

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES TO QUESTION TIME TUESDAY, 25 MARCH 2014
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The following questions were addressed to the above meeting. Some questions were adequately responded to at the meeting, however others required a more detailed response in writing.

This document includes both verbal and written responses. In this instance, no written responses were provided as issues were adequately addressed at the meeting.

Questions were submitted from the following residents, but were not present at the meeting. A response will be provided in writing.

Lou-Anne Armistead, Maureen Kavanagh, Margot Foote, Joan Hampshire, Dorothy Williams, Noel Emselle and Brenda Chick.

Peter Field asked:

- 1) that given the deep division in the community regarding the construction of a performance space in Ocean Grove Park (and the fact that Council is a 20% stakeholder), what alternative sites is Council willing to consider in order to preserve the Park as passive green space while also delivering a performance space elsewhere in Ocean Grove?

Cr Farrell responded that Council provided \$20,000 to Ocean Grove Inc in the 2009/10 budget in response to a request for funding for a scoping study and detailed design for a performance space. In 2010 Ocean Grove Park Inc applied to Council for a permit for the construction of the performance space. The permit was issued on 10 November 2010. A business case and detailed design for the performance space was completed in August 2012 and stated construction cost of \$1,002,000. That document was used as a basis to secure funding for the performance space.

Cr Farrell provided a written statement to the Gallery in relation to the Ocean Grove Park and added Council would continue to support the performance space.

- 2) There are important advantages in constructing the performance space on Council owned land. For example, if built in Ocean Grove Park, who after a concert where alcohol is consumed, is going to inspect the grounds by 7am the following morning to protect park users, e.g. young children, joggers, people walking dogs, etc from rubbish, broken glass and discarded syringes? Does Council agree that this responsibility could be beyond the capacity of a band of volunteers?

Cr Farrell responded that in regard to cleaning up - that would be part of the Management Plan. I am aware of three users of the Park and part of the conditions would be around sound and clean up. From Council's point of view we have no power or authority to go in and clean up.

John Grant provided a statement to Council, which was acknowledged by the Deputy Mayor, in relation to an amendment to application 1168/2002/A.

**A subsequent written response was provided by the
General Manager Planning and Tourism in the following terms:**

I am replying to your question submitted to the above Council meeting.

The current application to amend the plans for 2/127 Orton St, Ocean Grove will be determined by the Development Hearings Panel unless the Ward Councillor requests that the application is determined by a Council Planning Panel. Irrespective of whether the Council decides to approve or refuse the amendment the decision can result in a VCAT hearing. If the amendment to the permit is refused, you as the applicant have an appeal right to VCAT. If the amendment to the permit is approved, the objector has a right to appeal to VCAT.

Angie Gallagher asked when is Council going to build a town hall/performance entertaining area on your own land and not private land? As we will have an estimated town growth of 25,000 within five years as your own urban design framework estimates, why are you using so much of our rates on the Waterfront and forgetting about infrastructure in growing areas. We don't even have a tourist information place, but I see you have given permission to demolish our first town planners home.

Cr Farrell responded that the figure of 25,000 growth within five years is incorrect. In relation to a Tourist Information Centre, Ocean Grove has one located at the Aquatic and Sport Centre which was established in consultation with the Tourist group

Anne Morell asked if Council was aware of the growing community concern about how the consultation process for C300 has been handled as evidenced by the growing number of residents either signing petitions or contacting the various residents groups informing they were not aware of the process, therefore would Council consider further community consultation post the panel?

Cr Harwood responded, "probably yes". There is a process in place to follow and if people wish to enter into this process there is an opportunity to do so.

Georgina Alford asked the following in relation to Amendment C300:

Both Drumcondra and Lawton Avenue have the same prominent features and it is these features which formed the basis for zoning Drumcondra Neighbourhood Residential Zone.

Why hasn't Lawton Avenue been zones the same as Drumcondra and Newtown Hill? Could Council please explain why they have been inconsistent in their approach to applying the Neighbourhood Residential Zone across Geelong?

Peter Bettess responded that Drumcondra is almost exclusively made up of single detached housing and is not located within close proximity of an Activity Centre as defined in the Housing Diversity Strategy. Heritage is one contributing factor to this and not the defining principle of whether to apply the Neighbourhood Residential Zone.

Comparatively the Lawton Avenue Heritage Area HO1633 does not have the same list of attributes. The presence of a Heritage Overlay in itself is not sufficient justification for the application of the Neighbourhood Residential Zone.

