



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports *PLANNING BACKLASH*

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MEG NEWSLETTER.....MARCH/APRIL 2020

From the Convenor's Desk

It may seem frivolous to be talking about the matters that usually involve MEG at such a time in our history but some of ORDINARY life goes on so I thought we would pursue our usual practice of a bi-monthly newsletter. A virus won't necessarily beat us but when we lose our sense of humour, our utter astonishment at the antics of developers and bewilderment at governments which allow their destructive habits, **then** we might as well give up.

Let me start with IBAC which has been temporarily silenced by the virus.

Corrupt situation in Casey

On Feb. 19 Casey Council was sacked.

H.S. March 3 *"Yesterday IBAC heard more damning testimony from lawyer Megan Schutz, who worked for Mr. Woodman while he was dishing out cash to councillors and state MPs."* Apparently Ms Schutz briefed ministers or staff about **land re-zoning AND "developer needs."** She had met with Ministers Pallas, Luke Donellan...*had a chat* with Minister Wynne and *"was able to speak directly with Premier Daniel Andrews."* All of this was about re-zoning of some land in Cranbourne West from industrial to residential.

The Age reported on March 3 that *"a supposed community organisation "Save Cranbourne West Residents' Action Group" was paid a retainer of \$2500 a month to lobby for the interests of developers."*

(Previously we told you that this residents' group is **not** on the mailing list of Planning Backlash!)

Clay Lucas assured the readers at the end of the article on March 3 that *"Mr. Wynne has still not made a decision on the re-zoning."*

And there's more....On March 4 Matt Johnson wrote in the H.S. that Ms Schultz had attended a Christmas function of Labor's fundraising arm "Progressive Business" in 2018 where she had thanked Minister Pallas for introducing her to the secretary of the department and he had said, *"Megan, we work together. We work together to achieve outcomes."*

On March 5, Lucas reported that the CEO of Casey council removed *"two to three staff members from the council's planning division that controversial planning consultant John Woodman and his lawyer, Megan Schultz, also wanted sacked."* The CEO denied that this had been done at their request.

On March 12 *"a senior consultant of property giant Leighton has confirmed that he was involved in political fundraising at odds with his own company's policy and said in a secretly recorded conversation he feared being jailed over the controversial land re-zoning push with planner John Woodman."*

Royce Millar reported on March 17 in The Age that “former Casey mayor Amanda Stapleton and state Liberal candidate failed to declare tens of thousands of dollars in political donations over almost 5 years as Casey council considered planning matters that were likely to generate windfall profits for donor John Woodman and his developer clients.” She said when questioned by IBAC that “she did not declare the donations because she did not want to identify her financial supporters.....” (Oh PLEASE!!!)

Finally on March 23, The Age reported that property giant Leighton “offered the Andrews government a \$10 million site for a public hospital to sweeten its bid for the re-zoning of land in Casey that is the heart of an anti-corruption scandal.”

During that week IBAC suspended public hearings when news of COVID-19 changed our lives. There will be more when life regains a semblance of normality.

Finally on April 6 it was reported in The Age that with everyone’s mind on the coronavirus Minister Wynne against the advice of the Panel he appointed **refused the controversial re-zoning** of industrial land in Cranbourne West.

“On an intercepted phone call played at an IBAC hearing Mr. Woodman said to Ms. Schulz, ‘I’ve got enough dirt on them to sink them, if you know what I mean.’”

To be continued!

Four days later...April 10...The Age

“.....disused aged care centres owned by the state will be repurposed so they can house homeless people who contract the coronavirus or need to self-isolate because of it.”

“The government is also spending \$8.8 million preparing four “pop-up” facilities to provide health care and accommodation for more than 200 homeless people....”

“those without a home were at greater risk of contracting coronavirus” and Mr. Wynne said, “This will help keep them safe and slow the spread of the virus.”

It took this hideous virus to make the Planning Minister aware of the plight of the homeless AND to find Government-owned empty aged care centres!

Second Council sacked

On March 19 it was reported in The Age that Whittlesea Council had been sacked. Going down like flies, aren’t they? MEG wonders who will be next!

VCAT cases

If you are involved in a Planning Appeal please note the following information.

Planning Matters... “VCAT has extended the adjournment of all non-critical matters up to and including May 15/2020 to a date to be fixed.”

From Spectrum...Feb.22

“I had always wanted to do something about the moment of New York’s deepest modern crime, the destruction of the old city.” Edward Norton

Secret list of buildings with flammable cladding...The Age March 28

Clay Lucas reports that “a leaked confidential document listing 15 Melbourne properties with faulty cladding that will get taxpayer-funded remediation reveals the buildings are riddled with other construction problems.” The dilemma now isWHO will pay for the newly discovered problems and WHY weren’t these faults discovered by building inspectors and/or building surveyors BEFORE the faulty cladding was attached?

“Cladding Safety Victoria will have agreed by the end of this month on 45 buildings on which it will oversee repairs. The government has said it will fund fixes for all the extreme and high-risk properties.” BUT that’s only for the cladding issues not for repairs!

