have finally disappeared from College Street.

The running of the Art Gallery Society trip to visit the Versailles the next day was outlined.

Progress with the Oceanides fundraising was also briefly outlined, including the upcoming launch function and the production of miniatures of the statues for fundraising.

The meeting closed at 8:22 pm.

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday the 1st March 2017.

HB 16/11/2016