Judith Brooks asked the following:

- 1) Parking and Traffic – in reference to the Barwon Heads Parking and Traffic Study 2010 which is now well out of date, what is the Council planning for a review of these pressing issues in Barwon Heads? When did the Council last conduct traffic and parking counts or surveys and when will this data be released in comparison to prior counts? When was the last time parking restrictions in Barwon Heads was enforced?

Cr Richards acknowledged that the Parking and Traffic Study is out of date and advised that it would be renewed this year. The document will be put out for public comment.

- 2) Given the State Government has directed the CoGG to abandon its Councillor discretionary funding process for community grants what process will replace it? When will the public be informed of this process and how will equity and transparency be ensured?

Cr Harwood responded that the Local Government Inspectorate is coming to Geelong to investigate the budget process. There will be some recommendations as a result of that investigation. Councillor community grants still remain. Council's budget processes are open to public submission and involve extensive consultation by Councillors, officers and third parties before the budget is debated in the Chamber.

The new Community Concept process is currently being worked through as part of the budget process.

- 3) What is the status of the Barwon Heads Walkability Study? Has it been published?

Gary Van Driel responded that the Study has been completed and published via Council's website.

A subsequent written response was provided by the General Manager City Services in the following terms:

*Please find below our response regarding your questions raised at the Council
Question Time – 25th March 2014.*

- 1a** *In reference to the Barwon Heads Parking and Traffic Study of 2010 which is now well out of date, what is the council planning for a review of these pressing issues in Barwon Heads?*

A review of the study was undertaken in September 2013 and a table outlining status was provided to the BHA at that time.

- 1b** *When did the council last conduct traffic and parking counts or surveys and when will this data be released in comparison to prior counts?*

Traffic counts were undertaken in Hitchcock Avenue in June 2013 and Feb 2014 a summary of the data can be provided. Parking counts or surveys have not been undertaken since the 2010 study.

- 1c** *When was the last time parking restrictions in Barwon Heads was enforced?*

Parking enforcement was undertaken by Local Laws Officers daily over the Christmas School Holiday Period and once to twice per week during February 2014.

- 2** *Given the State Government has directed the CoGG to abandon its councillor discretionary funding process for community grants what process will replace it? When will the public be informed of this process and how will equity and transparency be ensured?*

Council retains the Community Grant scheme which is funded to \$240,000 annually or \$20,000 per councillor. The discretionary funding process known as Community Priorities with \$600,000 allocated for projects per Ward, no longer exists.

Council engaged with the community as part of the 2014-2015 budget development seeking submissions as community concepts. A total of 207 submissions were received and these are still being considered.

3 *What is the status of the Barwon Heads Walkability study? Has it been published?*

The study was made up of a number of components.

- *Surveys and data collection.*
- *Methodology report for data collection for future walkability projects.*
- *Equity Impact Assessment (EIA) report.*

The EIA report utilised the data to produce a number of recommendations and is available on the City's website under Barwon Heads Walks. The recommendations are used as a guide for future walking infrastructure in the Barwon Heads Township.

If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 5272 4317.

Betty Essex asked the following –

Ocean Grove and surrounds has a rapidly increasing population. We desperately need the public land we have to be retained for public use. Many years ago we were promised a replacement for the hall that we demolished. There is an acknowledged need for a performance and meeting building that could be sound-proofed. It could be built on existing public land that is now a car park in a commercial area, in The Terrace. Would Council consider building a multi purpose hall on this public, commercial land? It could replace the sound shell idea for the park, which is in a residential area and fraught with potential problems.

Cr Farrell responded that the footprint of the proposed performance space would take up about 1% of the area, so we are not losing a great deal of space. Regarding commercial land where the car parking is – there has been a lot of discussion about that and one of the proposals of that land is to provide long term parking and the retailers themselves are very keen to keep that. It would need to be underground parking and not an ideal place to put a Town Hall or Performance Centre. Performance space is intended to be in the rooms behind the sound shell, which are sound proofed for bands to practice.

Cr Macdonald added that the requirement for open space was originally 5%, but is currently 10% for new development.

Colin Nightingale asked:

Our group has spent weeks talking to Geelong residents about C300 whilst running our information booths and doorknocking for petition signatures. Certainly in the early stages, virtually no-one was aware of C300 and its ramifications. The broader community is now better informed and hence extremely concerned about the future of their neighbourhoods due to Council's proposal. The only consultation with Geelong residents has been forced upon the Council as public awareness has grown. When will Geelong Councillors and the officers for whom they are accountable, move away from the top-down approach where Council Planning assumes it knows what is best for the residents and move to a more consultative and collaborative planning model, as espoused in the 2008 document Embedding Community Priorities into Council Planning? This document believes the latter approach will see community engagement enhance the quality of decisions and ensure a sense of community ownership.

