

Notes of Meeting of the Combined Community Councils
Saturday 2 March 2013
Venue Gungahlin Library

(Gungahlin, Belconnen (2), Tuggeranong (2) & North Canberra Community Councils were represented.) Apologies were received from Weston Creek & Woden.

The Draft notes of the previous meeting held at Gungahlin Library on 17 November were confirmed.

Actions Arising

Agreement:

- to review the scope of its activities, (to be discussed Item 3)
- to focus on two key themes of Transport and Planning & Development in the short term, (ongoing)
- to retain the sub-committee process for those themes, (ongoing)
- to continue to seek government resourcing, (ongoing)
- to seek meetings with the Chief Minister & key bureaucrats, (ongoing – see Item 3)
- to feature presentations at meetings, (if adequate attendance can be guaranteed)
- to continue to make statements on key matters, (in abeyance pending new arrangements mainly with ESDD) &
- to introduce a forum for the sharing of ideas & experiences. (on this agenda)

Presentation

The Chair advised of the cancellation of the invitation to the proposed presenter from ESDD in view of the paucity of notification of attendances at the meeting.

The Chair indicated that a template had been circulated to prompt CCs into providing information about how each CC operates plus any innovative processes – the response has been pathetic! Very little has been submitted.

North Canberra advised that it ‘allows’ 30 minutes at the start of each meeting to receive & review Das thus preventing such matters from dominating meetings. Great idea!

3. Review of Draft Operating Parameters for CCC.

There was good & wide-ranging discussion on this topic. It was noted that the proposed new structure of the CCC may have been seen as a threat, particularly in an election year. The meeting considered a number of options for the CCC:

- 'put it into mothballs' until the leadership issue is resolved,
- revert to the rotating chairs process, or
- retain current process subject to securing support.

Those present who had attended the recent PDF meeting agreed that the new structure of the ESDD PDF as a policy advisory body offered opportunities for the CCC to become more involved in that process. If requests for provision of resourcing for CCs (to better contribute to the PDF) & dedicated points of contact in ESDD to enable CCs to raise area-specific issues were provided it would mean that the CCC could play a significantly improved role in seeking to influence policy & subsequent outcomes on the selected core issues of Transport and Planning & Development. The meeting noted the schedule for PDF meetings & agreed to convene CCC meetings in between the advised dates if focus on the PDF was considered to be a priority (for 2013 at least).

There was discussion on the role of CCs, even to the extent of having an audit conducted of our respective activities. It was agreed that this was unnecessary as we were generally deemed to be very effective in representing our respective communities. However there is scope for improvement in the recognition of our activities. An approach is to be made to the Local Government Association to determine whether they may be able to advise us how to improve our operations & lobbying activities.

It was agreed that a draft letter to MLAs be prepared to ascertain their views on the role & operations of CCs. (Nick Tsoulias is to circulate ideas.)

There was general agreement that a minute secretary role would be advantageous, both for individual CCs & the CCC. The preferred approach was to seek extra specific funding for these roles thus providing CCs with choice.

4. Sub-Committee Reports.

- Transport

Russ Morison advised that work had been continuing on Transport matters with major focus on seeking to achieve faster public transport transit times. It was noted that 65,000 to 70,000 work in proximity to Lake Burley Griffin so that area is a significant concentration point. Approaches had been made to Alan Evans of NRMA for support. Discussions had been held with In Love 40% to explore proposals to establish several groups interested in advancing the Light Rail concept, with one group focussing on the current corridor & another to look at extensions to other areas of Canberra.

- Planning

Leon Arundell briefed the meeting on major changes to the Territory Plan, principally the technical variation that created a large number of precinct plans, changing the nature of the Territory plan from 35 codes to over 100 precinct plans. The real problem arises where an area of one suburb can have 3 different plans applicable to it. The result is that residents may be unaware of current rules & conditions applicable to their blocks & those in close proximity.

The meeting discussed the feasibility of requiring the ACT Government to insert appropriate references on rate notices so that residents would have a 'user-friendly' process of acquiring knowledge about their blocks.

Leon undertook to provide a précis of precinct plans.

The Belconnen 35 storey development was discussed in terms of setting a precedent for Canberra & the adequacy of pre DA consultation being restricted to one area of Canberra – the Belconnen community – when such a development was likely to be of significant interest to a far wider segment of the Canberra population.

An update on the Planning & Development Forum was provided. It was noted that the mandatory Pre DA Consultation rules came into effect on 13 December during a prolonged period of hiatus of the PDF (& no opportunity for CCs to follow up issues raised earlier). It was advised that the Act does not specify what constitutes ‘consultation’ & that the form required to be completed by developers gives meetings/discussions with CCs as the most cost-effective solution. The issue of exemptions for Government & other developments had been raised at earlier PDFs without an adequate response.

It was agreed that the following matters be referred to ESDD:

- A request to broaden the requirements for pre-DA consultation to include large developments likely to be of interest to the public or have implications for nearby residents.
- A requirement to enforce or reinforce the need to comply with lease conditions in relation to commencement & finalisation provisions. (Too many projects lie idle or significantly exceed construction periods.)
- Concern about the adequacy of size of car parking spaces in view of the significant number of minor damage incidents to vehicles. (Does any provision exist for a minimum size standard for car spaces in development projects?)
- Provision of communal parking areas where approved developments do not adequately cater for residents’ vehicles or allow for visitor parking.)
- Include EDD in the PDF process in view of the commonality of issues facing the CCC between the two directorates.

5. Appointment of CCC Chair/Convenor

The CCC discussed the role of Chair/Convenor for this year. Ewan Brown agreed to continue in the role for the short term to develop a relationship with the PDF. However the process of rotating chairs should be re-introduced for the next meeting. A vibrant joint CCC/PDF process could foster the consideration of an external chair. Responses to the matter of resourcing CCs will also have a bearing.

6. Next Meetings and Plans/Schedule for 2013.

It was agreed to schedule meetings in the months between the dates of the PDF meetings (2 April, 4 June, 6 August, 1 October & 3 December) so it was agreed to hold the next CCC meeting in May with time & venue to be decided. The schedule for the remainder of the year could include meetings in July, September & November.

The meeting closed at 1230.