

Waverton Precinct Minutes

Tuesday 2 July 2019



WAVERTON

2060

Meeting opened: 7.30pm
Chair: IG
Minutes: SF
Attendance: 28

1 Welcome and apologies

There were no apologies

2 Minutes of the meeting of 7 May 2019

The minutes having been available online were taken as read and were confirmed.

3 Presentation on Balls Head Reserve Management by Gareth Debney, Co-ordinator of Bushland Management, NSC

Mr Debney gave a brief overview of the legislative framework under which Balls Head is managed. Under the LEP, Balls Head is graded as E2 for Environmental Conservation. This means that the area is treated as bushland rather than parkland, with implications such as encouragement of regrowth of indigenous bushland in the existing topsoil, but avoidance of planting apart from rehabilitation such as along paths where localised damage has been caused by pedestrians.

He advised that a Reserve level Plan of Management has been prepared in draft form and will be placed on public exhibition shortly with a specific request for community feedback. He stressed that the guiding principles are that conservation of natural values are placed before public amenity. He asked Precinct and individuals to provide comments to refine the draft Plan, when it is released

Questions from the floor addressed the following:

Why are walking tracks closed?

They may be closed for a period after cool burns (which aim to burn all areas over a 15 – 20 year cycle) to prevent interference with the ash bed created by the fire and allow germination. They are reopened based on observation of conditions.

Another trail has been closed due to cracking of embankment foundations and will be reopened following remediation.

A further trail has been closed permanently due to erosion and loss of slope on the southern side of Balls Head.

What rehabilitation is planned?

There is an allocation of some \$100k for tracks and public facilities over the near future.

Why is the main picnic area covered in woodchips/mulch?

The natural soil cover has been lost due to disturbance. The mulch is seen as a

reasonable outcome where native grasses struggle. Normal grass cannot put up with the foot traffic. It was noted that there is a nature project with Shore in which boys assist with weed control in these areas.

Why are there mulch piles left around the tracks?

These are either used as temporary deposits to be spread, or act as termite attractants to take pressure off the trees in the area.

Runoff silts and debris have obstructed walking paths, especially where those are adjacent to roadway narrowings. This forces pedestrians onto the road. Will this be addressed?

Council will look at these points. It is an ongoing problem for Council staff, too.

What is being done to restrict undesirable activities in Balls Head at night?

Council rangers and police patrol the area through the night. Consideration is being given to a boom gate to prevent vehicular access after dark. This issue will be aired in the draft document. (The meeting was very sceptical about this 'solution')

Why are visitor numbers reducing? Is it because the area is run down?

There is no specific data on numbers but anecdotal evidence from Council staff suggests that numbers are up, with many walking groups and flow-on visitors from the Coal Loader Platform. Work on upgrades is proposed. The local residents disagreed that many tourists go out on to the Headland itself – partly because it looks so unkempt and the walking tracks are poorly maintained.

Are trees deliberately planted to block viewing areas?

No. However, growth of self-sewn natives is not hindered.

As part of responses to the draft Plan of Management, community input could address specific iconic and historic views, and if these are accepted, the Plan of Management could address pruning etc to retain these sightlines despite what has been said above.

Gareth Debney was given a vote of thanks and amidst ongoing acclamation it was agreed unanimously that a letter of appreciation is to be sent by the Chair to NSC.

4 New Business

4.1 Tree planting in Larkin Street south

At the last NSC meeting a motion was passed that 17 replacement Sydney Red Gums would be planted within Carradah Park as per the original 2002 Landscape Masterplan with the addition of protective fencing installed around each tree.. Further that there would be communication with residents and Precinct, and that, on completion of the planting work, the vandalism sign would be removed.

Speakers regretted that the motion was passed by Council without first going through a proper consultative process.

Speakers noted that the headland was historically referred to as The Gib, after the large treeless prominence in the Mediterranean, and that through its occupancy by oil companies there were also no trees on this upper terrace. There is thus a long history

of Larkin Street being known for its open vista into Berrys Bay and across to the city. These vistas have been captured many times by well known local artists.

Speakers also noted that Carradah Park was intended, on original dedication, for use as open parkland rather than bushland, and also noted that there are many trees now in advanced growth on the lower areas of the park.

The recent work by Council to address previous concerns regarding messy growth and thinning was acknowledged, and is appreciated..

It was stated that a photo montage of proposed plantings tabled by Council in the past which was agreed upon in forming the current Plan, was later claimed by Council to be either deceptive and/or could not be guaranteed to reflect what would actually grow.

One speaker put the position that decision for the streetscape and parkland should not be dominated by the environmentally negative events of one night per year (NYE).

