

**Minutes of the Fairy Bower Precinct Community Forum Meeting held at St Patricks (ICMS) on the 2nd November 2016 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**

After some preliminary discussions the meeting formally was opened at 7:10pm and the facilitator welcomed everybody present.

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

A suggestion was made that the Precinct should resume providing wine and cheese at its meetings.

The Precinct received a request from the Manly-Warringah Choir to promote their Celebrating Christmas Concert on 3rd and 4th December at Cardinal Cerretti Chapel. We have thus put up their event flier with appropriate links on the front page of our web site. The Fairy Bower Precinct web site is also now up again permanently, having been restored in October.

**Fairy Bower Pool Repairs**

Next a report was provided on the Fairy Bower pool repairs. It was noted that the Council had completed a lot of remedial work to the pool to enable it to be serviceable and present better for the summer season. Particularly removing sharp edges and smoothing rough bits on the walkways and on the bottom. They have also done some structural investigation and they are going to retender the bottom works. The concerns about the existing tender process was the bids received were considered too high for the extent of works, and the tender document had not been written to properly control the contractual risk during the works (e.g. say finding a void under the existing bottom) which on the present documentation could see the cost to Council escalate further (variations). So the tender will be stopped because the existing one was perceived as too risky for Council.

So the end result is the whole project is to be delayed until about April 2017. The acting chair noted some concerns based on past Manly Council experience about whether this \$300,000 budget committed project would now actually be done, given it was now being postponed to the last quarter of the current financial year. However the acting chair also noted the General Manager's (Mark Ferguson) commitment that the new Council would complete all the committed public works. It was also noted due to the new amalgamated Council and General Manager that our access to detailed information via Councillors was less than previously enjoyed. The next step for the pool is a meeting with the appropriate managers to confirm the timeframe and agree the scope of works. The plan was if we don't have to replace the entire bottom we wont, which will also bring the costs down.

The issue was raised of reviewing the cleaning biocide, as the current one appeared more dangerous to the environment and staff than the bleach it replaced. This was noted in the previous meeting minutes, but was considered one of the finer details to work on after the main works were resolved. The issue is the chlorine active ingredient in the bleach appeared to be fully used up in the pool on the algae, whereas the new chemical appears still active as it exits the pool (hence the life in the rock pools near the weir is all dead). The issue of painting the walls in an algae resistant or cleanable finish was also noted.

In response to a question it was noted from the previous meeting tenderers were considered competent but there was no schedule of rates etc to enable the pricing to be scrutinised or aspects re-negotiated. There was also reportedly no penalty for running over time in the contract documents. The timeframe to retender was about 2 months.

In discussion about the Fairy Bower Pool tender, the Balgowlah Swim Centre project was raised. The change in costs for this project was discussed and it was detailed how this project went from a \$15 million idea to a \$26 million implemented project. The factors were noted to be :- Embellishment of the scope of works before tendering in adding in extra amenities blocks, a co generation plant, etc which took the contract price to \$22-23million, then \$2m to remove contaminated water from the site during construction, due to the site previously being filled with gas-works waste (heavy metals etc.), and finally the inclusion of the architects and professional fees, which had simply been not included in the original "works" budget.

Clr Barbara Aird was noted to have led the scrutinising of the project, but I eventually got through a motion on Council preparing a business plan for the Centre. (Which still does not appear to have been done even under the new Council.) In response to a question, the responsibility for this project fell to the GM and the all the elected Councillors. The issue being that in minority, influence is limited when a majority wish to do something a certain way. Again in response to a question it was noted the previous General Manager Mr Wong has now left the NB Council to become a temporary General Manager of Strathfield Council (a target for amalgamation).

The reconstruction of the storm demolished Fairy Bower toilet block was raised, and it was noted the Council staff proposed the timeframe for re-erection was to be similar to the works on the pool. It was to be funded from a separate storm damage budget. It was noted the residents' issue with the toilets was the importance of the change room facility they offered pool users to change into their swimming costume, beyond the obvious public convenience facility.

### **Oceanides Sculpture Replica**

The process of manufacturing the bronze sculpture was outlined - it was an involved 4 stage process. It was noted we are currently putting together a committee to run the fundraising campaign - including experts in fundraising, communications etc. All interested ex-Councillors would be invited to be on board just to ensure the broadest political support and make the committee apolitical. Jean and Candy have been approached.

The full price fundraising target was \$80,000-90,000 with the Administrator generously offering dollar for dollar funding to match public donations, up to \$40,000. This left us \$40,000 to \$50,000 to raise from the public. This was currently being put in place and we would have more news in the next FB newsletter with possibly a public dinner or similar fundraising event. The view was expressed we should commence fundraising as soon as possible and it was hoped the FB Precinct would be able to assist the campaign.

### **Warringah Golf Course Playing Fields conversion**

Reportedly, due the Premiers office involvement, the Administrator has decided to postpone implementation of this concept and leave it to the elected Council to resolve. The issue in Manly seems to be more people seeing such a move could also apply to the Balgowlah Golf Course. This is in a similar position with its lease being due to renewal and thus open to Council deciding whether its should continue as it currently is, given the reported demand for more playing fields in the area. So the main issue here is more of a local concern than the Warringah Club issue.

