



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports *PLANNING BACKLASH*

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MEG NEWSLETTER May/June 2018

From the Convenor's Desk

Some of you may not be aware that the umbrella organisation of 250 Victorian residents' groups is Planning Backlash Inc. MEG has had a representative on the Community Consultation Committee (CCC) of P.B. for some years and we are involved in the endless work of getting information to residents about planning issues. The key person of the CCC is Mary Drost OAM whose communication skills are enviable. She is the person who arranges our meetings with relevant politicians. She attends many sessions of Parliament in both Houses and is a frequent presenter at VCAT. Occasionally I went to Parliament with her but my nerves are not as strong as hers so I confine my 'political' visits to our own Council Meetings which involve little or no debate and which now can be seen online a day or so after each meeting.

I sometimes despair that 'getting the news' out to residents makes any difference because we are finding more and more people are really only interested in what's happening beside, behind and opposite them. There are some wonderful individuals in MEG whose outlook is broader than that and to them I offer my sincere thanks.

We have some news about a variety of issues in this edition of our newsletter. There's heartening news from Ontario. There's not so heartening news about State Government activities and here's a thought about the new Lord Mayor from an Age reader on May 20... *"Is being the head of a lobby group for property developers a conflict of interest or does the role get dropped from her portfolio?"*

Membership Subscriptions

MEG Membership subscriptions are due on July 1. We have attached a Membership Form to this newsletter. If you wish to pay through our Bank Account please contact MEG for details. Thank you for your continuing support, thank you for joining up family members and for your donations. MEG survives on YOU!

Ontario Government sacks the Ontario Municipal Board..... From a friend in Toronto

This Board was the final arbitrator in planning disputes. Its role was the same as that of VCAT....and the members are no longer employed! The official reasons for this action are to give more decision-making power to the municipalities and to speed up the process. *(We heard on the grapevine that the Tribunal was too 'pro-developer' and residents were angry about this! Does that sound familiar?)*

The new Tribunal (LPAT) will have less power to overturn local government decisions, hearings will be quicker, relying only on written submissions **without witness examinations**. Decisions will be written in plain language.

The new LPAT will answer a simple “yes or no” legal test....i.e. does the proposal follow the city’s official planning rules? If not, the matter will be sent back to municipal councils to issue another decision. **The Tribunal will not make planning decisions.** Does that sound like music to your ears?

Can we swap governments? Send ours to Ontario and bring Ontario to us?

Developers profit while thousands wait on housing

The Age June 6...A Parliamentary Inquiry into State Government’s proposal to sell public housing land in prime locations to developers so that towers can be built for public and private dwellings was held early this year. The public housing element is to be increased by 10%. The proposal in Stonnington actually results in 60 fewer beds. The Committee decided that the land was sold too cheaply and that *“developers gained a ‘significant advantage’ by building more private units than was justified while the amount of public housing on at least one estate was reduced.”* The Inquiry revealed there were **57,877 adults and 24, 622 children** on the waiting list for social housing.

The report shows that if government rebuilt estates using public money it would spend \$583 million...compared to the \$185 million it intends to spend by partnering with developers.

Just as details of this Report was made public we heard that State Government is contributing \$500 million towards the renovation of Etihad stadium and \$208 million towards yet ANOTHER art gallery and as that won’t be enough for the gallery the Government is going to ask the local philanthropists to cough up \$800 million so the project can be completed.

It’s a quaint idea, we know, but we thought the Government and/or the philanthropists could build homes for the people who don’t have homes instead of fixing up a football stadium and building another art gallery! The money for the stadium alone would just about cover the entire cost of up-grading the public housing estates in Melbourne.

There’s no place like an owned home

Sun. Age June 3...*“A survey by the National Australia Bank has found the wellbeing of those who own a house or unit is above the national average while the wellbeing of those who rent a house or unit is below average.”* NAB carries out a quarterly ‘wellbeing survey.’ MEG wonders if that survey ever includes the wellbeing of the homeless! We think that their level of wellbeing might be right at the bottom.

