



Some Reminders from the Convenors

Reminder 1 MEG's Annual General Meeting is on Wed. Sept. 7 at Ewing Memorial Church Hall at 7.30p.m. We promised you an interesting and controversial speaker and, judging by the positive responses (and one vehemently opposed) the choice of Kelvin Thomson is certainly an interesting one. We look forward to what should be a lively session. If you don't come to hear the speaker come for supper. We've ordered some of those delicious cakes for which MEG suppers are famous.

Reminder 2 We have had a great response to our request for Membership Renewals which were due on July 1/11.. Over 80 subscriptions have been received. If you intend to join MEG again we would really appreciate it if you would do so as soon as possible. It's a fiddly job processing the forms, doing the banking and keeping the Membership List up-to-date and it's good to have it over and done with.

Reminder Submissions re improving Victoria's planning system are due on August 31. These do not have to be lengthy, learned dissertations. The Ministerial Advisory Committee wants to know about your experience(s) with the system...i.e. what works, what doesn't work. The Committee will consider the whole system including the operation of the *Planning & Environment Act*, State and local planning provisions, zones and overlays. It's no use whingeing about it unless you're prepared to **do** something

Email submissions to
advisory.committee@dpcd.vic.gov.au
or send a hard copy to.....

Chairperson, Victorian Planning
Ministerial Advisory Committee
c/o Statutory Planning
Systems Reform
DPCD...GPO Box 2392
Melbourne 3001

Change to Planning System Already Rumoured

On June 24 the Age reported that Minister Guy intends to institute a "code assessment" planning system. This means that developments such as small commercial or retail and developments of 10 units or fewer will not require public consultation or a permit if they meet pre-arranged planning guidelines. MEG will vehemently oppose the introduction of this system. It means removal of your third party rights. Developers will have a field day.

Neighbourhood Character Study

Some of you will remember the lengthy process of getting this study done, submitted and the long wait since January 2007 for a decision from DPCD and the then Minister for Planning. Despite many requests we could never get a response. MEG asked the present Minister for Planning to approve the Amendment at a meeting with him on Dec.23/10. He said then that Councils should be able to do their own Planning Scheme Amendments. In Council Notice Paper July 18 it was reported that a letter was received by Council from the Minister advising that "the authorisation request for Amendment C67 was considered to be withdrawn." The reason for refusing the Amendment is that Stonnington has to identify land in Planning Scheme Amendments for

housing diversity to cope with projected increases in population. It is reported that Stonnington has to plan for a 17.5% increase over the next 20 years. It's called "how to destroy what's left of the leafy suburbs."

Apartments in Stonnington

In the 2006 Census nearly one in two dwellings in Stonnington was a flat. (Leader July 19) This is 42.29%. Compare that with 16.1% in Melbourne and 14.2% across Australia. Most of these dwellings are in the Western part of Stonnington. Slowly but surely the Eastern end of the City is catching up. Once developers and the system have ripped out the trees to make way for buildings, who is going to be able to BREATHE! Combine this with reported threats to the Green Wedges and it seems that providing "lungs for the city" is low on the priority list for Planning in this State.

VCAT Quarterly Report

In Council Notice Paper July 18 officers reported that for the previous quarter 51 cases were determined by VCAT with 36 wins (70%) and 6 losses (11%). Mediations are counted as wins and 17 cases were settled by mediation. Some cases were part win/part loss (7%). Total cost to ratepayers for the quarter was \$134,000. The case re 857 Dandenong Rd. cost \$25,000. Similarly the case opposing an extra 5 storeys to the 38 storey building on the corner of Toorak Rd. and Chapel St. cost \$25,000.

A Tale of Two Planning Applications

We've told you about the application for a 4 storey building at 3 Winter St. Malvern, a narrow residential street primarily comprised of single storey houses and in the vicinity of a Major Activity Centre. The application was refused by Council and approved by VCAT.

Compare that with an application for a 4 storey building at 220 Burke Rd. Glen Iris in the vicinity of a Neighbourhood Activity Centre on a Category 1 Road. Council issued a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit. This was appealed by 2 residents and VCAT issued a Permit with the fourth storey deleted. Hope you can work it out. MEG can't.

Caulfield Racecourse

Prior to the 2010 election the Liberal MP for Caulfield, David Southwick pledged to stop the "monstrosity" proposed by Melbourne Racing Club. The Leader reported on July 12 that the Then Shadow Minister for Planning Matthew Guy echoed this pledge. It's a different story now. They have both applauded the \$1 billion project. Mr. Guy supported Council's decision to approve it and duly signed it off. Minister Guy seemed to be unaware of the fact that Glen Eira Council did not make the decision. Four Councillors were on a specially convened Racecourse Committee which dealt only with this application. A Committee only needs 4 to have a quorum. The Council would have needed 5 and somehow someone decided that the 5 Councillors who apparently opposed the application had a "conflict of interest." It has been reported to MEG that some of those Councillors are now declaring that they did not have a 'conflict of interest.' Who knows! Strange goings-on in our neighbouring municipality! What a difference an election makes!

