

Housing and Community Services
Community Consultation

Purpose of meeting: To engage with the community on the future of the vacant land in Jerrabomberra Avenue, Stuart Flats and Gowrie Court

Date: Monday 4 August 2014

Time: 7.15 pm – 8.45 pm

Location: Harmonie German Club, Narrabundah

Attendance: 70

VIPs in attendance: Mr Steve Dozspot, MLA

Chair:
John Keeley Old Narrabundah Community Council

Guest speakers:

Simon Tennent	Environment and Planning Directorate
David Collett	Senior Director, Community Services Directorate
Peter Johns	Environment and Planning Directorate
Hanz Stoehr	President Harmony German Club

The Chairman invited each of the guest speakers to provide a short presentation.

Peter Johns:

This is a consultation, an opportunity for the community to have their say. The government wants to hear what the public think should happen. Any input is welcome. The Territory Plan Variation will be undertaken in an omnibus form with an individual variation for each site. This is pre-consultation before a draft Territory Plan Variation is released for formal community consultation.

David Collett:

It is the intention of the government for the community to be able to see the strategic links between the different sites. The process started with a presentation to the combined Community Councils. We are holding meetings with tenants in surrounding areas. Seven of the sites are public housing. ACT has a better spread of accommodation than other jurisdictions but we have the oldest stock. The aim is to break down the large aggregation of public housing.

Simon Tennent:

Of the 17 sites, 11 belong to the Land Development Agency. These sites are a mixture of commercial uses from bulky goods in Fyshwick to tourist accommodation at Mt Stromlo. There are efficiencies in grouping the consultations together. Want to identify sites and their potential for future use. The block next door was offered to the club 5-6 years ago but offer was not taken up. This offer of a direct sale was reiterated through a phone call today and again this evening.

Hanz Stoehr:

Club is 53 years old, the Club is part of Canberra. The German builders helped to build Canberra and the snowy scheme. The club was approached 20-30 years ago to buy the block but they didn't realize the value and turned it down. The club has grown and gone down and grown again. It is my second year as President. It is one of the largest ethnic clubs in Canberra. Live music is very big at the club, for instance, the Canberra Blues Society use the club. If zone changes from CZ to RZ it will be the demise of the club. It takes just one sourpuss to complain. There are no issues with noise now. Think it is idiotic to change commercial to residential. Government should talk to the club about expanding, beer gardens, help with issues of parking. If changed to residential then issues with noise and parking. For instance, they had over 350 people at the club to watch the world cup. Not against progress or residential. It was set as CZ6 for a reason. It took them five years to sell the residential units built down the road, how is it going to work next to a vet with sick dogs making noise? Want the government to talk to us, if this club goes where can the locals have a drink and listen to live music – German culture. The people of Narrabundah are used to this place. We want to talk to the Government to make it work.

John Keeley

We have an understanding of zoning, CZ6 - add RZC2 to it, becomes two zones therefore could do CZ6 or RZC2. Residential blocks have a greater value to the Government and taxpayer, in the millions of dollars. Invitation was extended to Boomanulla to present tonight on their plans for future development. I would now like to invite questions and comments from the floor.

Comments and questions from the floor

- I am seeking a clarification on zoning. What are the implications of a change in zoning? For example, how high can the buildings be in RZ3?

A: The change of zoning is to add residential to the existing zone. There is no height defined at this stage. The purpose of consultation is to determine what type of detail in the zoning would be useful. The block next to it has a maximum of 2 storeys.

- In the example there is a suggestion made that the higher levels should go to the back of the block. Is this referring to two storeys or 6 storeys?

A. There is no height specified at this stage, but yes you would look at putting the higher elements of the building to the back of the block. Height depends on controls in Territory Plan.

- With respect to Gowrie Court, I am not interested in a six-storey development. Happy with lower level, perhaps 2 storey. Don't want another Barton or Kingston.

- As a local resident I endorse that comment about Gowrie Court.

- For this block in Jerrabomberra Avenue, if the taller buildings were at the back of the block, it would be on the north side of the block which is bad from a solar perspective. Better to have taller at the front and smaller at the back.

A: That is a good point. Thank you. Just to remind, there is no height specified by RZ3, one of the purposes of this consultation is to determine what would be an appropriate height to specify. For example, as suggested, 2 storey.

- What is RZ3? Two storey?

Statement by David Collett: We are here to field comments, at Griffith drop-in session there were many comments about the height of buildings, this is pre-consultation, we have a blank slate. Put forward planning studies with detail in September, Authority look at it and then the planning authority assessing if we have satisfied their consultation requirements. We want your views.

- What kind of feedback do you expect to get from tonight, when you don't present specific plans? How do we as a community get our heads around this and how will you gather feedback?