Growth is a vital debate

The Editorial in the Herald Sun on June 24 discussed this issue as Melbourne’s population is on the edge of 5 million. With so many people on the public housing list and the number of homeless people on the rise MEG doesn’t consider that we’re doing too well with more and more people being crammed into this city. We believe that we have space in the STATE and support any moves towards decentralisation. The State Opposition has a ‘Population Task Force’ working on the issue of spreading the population throughout the State. There have been no less than 3 Chairpersons of this committee so it tends to lack continuity. Our CCC has a representative on it. She has reported that there have been very few meetings. MEG has provided her with research on a number of projects going on in Victoria...projects that could do with an injection of funds to really make a difference.

Alas, politicians tend to govern on the basis of ‘Melbourne is Victoria.’ The Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) now has a liveability index and according to the most recent study by Deloitte

Warrnambool is the world's most liveable city. Does State Government know about this? We suspect not. Warrnambool's CEO says, "We are a liveable alternative to Melbourne."

Southern Metropolitan Partnerships

A number of MEG members attended the first of these sessions and MEG's Convenor has refused all invitations to the second. They are expensive attempts by State Government to bring Stonnington, Glen Eira, Boroondara and Bayside municipalities together. There are 6 such 'partnerships' in Melbourne. In our opinion they are the thin edge of the wedge towards amalgamation of Councils and at least one CEO agrees with us. In H.S June 24 State Opposition is reported as saying they are "*a waste of money and bureaucracy gone mad.*" Minister D'Ambrosia calls them "*important vehicles for engagement.*" The H.S. reported that at the last inner southeast partnership people agonised over whether the "*label of established and affluent*" for the area was a matter of concern or not. So help us! We have to agree with the State Opposition on this matter. Indeed it's bureaucracy gone mad!

VCAT and the high-rise loophole

Caulfield Leader May 22 .."*Cavalry Health Care Bethlehem was given the go-ahead by VCAT recently, despite the area's two-storey height limit.*" Bethlehem's original application had been for 19 storeys for an Aged Care facility. It was scaled back to a mere 10 storeys by VCAT. There is a little-known clause in the planning rules that exempts aged care and retirement homes from height limits "**because of their function.**" MEG does not know just when this Clause was popped into 'the rules' but we're glad the Blue Cross, Regis and Arcare didn't know about it when they built in Malvern East. We understand that a brothel has a special function. MEG wonders if the planning law allow a 10 storey brothel "**because of its function.**"

VCAT and its reasons for decisions which aid the developers...Herald Sun April 12.

Now we not only have to fight against the planning rules which change according to the latest whim of whoever happens to be the reigning Planning Minister we also need to plan opposition to VCAT's **new standards**. Apparently it's **the** authority on "**net community benefit**" and "**the greater good**" and because of this a recent decision by a Member overruled vehement opposition from residents and Bayside City Council for a \$60 million development in Hampton. VCAT Member said that the people living near the site would "experience significant change" but "**net community benefit**" and "**the greater good**" must prevail...only they don't define the terms.

We think you can find the vague terms they are using in their quasi-legal decisions in what's called a Social Impact Statement, a document loved by cliché-ridden bureaucrats.

It is SO good to know that VCAT is operating for "the greater good." Is that the "greater good" of the developers and their 'hired guns' or the residents or State Government?

We wish someone could clarify this for us. Bewilderment reigns!

LOCAL NEWS

Chadstone Bowling Club and Percy Treyvaud Park

You are all aware that Percy Treyvaud Park has been nominated by Council as the site of the new 4 court netball stadium. You may not be aware that a Stakeholders' Group chaired by

Cr. Glen Atwell has been established and has proposed to develop a Master Plan for the park which is to include places for **Bowls**, Tennis, Cricket, Lacrosse, Netball and Basketball... (have we omitted anything?)... and passive recreation. Council has assured residents that **no significant trees** will be destroyed in the process of finding space in this one park for all the sporting activities and for people not indulging in any particular sport. Council has also promised that **not one millimetre of open space will be lost** in this process. The cost of the stadium has risen considerably from the original \$20million to the figure of approximately \$36.5million given by the CEO at the recent East Ward Meeting. The report on which Councillors based their decision to use Percy Treuvaud Park for a stadium is Confidential and Council has refused to release it under FOI although an extract has been released. Some intrepid residents have been given advice to the effect that the document could be deemed to be "in the public interest" and only VCAT can make a decision about that so they have lodged an appeal to VCAT. Council has appointed a legal firm to oppose the residents...(your rates at work) ...and VCAT has set down a date in August for Mediation.