Whilst not put as a motion, concern was expressed that the vandalism sign continues to generate hate comments from passers-by directed at people uninvolved in acts of vandalism and the nearby residents asked that Council consider early removal of the sign.

It was:

MOVED KA SECONDED MN

“THAT Precinct requests that the decision by Council on tree planting on the upper terrace of Carradah Park be not implemented immediately but be reconsidered following a consultative process with residents and other affected stakeholders, and that reconsideration take account of the following points:

- ***That there has historically been a clear, wide vista from the street unobstructed by trees***
- ***That no case has been made to plant trees in this regionally significant viewscape, nor was such a case made before the 2002 plan was adopted***
- ***That trees planted beneath powerlines (as occurred previously) is always a flawed strategy resulting in maintenance costs, disfigured trees and expansion of view loss due to trees spreading at the level of cropping. If underplanting is to be considered, aerial bundling of cables or placement of cables underground should occur first.***
- ***That the street is visited on a continuous basis by local and international tourists to enjoy the vistas from the street and lookouts, whilst at NYE the street itself is filled with pedestrians enjoying the “big sky” experience***
- ***That a preferred outcome would be a revised landscape plan with an associated plan of management which addresses the above as well as management of self sown trees and other plants on the upper areas of the park (referred to as Areas 1 to 4)”***

CARRIED

4.2 Council Matters and Replies

Rates Increase

The Chair reported that Council had received IPART approval for a rate increase of 7% in total for the next three years. Council has advised that **increased rates** would be

spent on items to the benefit of the community. Including improved maintenance and capital works activities.

Developments Applications

Comments on **DA for 11 Woolcott Street**: Precinct comments have been passed to the Council's assessing officer.

Waverton Bowling Club

Council has a 6 month lease during which time it will carry out routine maintenance and also actively consider options for future repurposing. It was noted that the land will remain as Crown Land and that the State Government is also considering options. The Waverton Peninsula Committee and the Waverton Precinct has been formally approached by NSC for input. Date for inputs to close is July 24.

Precinct will draft a submission supporting community uses, failing which, reversion to parkland should occur. There already is a resolution to this effect on the record.

Crows Nest and South St Leonards

Precinct has supported opposition to the current redevelopments as inappropriate highrise with an over emphasis on residential use. The opinion of the meeting was that this trend would now stall, fortunately, due to the slowdown in property development and an over supply of apartments.

North Sydney Over Station Development:

The NSC remains in negotiation regarding opportunities for a better community outcome. The Committee for North Sydney is also in talks with Lend Lease.

Code of Meeting Practice

NSC has adopted a new code. This will prevent residents from speaking at council meetings. Opportunities for democratic input will be limited to 2 for and 2 against at a pre-meeting - at which attendance by Councillors is not mandatory.

It was:

MOVED KA SECONDED IB

“THAT Precinct requests reinstatement of full democratic access to Council meetings, constrained if necessary to limit speaker numbers and individual speakers talking to too many items”.

CARRIED

5 Any other standing committee updates

- **Waverton Wollstonecraft Rail Noise Action Group**

The Sun Herald article highlighting the noise problems was noted. It was mentioned that Howard Collins, head of Sydney Trains will visit Waverton Station to experience train noise for himself. IB is to circulate the date.

6 DAs

11 Balls Head Road

The existing dwelling is to be replaced with a new one. MP noted the plans call for large windows close to the side boundary. It was decided Precinct should write in to ask for clarification of the Council approach to large side windows immediately opposite or adjacent to neighbours windows, especially when these are near the common boundary (it seems an intrusion on privacy).

It was:

MOVED MP SECONDED JD

“THAT Precinct expresses concern at approval of DAs with large windows close to side boundaries resulting in potential loss of privacy, and requests that Council advise of its policy in regard to this issue, and whether such policies are being policed.”

PASSED

22 Larkin Street

Windows to be modified. No Precinct comment.

7 Other Business

Footpath on Western side of Balls Head Road

It was noted that parts of this have eroded and become unsafe, resulting in at least one serious injury. Precinct requests that Council take action to remediate this footpath urgently as hundreds of tourists use this path every day to go to the Coal Loader Platform.

Banners at Waverton Station crossing

It was noted that one pole has been hit and removed.

It was observed that the content of banners is poor and a distraction to drivers, as a crossing.

IT was:

MOVED VY SECONDED IB

“THAT the flag poles be removed at Waverton Station as soon as possible”.

PASSED

8 Community activities

Interested attendees were referred to the village notice board.

9 Correspondence

The correspondence folder was circulated during the meeting.

10 Date of next meeting

The next meeting is on Tuesday 6 August commencing at 7:30 pm, at the Uniting Community Hall in Bay Road.

The meeting closed at 9:50 pm.