A: We are gathering the feedback from this discussion. The minutes of this meeting will be sent out and put on our website. We are documenting this feedback. Please include your contact details if you provide written feedback to be kept informed. Peter Johns contact details will be included on the website.

- We are a multicultural country. Right here we have the German and Spanish clubs. Why doesn't the ACT Government donate the land to the two clubs, rather than sell it for commercial benefit to developers? Clubs are non-profit, leave the clubs alone. It would be part of retaining the uniqueness of the local heritage. [applause]
- Will the LDA be selling this land to the private sector or will it be developed by ACT Housing?

A: No decision has been made about that yet.

- We shouldn't be afraid of development here; a density increase will provide opportunity for the club. Need to increase the heights to maintain the level of open space and reduce the footprint on the block. Commercial and residential can work together. Don't think that development around it will necessarily be bad for the club, may increase membership.
- I am concerned about making statements about what we think should happen here. There is a greater risk for us (the community) to make comment than to ask questions.
- Changing the leasehold provisions of the site will actually lead to a loss of facilities. There are examples such as the National Press Club and at the Griffith shops of businesses having to negotiate outcomes as a result of the impact of music on surrounding residents. The Harmonie German Club is the last remaining venue for live music. Good planning should ensure space for live music. I recommend that the zoning remain as it is. To change to RZ3 poses a threat to this club and the community services it provides. (this one doesn't make sense to me)
- I am concerned about public housing. I understand Narrabundah already has a higher proportion of public housing than other Canberra suburbs. Is the aim to distribute public housing so that it is 10% across Canberra and is it currently 20% in Narrabundah? What is the rate of public housing in Narrabundah? Will proposal increase public housing in Narrabundah?

A: It is not currently 20% in Narrabundah, but will find the actual figure and put it on our website. There is no intention to increase public housing in Narrabundah through this process. It is not on the agenda, but I can't rule it out.

- I am not phased what you do or how it is developed. But, it should be noted that clubs have gone to the wall as a result of complaints about loud music and it is time to put a stop to unreasonable people complaining about things. There needs to be a change to the EPA noise laws to protect the club and the vet. If you are going to develop, do it sensitively, but look after existing amenity and protect that amenity from community complaints. Look after those who are here.
- Why don't you build the houses in Isaacs or O'Malley there is plenty of space there. Leave these blocks empty. Put up a playground or something there.
- I am on the committee of the German Harmonie Club; I don't believe anyone on the Committee is opposed to residential development. But it presents difficulties for the club. This is an entertainment hub that depends on a type of entertainment and on people getting here. There are two impacts. One, parking. Parking next to the club will not be possible if houses are on the site and overflow parking from the housing will use up other parking in the area. Two, one complaint from noise and we will have a legal battle that would require thousands of dollars to address. Successful clubs in the ACT have large carparking eg Woden Club. Our patrons park in the surrounding streets. If we could use the site for parking it would be good. Poker machines no longer make money for clubs due to smoking rules and online/phone gambling. Clubs need to change and providing entertainment and functions is the way. One noise complaint will mean our one chance of staying alive is gone. We provide a valuable community facility that will be gone.
- Is it the intention to cause the club to close down?
- I think it is premature to talk about residential on the site. We need a community needs assessment for these sites. What are the future needs for those sites? They are vacant, but are a land-bank for uses under their current existing use. Has ACTPLA called for expressions of interest under the existing uses? Have we asked the community what it could be used for? There is likely a business out there that could use the site. At the moment there is a need for car parking. Both clubs and the baseball need more parking especially for events. A block for overflow parking would be a benefit to all businesses and community facilities in the area. Shouldn't change the zone or use until we know we don't need it for community use. Not just Narrabundah but Canberra use this club. Needs assessment required, want study by LDA and Public Housing regarding residential, it might be on the LDA agenda but not best use of the land.
- Compatibility of club and residential, forget that. Community fought to keep the Hungarian Club, but ACTPLA said you can't have a club in a residential area – now ACTPLA wants to put residential in a clubs area – can't have it both ways.
- I am interested to hear more about the Omnibus process. It is not right for the community to not be given a presentation. It is unfair to have it all grouped together, it is a difficult process for ACTPLA to have undertaken and community expected to comment on 17 sites. Want planning studies to be given to community. Want extended consultation on each site.
- When the baseball is on it means that Goyder St is full. I have been asking ACT Sport and Rec to acquire these sites for parking for the sports grounds for 18 months – 2 years. People don't use buses for club or baseball they use cars, Mixing residential and commercial will cause problems. Eg baseball games sometimes go to midnight, parking on Goyder St is not

appropriate. I have paced out the blocks and think you could fit approximately 374 cars on these two blocks, 6 lines of cars. Keep the zoning as it is.