As always MEG despairs at the secrecy....and the expense!

Not enough housing in Stonnington???

H.S. June 3....At an Urban Development Institute of Australia event the State CEO Danni Adderson said the State Government should set housing targets for each Council area. *"A developer lobby (UDI) has called for suburbs which don't pull their weight on housing supply to be punished with less investment in infrastructure."* Can you believe it? Punished! Developers told the event that Councils like Boroondara and Stonnington are not providing their share of housing. At Council Meeting on June 4 Councillors lamented the destruction of beautiful old homes in substantial garden settings particularly along our main roads. Toorak, Wattletree, Malvern and Burke Rds in particular were named. The 'powers that be' will rue the day they allowed 'garden suburbs' to become treeless, concrete landscapes. What more does the UDI want?

Vicinity...part-owner of Chadstone Shopping Centre

Bus. Age June 5 Vicinity, Australia's second largest landlord, is selling some of its shopping centres. No, Chadstone is not up for sale! Vicinity is going to re-develop its larger 'flagship' centres. At The Glen Shopping Centre *"a \$450million apartment project above the shopping mall"* has been launched. *"At Chadstone **three** office towers and a hotel are planned."* This is the first time we've heard about **3 office towers!** There's more joy for the neighbours!

Tram to Chadstone? Route unknown!

The Age June 27...State Government has plans for a tram line to the Clayton campus of Monash University and Chadstone Shopping Centre. The Federal Government has urged them to drop the plans because the Federal Minister for Urban Infrastructure and Cities wants a heavy rail shuttle from Huntingdale Station to the University. Canberra would put in \$475 million for such a link. State Government would have to come up with the rest. What do the residents around CSC think?

Gardiner Park

According to the recent edition of the 'Stonnington News' Gardiner Park redevelopment started in June. Council reports there will be a new pavilion, park improvements, new

playground along with more trees...(how many?)...and 'improved open space' ... **and lots of artificial turf containing carcinogens and contributing to global warming!**

Payment of bond for tree in Beech St.

On May 7 Council issued a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit for a two storey dwelling at 24 Beech St. in a Neighbour Character Overlay. There were 5 pages of conditions attached to the Permit and a significant condition was that prior to commencement of any work on the site **a bank guarantee of \$20,000 must be provided to the Responsible Authority as security against a failure to protect the health of the *Corymbia maculate (Spotted Gum)* tree to be retained.** This is a positive step towards preventing the destruction of significant trees on private land.

MEG thinks the bond for a significant tree should be \$100,000.

Caulfield Station Precinct...Community Visioning Workshop.

A number of MEG members attending this "visioning workshop"...(that's a new piece of twaddle for us)...to discuss the future of this precinct and the ways "the people" who own the 54 hectares of land at the Racecourse Reserve will be able to use it. We cannot count the ways that "the people" have told government after government how it can be used. The Auditor General has told the government of the day how it can be used and as MEG informed the local member at the 'visioning' every government has been remiss. He agreed but assured all of us that something is really going to happen now. Gosh!!! After drowning in a cliché-ridden introduction we 'consulted' in groups with a facilitator from Victorian Planning Authority who didn't seem to know much about the area and was a bit daunted by the knowledge of MEG members. A new Trust for the Racecourse Reserve has been appointed and will begin in August. No locals on it. The Crown Grant has been revoked. Crown Land is no longer in the portfolio of the Minister for the Environment. It has been transferred to the Planning Ministry. This does not bode well for use of the Reserve by "the people." We can look forward to another session of "visioning." We have been told that this is the first time that a Crown Grant has been revoked!