Cr Ansett responded it was the State Government that put this to all Councils in Victoria, we had no choice. Actually, it was this Council's decision to go out to public consultation - other Councils did not consult.

Lesley Harper asked if Council has planned or considered creating public space for additional primary schools within the areas marked for high density development and if so, where are they? The present primary school in Lawton Avenue (Ashby) is at capacity and portables would be inappropriate as it would deny the children the small play areas they currently have and enjoy. Also, are there any further public areas being considered for further future development?

Cr Harwood took the questions on notice for a written response.

**A subsequent written response was provided by the
General Manager Planning and Tourism in the following terms:**

I refer to your question in relation to planning for primary schools in areas designated for increased housing diversity.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development plans for public schools and manages the needs of the existing public schools. This is therefore not a matter that Council can comment on specifically.

It is noted however that background work that has been undertaken as part of implementing the new residential zones across the municipality, recognises that ABS data shows that population of Geelong West has been very stable for the past two decades, at between 6000-6500 residents. This is despite an increase in dwelling diversity, as a suburb might simultaneously experience housing growth, decreasing housing size and higher rates of dwelling vacancies, that together results in minimal population growth.

Bruce Wood asked questions regarding the Men's Sheds:

The Council has been generous in supporting three sheds in the City with capital works grants. There are 11 sheds in the City either operational or in development. With the closure of industries in Geelong men's sheds are in a position to help men who lose their jobs, particularly the 30% that history shows may not work again. Men's Sheds are designed to assist the social inclusion of men within their communities particularly for those undergoing transitional stages of their life. Has Council given consideration to appointing an officer to specifically work with sheds and participate in the municipal officers group working with men's sheds? What consideration is being given to funding programs as well as capital works for men's sheds?

Cr Harwood took the questions on notice for a written response.

**A subsequent written response was provided by the
General Manager Community Services in the following terms:**

Thank you for your question regarding Men's Sheds during Public Question Time at the Ordinary Council Meeting on 25 March 2014. As the matter falls within my area of responsibility your question has been forwarded to me for reply.

The City of Greater Geelong has been a supporter of men's shed programs since their inception. The City recognises that men's sheds offer valuable services to men, particularly those in times of transition. Discussions have already begun between our officers and the Geelong East Men's Sheds about how best to support local workers recently retrenched. As you point out in your question, men's sheds are well placed to

provide support for some of these retrenched workers. The City will support the development of programs specifically for these men, recognising the difficulties that many will face. We also appreciate the valuable skills and strengths these people offer, not only to men's sheds, but to the whole Geelong community.

Although Council doesn't have a specific men's shed designated officer, a great deal of Council resources have been allocated to supporting men's sheds. This includes officer time from Community Development and Community Facilities units as well as those from Sport and Recreation, Parks and Capital Projects. Council has also invested large amounts of capital expenditure into two purpose built community facilities, which are used by men's shed programs and cohabitated by other community groups.

Under increasingly tight budgetary pressures it is unlikely that the City would create a position solely to support men's shed programs. However, the groups may be supported more holistically by a range of Council services.

In addition, funding may be available through existing Community and Councillor Grants programs.

Should you wish to enquire about Community and Councillor Grants funding please contact Lynda Hansson on tel: 5272 4736.

If there is anything further you would like to discuss on this matter, please contact Paul Jamieson on tel 5272 4727.

Karyn Howie asked questions in relation to Ann Nichol House – Portarlington:

- 1) Is Council aware that Ann Nichol House, a non for profit aged care facility in Portarlington is to be sold off by Bellarine Community Health?
- 2) Is Council also aware that Ann Nichol House was established through the hard fundraising efforts of Ann Nichol herself who was the Order of Australia for this community work?

Cr Ellis responded that there is an item of Urgent Business for presentation to Council later this evening in relation to this issue.

Jennifer Bantow asked the following in relation to Amendment C300:

Is Amendment C300 consistent with CoGG key strategic documents and Clause 15 of the CoGG Planning Scheme with reference to the conservation of the 45 important heritage precincts listed in Clause 15 of the Planning Scheme which would be protected if Neighbourhood zoning was applied to these areas?

Peter Bettess responded the answer is "yes". When Council decided to submit C300 to a Panel it made an important change in that where a building has more than one storey, the second storey of that building has to be set back to preserve the heritage character.

Cr Heagney added that there is a Notice of Motion being discussed later this evening in relation to Amendment C300 which proposes to change Residential Growth Zone to General Residential Zone for Geelong West, Belmont and Newtown.