And at Moonee Valley Racecourse

On July 12 the Age published a photo of ex-planning Minister Madden joining in a protest **against** a huge development at the Moonee Valley Racecourse. Can you BELIEVE these people. What a difference an election makes! (Are we repeating ourselves?)

Chadstone Extension

Business Age on Aug.20 featured an article about Colonial First's proposal to pay for half of a \$520 million redevelopment of the oldest part of Chadstone on the north side of the site. More international retailers will be included in the revamp and some existing shops will be re-located. This will result in an extra 25,000sq.m. of retail floor space on 4 levels surrounding an atrium and the existing mall will be extended. There will be a new central bus interchange and more car parking will be added. We wish out MEG members in the Chadstone area all the best in the ensuing mayhem.

Quote from Letter to the Age...June 28

"Why do authorities think open space is fair game for construction?"

Near Melbourne High School

It was reported in Business Age Aug.6 that the density of this development was quietly increased last month from 79 flats to 180.

590 Orrong Rd.

While Council is in the process of holding Community Workshops regarding an Urban Design Framework for this site, LendLease has prepared a Planning Application which will sideline any UDF. The application comprises 5 twelve storey buildings, 3 nine storeys, 4 seven storeys, 1 six storeys, 2 four storeys plus 22 townhouses and terraces. In all 477 dwellings...13 fewer than the first proposal. It is rumoured that LendLease will lodge the application with Council in August. Council will not be able to make a decision within 60 days so the applicant can lodge an appeal to VCAT Against Failure to Determine. Council and the Orrong Group will have an uphill battle on their hands, We wish them luck.

Empty Dwellings

While developers overrun the suburbs with their endless dreary developments because there is a need (we are constantly told) to house all the people who want to live in Melbourne, on July 25 an article in the Age states that in the *Speculative Vacancy Report* of the housing campaign group 'Earthsharing' it is indicated that speculators have locked up 46,220 empty homes. The report says that in Docklands 23.92% of dwellings are vacant. The official figure for vacancies in Docklands is 3.62%. (MEG wonders what the vacancy rate is in our very own 'docklands'...i.e. the soul-less high-rise area near Sth. Yarra station.) In the near future there will be a documentary on this issue. Keep your open for *Real Estate and Ransom*. MEG hopes that all the spin doctors who tell us of the need for more and more developments will be watching and taking notes.

Planning Applications

MEG does not list all the Planning Applications lodged in our area. We list only those in which MEG members have been involved and the ones about which we've been able to find information. Please note that Stonnington receives 1100-1200 applications each year.

78 Millewa St. Application for four 2 storey dwellings was refused by Council. VCAT issued a Permit for three 2storey dwellings and a single storey dwelling at the rear of the site. The 2 Bhutan Cypress trees are to be destroyed. The VCAT member accepted evidence from an expert witness for the applicant that the trees would only last for another 15 years...so they could go now. (One despairs!)

253 Waverley Rd. Application on the corner of Waverley Rd. and Oak St. for a four storey multi-unit development with a medical centre and two storey townhouses are the rear

Was approved by the Planning Department despite opposition from our Heritage

Advisor. Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit was defeated by a vote from 8 Councillors on Aug.1. Cr. Hannan declared a conflict of interest and withdrew from the chamber. The applicant had already lodged an appeal Against Failure to Determine. A Practice Day hearing in August will decide on the possibility of settlement by Mediation and length of hearing starting on Nov.2.

3 Findon St. Two storey dual occ. Applicant has appealed Against Failure to Determine.

VCAT hearing on Aug. 26

36 Hughes St. Two storey dual occ. Applicant has appealed Against Refusal to Grant a Permit. Hearing is on Sept.27

7 Wattle Grove Two storey dual occ. Applicant has appealed Against Refusal to Grant a Permit. Hearing on Oct. 13.

22A Findon St. Alterations & additions ;to a dwelling on a lot less than 500sq.m. Resident has lodged an appeal Against Decision to Grant a Permit.

23 Glenbrook Application for new dwelling and removal of a tree in a Neighbourhood Character Overlay. .Appealed Against Failure to Determine. Hearing on Sept. 29.

4-6 Finch St. Appeal Against Refusal to Grant a Permit for a second dwelling at rear of site has been withdrawn. The property is now up for sale.

82-82 Manning Rd. Application for an 11unit convent. Applicant appealed Against Conditions and a resident appealed Against Decision to Grant. VCAT issued a Permit with 3 different conditions.

3 Beech St. Applicant appealed Against Decision Not to Grant an Extension of Permit.

VCAT granted extension. (We think this development of four 2storey units has been going for at least 6 years!)

617 Waverley Rd. Application for second dwelling on rear of site was refused. Appeal Against Refusal to Grant. Awaiting date.

4-6 Clarence St. Council has not issued a Certificate of Compliance pursuant to Section 970 of the Planning & Environment Act. Applicant has appealed this decision. Hearing is on Sept.20.

1 Clarence St. Application for four dwellings in two 2 storey buildings with four lock-up garages. In advertising period.

REMINDERS

- 1. AGM Wednesday Sept.7 Ewing Memorial Church Hall 7.30p.m.
Guest Speaker..Kelvin Thomson**
- 2. Membership Renewal**
- 3. Submission re Planning...due on Aug.31**