A: I can see that we should come back to the community with some information on commercial demand for CZ6 zones, noise, and parking and traffic. The Omnibus is a mechanism to co-ordinate changes to plans. Input comments to the Directorate, each site will be separate, it is always a challenge for us on how much work to do before hand, your points are clear and a good argument re CZ sites, noise and parking, we will come back with the facts, information will be on the website.

- I have been involved in creating a residents action group for another issue. Do not rely on this exercise to get your point across. Get onto your Community Councils, political representatives etc. The Government is addicted to residential development, rates increase if do not do it, we need to keep that in mind as a constant threat.
- You said you will letterbox about future development. Will you guarantee that we will be letterboxed?

A: We use standard letterbox deliverers. The cost of sending it out through Australia post is prohibitive. Can't guarantee that everyone will get it, we hear this issue a lot which is why we also use posters in local shops and work through the Community Councils.

- I have lived in the Maddison Apartments across the street since 2010 and am a member of the club. I think the club hasn't marketed itself very well to its neighbours. As a club we need to sell ourselves to our neighbours. I am happy to help.
- I have a process question. To what extent is our consultation taken into account when the decision is made?

We have scribes here this evening recording your comments and it is my commitment to put this on our website. We need to demonstrate to the planning authority that we have undertaken necessary consultation and responded to the community feedback before the authority is satisfied we have done consultation. The planning authority needs to be satisfied before we go any further with changes to these blocks.

- I am not sure about the comments being taken into consideration. I lodged an objection to the Hungarian Club development and I was told I live too far away for my comment to be taken into consideration and I live just behind it.
- I was at the Assembly two weeks ago for an affordable housing forum and I noted that the ABC Flats will be replaced by 10-15 storey flats. Flats on Northbourne Avenue are being replaced by a 10 storey building. What guarantee is there that if this development goes ahead that it won't be 15 storeys?

A: This is only a proposed Territory Planning Variation at this stage and if it proceeds it will include a provision for a maximum height. On Northbourne Avenue there has been no change of height, for the ABC Flats the 12 storey height limit was clearly articulated in the Territory Plan Variation during consultation. If Territory Plan is changed then it has the force of the Plan to control development on the site.

- I suggest we should have a show of hands of who doesn't want the blocks to be rezoned.

Meeting Chairperson: I don't think we need a show of hands; we are getting quite a clear feeling from the meeting.

- This is a proposal from Government on what they plan. Consultation doesn't mean anything. What assurance is there that there won't be any call-in powers exercised by the Minister.

A: There are no Ministerial call-in powers associated with a change to the Territory Plan. Website includes where changes have occurred and the community has influenced the outcome. For example Hawker shops.

- To what extent does a rethinking of zoning trigger changes to other government policy or services, eg the buses/transport ?

A: Look at this if the increase in density occurs. Buses are a question for Action.

- What sort of analysis informs the decision to change it to residential? If it is sold to residential it is lost forever. While it is a community zone there is an opportunity further down the track; a legacy for potential future uses. I am pro infill, but need to keep community aspects/balance.
- I support the car parking suggestion. I submit that the Government do this for local residents. Give us a carpark. Put housing at the Arboretum, they spent \$5million on car parking for that site.
- Earlier you mentioned 'identified social problems' that may exist with respect to public housing. What does this mean? Are you shifting housing tenant problems to this area?

A: That comment was in reference to the national trend to change the dynamic of large concentrations of housing tenants in one area. The question was in relation to Gowrie Court and Stuart Flats. There is currently no intention to put public housing tenants on these sites in Jerrabomberra Avenue. Better to not have a large aggregation of public housing, motivation is to have smaller groups of public housing scattered through the suburbs.

- If you are looking at all the sites. I think it is important to retain an element of public housing in Narrabundah. These tenants need to be near public transport and other facilities; they shouldn't be forced to live out in the distant suburbs.
- I have been left really unclear here on what will happen. Where are those public housing tenants to go? There must be some overall plan.

A: Over the last 20 years we have decanted many tenants from large blocks across Canberra, eg Condomine Court, Burnie Court (240 units), Lachlan Court etc. It is a process most jurisdictions are going through, over time we move these people to other sites.

- The Harmonie German Club is not here just for Narrabundah. We invite all Canberrans in. We put on one of the biggest festivals in Canberra, Ocktoberfest, our greatest fundraiser. It is a local drinking hole for people in the area and we rely on these local residents, use it for R&R, but all of Canberra come here to the different festivals. Hungarian Club was put to side

by one source. We are the last of the multi-cultural clubs in Canberra. It is my aim to see this club make 100 years. I say to the ACT Government, the doors are open, come talk to me.