



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports **PLANNING BACKLASH**

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MEG NEWSLETTER....MAY/JUNE 2021

From the Convenor's Desk

My first attempt to write this column comprised the tale of our first MEG Meeting in 2 years, the anxiety about wondering if anyone would come...or not?" I deleted all of that to tell you this tale of your **rapidly expiring democracy.**

At Council Meeting June 28 on a vote of 6-2 (one absentee) an East Ward park 'bit the dust'...or the concrete! MEG lobbied all Councillors. As usual, only 2 replied. When campaigning to be elected, Greens candidate Polly Morgan wrote the following to Residents Against the Stadium, (Reported on FB June 28.)

*"I think the project should be reviewed and that we need to find an alternative for the stadium. **I don't think it should be at Percy Treyvaud Park.**"*

So, with a viable alternative at Holmesglen and another at CSC, for Council to consider Ms. Morgan voted for Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park to be the site for a stadium. The other Greens councillor from South Ward joined her. Does that strike you as being slightly skewed?

In 2020, all councillors declared "A Climate Emergency." In 2021 six of them voted to destroy 67 mature trees, **16 of which are deemed by Council to be significant**, and some 100 shrubs and replace them with a concrete stadium (bunker style) and 130 saplings. Our research shows that saplings take 20-40 years to do what mature trees already do for the environment...i.e absorb pollution, counter the heat island effect, provide shade, provide oxygen. An East Ward councillor in moving the motion told a lengthy story about how she had been harassed because she supported the destruction of a park. The Chair allowed this to go on and on and on! One has to marvel at the lack of relevance.

Please note that the actions of this Council mirrors the actions of developers

First own the site, moonscape it and then fill it with STUFF!

MEG Membership Subscriptions are due.

MEG subscription is \$5 per person. We accept cheques or cash. You can do a Bank Transfer if you wish. Please send MEG a quick email indicating that you have done this.

Bank Details.....BSB 633 000...A/C No. 127 271 591...A/C Name...Malvern East Group

If you joined the Group in May or June you will remain on our mailing list.

At the MEG Meeting...Heritage & Fast Tracking

We were pleased to welcome Clifford Hayes MLC for Southern Metropolitan Region as Guest Speaker at our meeting. Clifford has been involved in planning issues as a councillor,

mayor and now as a parliamentarian. He has put forward a number of Bills to the Upper House. Read this one.

“a bill to Parliament to give local residents across more say in planning decisions by moving amendments to the Planning and Environment Act that would have given Councils the capacity to set mandatory height controls on new buildings and also modify the capacity of VCAT to overturn Council planning decisions.”

This Bill was defeated in the Upper House by 22 votes to 18.

He had also proposed that **developer contributions to political parties be banned**. Both Liberal and Labor MLCs voted against this. His most recent Bill to establish an Inquiry into Heritage issues has been approved and this is what the Bill proposes...

1. At a national level create a Federal Minister for Heritage and a Federal Department.
2. At Victorian level, separate Heritage from Planning with a separate Minister and a separate Department.
- 3 ..Remove Heritage decisions and appeals from VCAT and place them under a Victorian Heritage Tribunal.
- 4 ..At local level require Councils to have a Heritage Department.
- 5 ..Require developers to pay for heritage advice on any building they propose to demolish but not permit them to appoint the Heritage expert. Council to appoint the expert with local knowledge from an accredited panel. Heritage adviser will be required to demonstrate that no conflict of interest exists in each case Investigate whether 2 levels of heritage protection at local level is sufficient.

MEG will let you know when submissions can be made.

Supreme Court Action taken against Glen Eira Council...The Age June 19

John Wylie was not notified of an application for a 5 storey development in Glenhuntly Rd. Elsternwick behind his home. *“Under delegation”* approval was given by Glen Eira’s Planning Dept. for a 5 storey development in a section of Glenhuntly Rd. which has a 2 storey height limit. The Department refused an application by the developer for 7 storeys so he has gone to VCAT and John Wylie has gone to the Supreme Court against the entire Council even though Councillors did not make the decision.

“The project is directly north of the Wylies’ 4000 sq.m. home.”

Fast tracked? We’re not sure about that. No notification to certain affected residents? We’re sure about that.

H.S. May 19..... Cladding emergency avoidable

An apartment block in St. Kilda was branded “uninhabitable” in May due to highly inflammable cladding and the residents were ordered to leave on May 21. Port Phillip Council reached an agreement with the Owners’ Corporation for emergency remediation and the residents were allowed to stay while the building was made safe.

Would you be staying under these circumstances?