Andrew Dixon's response to the VPA re the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve

"The Racecourse/Park is an amazing public asset that should be carefully looked after for the next 100 years and after that too. Very long term thinking is required. The MRC should not be allowed to apply to rezone the areas on the edge of the Reserve they have purchased with their profits (aided by below market rental of the Reserve) over many years. The Government should ensure that the freehold land in this area that the MRC owns should be handed back to the newly established Trust for long term community use and benefit. Blocks of apartments should not be allowed to encircle the public spaces to the west and south-west. When I visit the Reserve I am amazed at what seems to be a country-like setting with no tall buildings visible to the east, south and west. I urge Glen Eira Council to work harder to engage with local residents and resist inappropriate development (and greedy short-term profit making) around the west and south-west perimeter. It is crucial that Monash University and Stonnington Council be involved in this process."

Zagames Hotel for sale

This hotel is in the Caulfield Station Precinct and in a Glen Eira Heritage Overlay. Some years ago the owners applied for a Permit to build a 23 storey development. Thankfully, no

Permit was issued then. Now it's a different ball game as we can testify with that 18 storey thing hanging over Malvern East at the southern end of Tooronga Rd. We're told that it looks like a "squashed silo" from Caulfield. It has set a hideous precedent for the whole area.

Trees to go in Sydare Reserve

A long-time MEG member rang to report the loss of 12 significant trees in the Reserve. They have to go to make way for a new stormwater drain. According to a report in The Leader of May 15 Melbourne Water didn't know how many trees it was going to destroy. The Project Manager assured residents that it would plant more trees than it removed. MEG is never sure just how these 'replacement' trees which will take some 30-40 years to mature can actually **replace** 100 year old trees.

Cabrini Hospital

An Advertising Feature in The Age of June 15 stated that *"the Alan, Ada and Eva Selwyn Emergency Department at Cabrini Malvern sees more than 23,000 patients a year and receives the largest number of ambulances... more than 5000...of any private hospital in the country. The department does so with a conviction that every person will receive the swiftest, most compassionate and professional...and after care...available."* GOSH! The claim is that in 90% of cases the waiting time is *"within a 10 minute range."* There's much more in this 'Feature' and a glaring omission is the cost of the non-refundable charge.

Planning Applications in and around Malvern East

302-306 Waverley Rd. Construction of 4 storey Mixed Use bldg. comprising shops & apartments behind existing heritage bldg.. Reduction in car parking requirements. Pl. Dept. Recommendation to Grant a Permit.

1341 Dandenong Rd. (Chadstone Shopping Centre)

Amendments to existing approval to allow for re-purposing of existing shop floor area over Ground & Mezzanine levels in 'Food & Drink Premises' & addn of a tourist lounge. Permit Granted...Council Mtg. April 23.

1341 Dandenong Rd. Chadstone Shopping Centre

New outdoor dining area known as West Piazza incl. general liquor licence associated with food & drink premise and reduction in parking requirements. Permit Granted....April 23.

45 Washington St. 2 storey dual occ. in NCO. Pl.Dept Recommendation is for NOD to grant a Permit. Council Mtg. June 25. Decision deferred for one cycle

32 Moama Rd. Pt. dem, addns and alterations to dwelling in H.O.

2 Serrell St. Pt. dem. addns & alterations to dwelling in H.O.

45 Washington St. Dem. of existing dwelling & construction of 2 two storey dwellings. Application lodged in May 2017. Advertising complete May 2018. Revised plans were submitted. Awaiting Pl. Dept. Report & Recommendation.

97 Argyll St. Two semi-attached dwellings on a lot in an NRZ. Revised plans. Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit with conditions...Council Mtg. May 21.

102-106 Burke Rd and 2A Nyora St. Multi-dwelling development....3 storeys,18 apts. above basement car parking. VCAT appeal against FTD. Refusal to Grant a Permit....Council Meeting June 4. VCAT hearing June 18.

22 & 22A Winter St. Malvern 3 two storey dwellings with roof top terraces. Refusal to Grant. Appeal to VCAT. Compulsory Conference July 4 and 3 day Hearing Aug.27