Population growth in Victoria is the nation’s highest

H.S. Mar.20 *“The state had 6.63 million residents as of September 30 last year after an annual growth rate of 2%.”* NSW grew by 1.3% with a population of 8.1 million according to the ABS report. Melbourne’s population is now about 5.2 million!

“Victoria had a net gain of 11,629 people by interstate migration while NSW had a net loss of 22,245.” MEG thinks that wouldn’t be so bad **if only** all these ‘interstaters’ would settle in Victoria and not just in Melbourne!

Melbourne Racing Club....Sandown Racecourse this time...H.S. March 11.

Some of you may not know that the land-hungry MRC owns not only Caulfield Racecourse and hectares of land around it but also Mornington Racecourse and Sandown Racecourse (Ladbrokes Park) which it has sought to have re-zoned.

“Plans to shut down Sandown Racecourse and build a huge housing estate with thousands of dwellings are under discussion.” Greater Dandenong Councillor Peter Brown says that MRC briefed councillors 2 weeks ago. MRC has sought a re-zoning of the site. Cr. Brown said *“that one of the critical issues for the council is that we’re entitled to 20 per cent of the total area of Sandown Racecourse as **public open space**.....”* MEG wishes that council every bit of good luck in the world getting ‘public open space’ in any deal with the MRC. We’re still battling for it at Caulfield and have been for years and years and years!

Councils call for right to hold virtual meetings...The Age...April 4

“The Local Government Act requires councillors to be physically present at council meetings to participate in decision-making.” Unlike school children councillors cannot legally hold their usual bi-monthly meetings online. At the end of March Stonnington Councillors handed over their decision-making powers to the CEO who is, we are informed, consulting with councillors prior to making such decisions. MEG understands that no items re planning that are awaiting decision will be decided upon until councillors can meet legally either online or in Malvern Town Hall where there is sufficient space for ‘social distancing.’ A meeting is scheduled for April 27 in the hope that State Government has set aside a minute or two to update the Act. This may occur just before April 27.

Housing levy for the needy....H.S. Feb.28

John Masanauskas wrote about an inner city “affordable housing crisis” that was identified in a housing plan released by the City of Melbourne. There is *“a shortfall of 5500 homes for homeless and other vulnerable people.”* The Urban Development Institute of Australia says that *“this shortfall is a result of a range of factors including a rapidly growing population, rents increasing faster than wages and insufficient investment in social and affordable housing over many years.”*

This is true and don’t forget that because of coronavirus Mr Wynne has found *“disused state-owned aged care homes”* which are to be re-furbished for homeless people who have coronavirus and for those who have been in contact with them. We simply do not understand why these places could not have been used prior to the virus scare.

Shades of green....Royal Auto...April/May 2020

"The rapid expansion of our city has led to the loss of green space." And so say all of us! Lucy Cleeve says, *"Melbourne needs to come alive again, literally. And climate experts are prescribing a healthy dose of greenery, water and shade to help cool and adapt cities like ours for rising temperatures to come."* She says that the city centre is suffering from the Heat Island Effect. This is a phenomenon that boosts temperatures in built-up areas where there is not enough vegetation. *"It is **crucial** that we **protect our existing green spaces and tree canopies....**"* and MEG says that includes saving Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park from the 5 councillors who want to destroy the tree canopy that is an intrinsic element in our park.

On April 11 in a letter to The Age from a resident who lives in a small apartment the need for green space was summed up ...*"Having spent the last 10 days in solitary confinement, a garden to tend would have been heaven. If the pandemic has taught us anything, rather than just building a box for people to shelter in, we should be building communities to live in, with mandatory requirements for personal and shared outdoor space."*

Local News

Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park....and the Supreme Court case re the covenants

The Supreme Court has deferred this matter to a date to be decided. There is more to this matter but it is **confidential...** (the word we have all come to loathe)...and we can't tell you any more. No doubt all the machinations will come to light eventually and in the meantime we can delight in the fact that the trees and bushes have been saved and can continue to clean the air and provide green open space for the people despite the 5 Stonnington Councillors who want them and the open space destroyed.

Cabrini Hospital

Prior to the outbreak of the Coronavirus, MEG was informed that Council *'was agreeable to selling Coonil Crescent to the hospital.'* We do not know if this information refers to part of Coonil Crescent or all of it. No doubt you are aware that Cabrini owns the land on the corner of Coonil Crescent and Wattletree Rd. There were 3 homes on that land, all of which had single house covenants. Cabrini had those removed and then destroyed the houses. We would live in "looking glass land" if we had believed for one moment that there wouldn't be a Cabrini building on that site at some time and it seems from the information we have received that the time is nigh! Our source also informs us that the carpark site has a caveat. We are not sure what that means in terms of development on the site. The Mayor has said in an email to our source that it is not unusual for Council to sell a road which it owns and that Council is required to go through an extensive "community consultation" process prior to any such sale. If you know people who live east of Cabrini please tell them to be prepared to be 'consulted' on this matter in the not too distant future.