Tree blitz in west to boost greenery...The Age May 14

“The state government will fund planting 500,000 trees in Melbourne’s west starting in September.” This is because western suburbs have *“far less green cover than other parts of Melbourne.”* (GOSH! Who would have thought it!) The Government renowned for destroying thousands of trees has recognised that *“Locals in newer suburbs have noted much hotter conditions compared to older suburbs with established trees.”*

Try telling that to Stonnington councillors. Destroying trees seems to be in the DNA of the majority of them!

Officeworks plants 787,104 trees....an advertisement

"Restoring Australia initiative is one of Officeworks' commitments to making a positive difference to the environment. Officeworks plants trees and establishes native plants to help restore natural landscapes and habitats."

We think Stonnington Council should invite Officeworks to tell councillors what it should be doing to protect the "natural landscape and habitat" at Percy Treuvaud Memorial Park!

The Age....Spectrum....May 1...Even Virginia Woolf was felled by the majesty of trees

"In the State Library of Victoria the ruthless tree-felling of the colonialists is documented in paintings and photographs. It was as though the new arrivals found the sight of trees....unbearable.....By the late 19th century, the tree stump had become a national symbol for white culture and sovereignty."

Some Stonnington Councillors clearly belong in the 19th century while disseminating the myth that this is a modern forward thinking minor form of government!

Top private schools grow richer.....The Age June 18

"it's gobsmacking that these private schools claim they need public funding."

Gobsmacking indeed! There are so many private schools in Victoria and they are all partially funded by the taxpayer. They do not **share** facilities that are partially paid for by the taxpayer. If they were to do that ratepayers of municipalities such as Stonnington would not be spending millions of dollars building more and more sporting facilities and in the process destroying parks. "Mr. Grutzner, a board member of the private schools lobby group "Independent Schools Australia, " said without the public funding school fees would need to rise." GOSH!

MEG would encourage Council to lobby all the private schools in Stonnington to share their **publicly-funded sporting facilities** with Stonnington residents. It's a faint hope!

Noises in the night.....The Age June 11

"Residents in Melbourne's tallest towers are being tormented by creaking noises so loud they are unable to sleep and fear for their safety....."

"A Melbourne Square resident, who asked not to be named because he feared it would affect his tenancy, predicted class actions over what he regarded as systemic non-compliance with building codes."

Multiplex examined an apartment and said, "***the noises were caused by incorrectly installed screws.***" Another Multiplex representative said "***the noises were caused by extreme wind.***" Wind?? Screws?? Bit of a puzzle!

MEG wonders if a class action could be taken against developer(s), Minister for Planning & Housing, Council(s) for granting approval or perhaps VCAT for issuing a Permit. The list is endless. Could put a stop to any more skyscrapers!

Rare butterfly effect: \$530m plan detailed....The Age June 24

The sighting of "*the endangered Eltham copper butterfly in bushland near Montmorency station*" put a stop to State Government's "*\$530million track duplication on the Hurstbridge line.*" A section of the line was ditched because it would have cut through the butterfly's

habitat. This would have contravened Federal environmental law. A resident said that “*if the government had carried out the proper environmental assessments earlier.....*”

(We dream of all the IF ONLYS all the time. If only Stonnington council had carried out an Environmental Impact Statement on P.T. Park we just MAY not have a lump of concrete instead of trees in that park. How we wish for a butterfly!)

Victoria’s population growth has slumped to its lowest level since 1916....The Age June 17

“Every state and territory had big slowdowns in growth through 2020 but the worst hit was Victoria, which had zero population growth.” 31,000 residents left Victoria for other states. (Can’t really blame them can we?) Growth occurred in Queensland and W.A. MEG wonders if that is because their Labor governments are not as draconian as the Andrews government? Who knows....but MEG can guess!

Ageism is OUT! H.S. June 17

“Several eastern suburbs councils have joined forces to crack down on ageism as a “disturbing form of prejudice” that can severely impact the elderly.” MEG does not know if Stonnington Council is taking part in this campaign. It wasn’t mentioned in the article. Boroondara, Knox and Monash are named. It just MIGHT catch on in Stonnington that *“Ageism is a disturbing form of prejudice, which lacks respect for older people and it affects many aspects of an older person’s life.”*

Virtual Council Meetings

There is a move by State Government agency “Engage Victoria” to do away with Council Meetings as they were before COVID and conduct the meetings **only online**. This is a gross act of discrimination which purportedly is against the law.....as if Engage Victoria bothers about such niceties. There is a number of people in this State who do not have devices which allow them to use the internet and a number who have disabilities which don’t allow them to access anything online. There are people who CHOOSE not to have their lives cluttered with this technical stuff...and, as this is (purportedly) a democracy which does not discriminate against ANYONE no government can actively exclude those in any of these categories. (FYI MEG has a few members who require hard copies of our newsletters.)