### **Mona Vale Place Plan and Intensification**

As per the newsletter this matter was outlined in terms of a proposal to raise the height limit in Mona Vale CBD to six stories, when most structures are currently two stories. The history of this issue was very important. Previously one 6 storey "Delmage" building was approved by Warringah Council in the mid 1980s, but this provoked such a public outcry that this lead to Warringah Council getting sacked and galvanised the community to seek a new Council of Pittwater being formed from the northern end of Warringah. The issues of concern from the Manly community was the potential picking off of local CBD centres one by one and say proposing double density height increases. E.g. in Balgowlah, Seaforth and Manly itself.

In response to a question it was noted that concerns about overdevelopment in Manly had also lead to political action in the 1980s - for example the public reaction to the proposed Leighton's Development in Wentworth Street changed the political composition of Manly Council. The construction in the 1960s and 70s of tall tower blocks on large sites in the Manly CBD and on the beachfront was noted. At the time these was considered "modernity" and was seen as the future. These included towers such as Trident, Carillion, Pembroke the National Building. However these intrusive buildings produced a resident backlash that changed the planning rules in Manly, to stop more of them being built. However the trouble with modern politics is that things we think are resolved for good now get raised again. It seems possible we may have to go through this battle again if a new Council or State Government pushes to raise Manly's height limits.

The issue of the MD letter reporting the GIPA request that revealed only one submission supporting high rise in the Mona Vale Place Plan in the public comments was also noted.

The issue of intensification and traffic congestion was raised. The example of the Eastern Hill with only three lanes in and out over three roads was noted. This cropped up in the 2015 matter but common sense won in that case. E.g. a closure of the beachfront makes Bower Street to Eurobin Avenue a 30 minute trip instead in the normal 5.

### **Community Involvement**

Large number of Manly residents offered themselves for the reference groups but few were accepted due to maintaining ward proportions with the Manly ward only being one fifth of the area of the new Council. The Manly Community Environment Committee continues to operate to a point without official Council support and the Manly Art Gallery and Museum Society committee still operates as it not a committee of Council. In addition five Precinct groups continue to operate. So the question has been raised by a number of Manly constituents as to whether Council should be re-establishing the previous committees and working groups to better engage with the community.

The issues of tourism and factors concerning the long term future of Manly Council's cultural intuitions, like the Art Galley, was raised by the meeting. It was noted the Art Gallery previously enjoyed cross part support, which was important in dealing with a few significant issues. It was

considered there was probably a medium-term risk of a push for centralisation to create a bigger regional institution, with all staff at one location. The critical issue was it was felt the impact and range of tourism was not understood in considering such an option. It was noted that barely any tourists go 1km from Manly let alone as far as Dee Why. The reported typical ferry tourist visitor to Manly, involving the Corso, 90 minutes at beach and possibly buying an ice cream was noted. Restaurants at North Steyne were noted to be even too far from the tourist zone. Warringah has a "creative space" Gallery at North Curl Curl, but compared to the Manly Gallery its very hard for tourists to get to.

### **College Street Sweeping**

It was reported College Street is not being swept by Council's street sweeping (machine) contractor. The issue may be due to difficulty of getting the truck to do a loop into and out of the College Street cul-de-sac. Clearly there is a need for some manual sweeping to get all the leaves into the middle of the road for the truck to sweep up and then it may have to reverse out. The truck in lower College Street was noted to have finally gone.

### **Presentation on the Spit Tramway Terminus**

A presentation on the route of this line from Sydney Road to the Manly side of Spit Bridge was given to the residents present. The line opened in 1911. The value of the 1943 DMR aerial imagery of Sydney was noted. Part of the tramway route is in the open, if overgrown, and a section is under the Manly Road embankment. The proposal to make this initially into an extension of the Manly Scenic Walkway was outlined..

### **Ferry South Steyne**

A question was raised what has happened to the ex-Manly ferry South Steyne, which was previously moored at Darling Harbour. The ferry was removed for "repairs" to its wharf, but the wharf was demolished instead and the ferry remains moored in the middle of the harbour. The plan is to return the South Steyne to Wharf 7 near James Craig. The Baragoola was noted to be under active supervision at Waverton. These are the last two surviving original Manly ferries.

### **Railway to Manly**

The plans of Dr Bradfield to have a railway to Manly was discussed. The cost of strengthening the Council's 1923 Spit Bridge to take trams was declined because the railway to Manly was considered to be built within 10 years, via a high level bridge to Seaforth. The prospect of a railway line to Manly did result in the ordering of two faster (18 knot) new Manly ferries that arrived in 1928.

### **Parking Discussion**

The need for more parking in Manly and the value of parking indication systems was discussed.

### **Manly Hospital**

The need for a local triage facility to be in place for the proposed closure of Manly Hospital was raised at the meeting. The previously officially outlined managed closure of the old hospitals, with no overlap, was noted. Having a close local hospital was considered is very important for older residents. This was thought to be a matter we should put to the local member.

The meeting closed at 8:24 pm.

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

HB 12/11/2016