Developers eye leafy Glen Iris homes....Bus. Age April 11

"A group of neighbours has banded together to sell six adjoining properties in leafy Glen Iris." The six properties at 1514-1520 High St. and the corner properties at 65 Erica Avenue and 32 Ellis Rd. have an area of 3425 sq.m. and a High St. frontage of 84 m. The sales campaign will begin soon. One of the agents said, *"it shows there are developers with time on their hands and not a lot of stock on the market. There are still pipelines to fill."*

This item has left us speechless!

Chadstone Shopping Centre

In the Stonnington leader on March 31 CSC took half a page to advertise all the changes it intends to make at the shopping centre to make it into a 'lifestyle' centre. We told you in our last newsletter that they intend to exceed the IPO (Incorporated Planning Overlay) by no less than **8 levels** for a new office building, add more parking on the David Jones and Coles car parks, while requiring a reduction in the statutory parking requirements. The sheer gall of the Vicinity/Gandel monolith is staggering!

(N.B It has come to our attention that Vicinity was negotiating to buy a large residential site recently and withdrew from negotiations when coronavirus caused a downturn in the economy.)

On March 26 Ben Schneider reported in The Age that in a letter and petition to "*Chadstone Shopping Centre, about 35 tenants said that 'each day is getting worse and worse' due to economic fallout of the pandemic and asked for help to save our businesses." They can't pay the rent. In its response Chadstone management ask for "*further sales information before considering the request for a rent holiday but did agree to defer rent payments for March and April.*" They are looking for ways to "*support our retailers.*"*

Gosh! One can only admire Chadstone management! They're all heart!
Always thinking of others!

Caulfield Station PrecinctVictorian Planning Authority

An email on March 26...."*Despite the current response to the coronavirus (COVID-19), the VPA is working hard to limit any impacts on our work program. Our team is working remotely and we will continue to plan for the future of the Caulfield Station Precinct.*"

Truly it gives you heart, doesn't it?

Last November we popped into a VPA display at Glen Eira Secondary College where there were more VPA people than there were members of the community and apparently out of that display came 4 key ideas....

Improved use of land....Improved access and movement....quality & site-responsive built form ...vibrant open space. (The community thought of all this!)

"The community wanted to know more about the proposed building heights, local traffic and car parking management which are currently being investigated. Visual amenity of the future Caulfield Station Precinct, as well as acknowledging the precinct's history and heritage were also raised."

We have only to **look** at what's being built on the area between Normanby Rd. and Station St. to know what it's going to look like.....and they call it **Classic Caulfield.**

Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust

On April 14 we received an email from the Chairman of CRRT. He told us that the Trust is on track to.....

deliver the Draft Land Management Plan by June 30

there will be an opportunity to provide feedback

final Land Management Plan is due to be released in September.

The whole Caulfield Racecourse debacle has been going on for about 100 years. Are we REALLY going to see **our** land used for **us** in September 2020...or is it just a PLAN?

Update on combustible cladding....Stonnington News....Feb.2020

Investigations continue throughout Stonnington. Council reported in its newsletter in February that *“residential buildings that are more than two storeys in height, schools and health care facilities fall under the investigation umbrella.”*

Council’s Building Surveyor team has had an increase in enquiries from the public about dwellings they own or are contemplating buying. Up to Feb. 2020 council had 82 properties where *“building notices or orders have been issued regarding detected combustible cladding with a further 41 properties investigated and found to have no combustible cladding.”*

Stonnington Leader

We have not received a print edition of the Stonnington Leader for months...**but** out of the blue we found the March 31 edition in the letter-box. (That’s the one in which the CSC Planning Application was printed.) Now it has been announced officially that there will be no local papers during the coronavirus pandemic.

Probably most of us will not notice any difference ‘cos it’s supposed to be delivered and that is a rare occurrence.

A few of the Planning Applications in and around Malvern East

343 Waverley Rd. Change of use of existing dwelling on site to a dental clinic (medical centre)...demolition of existing garage, shed, lean-to and extension , constr. of dwelling to the rear and waiver of one car parking space.

2 Melrose Av. Constr. of new 2 storey dwelling to rear of existing dwelling incl. fence, dem. of outbuilding and alteration to existing crossover.

692 Waverley Rd. Dem. of existing dwelling and attached garage & constr. of 3 two storey dwellings.

43 Central Park Rd. Dem. of existing dwelling & constr. of new dwelling in H.O.

267-271 Waverley Rd. Bldg & works, waiver of car parking, use of land for shops and dwellings in H.O.

87-91 Manning Rd. St. Mary’s School ...Bldg & works associated with existing Education Centre

9 Findon St. Extension of existing residential dwelling.

77 Repton Rd. Constr. of single dwelling on a lot over 500 sq.m. in H.O.

8 Rebecca Rd. Constr. of 2 dwellings on a lot in NRZ.

31 Midlothian St. Dual occ. in GRZ.

28 Midlothian St. Dual occ. in GRZ.

7 Ash Grove. Demolition of dwelling.

13 Kingston St. Pt. dem. and bldg. & works in H.O.

34 Armadale St. Dev. of 3 storeys, 13 apts.. Pl. Dept. Rec. to Grant a Permit. Council Mtg. April 6.....Mtg. deferred to April 27....Councillors put up a Refusal to Grant Permit.