We heard on the grapevine that Boroondara Council opposes this proposal. We have NO IDEA what Stonnington Council thinks about it.....not an unusual state of affairs!

(From the Convenor...I lodged a submission vigorously opposing this.)

LOCAL NEWS

Stonnington News

In the Winter Edition of this paper that promotes Stonnington Council we read of the report to come to Council re the ‘*independent review* of 13 sites for the ‘**indoor courts.**’

“The outcome of this review is to continue discussions with Vicinity Centres operators of Chadstone Shopping Centre, to investigate the concept of a multi-purpose sport and recreation facility to support the need for additional indoor sporting court. Discussions will also continue with Holmesglen Institute to better understand their interest. A report will be brought back to Council IN JULY.....”

As we all know by now this wasn’t true! It was dealt with on June 28 with one councillor absent. Holmesglen rated high in the review but was ignored by 6 councillors in their feverish haste to moonscape a park in East Ward. If the Greens councillors had stood by

their so-called 'GREENS' credentials and pre-election promises, there may have been a chance of saving the Park AND saving millions of dollars by giving serious consideration to the Holmesglen option. The only issue against considering this was that there would be a wait for Holmesglen to complete its Master Plan. **Your rates at work!**

Talking about your rates

At Council Meeting on June 28 a majority of councillors voted to impose the 3.5% rates increase. This comprises the 2% rates relief we were given last year and the 1.5% increase which State Government allows. Some councillors made much of the percentage of resident renters in Stonnington. Apparently 48% of Stonnington's population rents accommodation. Of course SOMEBODY pays rates on rented properties so Council will still get its 3.5% increase from SOMEONE and, inevitably, it will be the renter because costs must be passed on by landlords eventually. It was mentioned that as property values have risen so much this year people who own their own houses can easily afford a rate increase of 3.5%. The logic of that entirely escapes us but who are we to question!

Chadstone turns shops into offices The Australian...June 23/2021

*"Melbourne's Chadstone shopping centre has unveiled plans for its fourth office tower, with the 9 storey to comprise over 20,000sq.m. of office space. The tower will be known as the **1 Middle Road** development, and Chadstone centre manager Michael Whitehead contends it will "set a new standard" for suburban properties.*

This is about the 40th extension of Chadstone since it opened in 1960 AND apparently they want to have a 4 court stadium there as well.

1755, 1757-1759, 1761-1763 & 1765 Malvern Rd. Glen Iris

All of these 'art deco' homes are to be demolished for Korowa to build a day-care centre and primary school with, needless to say, swathes of artificial turf....undoubtedly a "cooking the kids" project. We have used those words of Dr. Greg Moore on many occasions with reference to artificial turf. MEG simply can't understand why anyone with a brain doesn't recognise the danger of 'global warming' that artificial turf presents. Council has declared a "Climate Emergency" and council's addiction to artificial turf can be seen at Penpraze Park where there are now only a few trees on the Tooronga Rd. side and that stuff is a direct contradiction of Council's own policy. Gardiner Park is another glaring (exactly) example of this....and there are other many instances of council using the stuff. Leaves us breathless!

Please note the following. From June 2021. Amendment VC180 designates the Minister for Planning as the Responsible Authority for new non-government schools and upgrades where there is an estimated cost of \$3million or more.

857 Dandenong Rd. (Now known as 1A Clarence St.)

After a lengthy and somewhat bitter battle this uninspiring thing was built with VCAT approval. At the moment the combustible cladding is being removed! Ironic?

Mutual Respect Charter...The Age May 27

Stonnington Council has a Mutual Respect Charter which indicates that everyone has to be nice to everyone else on Council. It means among other things, MEG assumes, that councillors are not permitted to speak or shout directly to other councillors rather than

going through the Chair as we saw at Council Meeting on June 28. It's supposed to be "a safe, respectful workplace."

The Age reports that this is "Good news after such a long periodof fraught relations between councillors leading to a broken, toxic and dysfunctional council before last year's elections." The report goes on to deal with the BUT"it looks like history is repeating itself." The gossip is that relations between a small number of councillors "are so bad that a formal mediation process is underway." (Your rates at work!)

Thankfully the CEO assures us that "mediation is common in modern workplaces." What a relief!

Some of the Planning Applications in and around Malvern East

909 Dandenong Rd. 6 storeys & reduction in car parking. Student Acc.

766-768 Warrigal Rd. Removal of restrictive covenant.

52 Abbotsford Rd. Construction of 2 dwellings on a lot in NRZ.

636 Warrigal Rd. Vary restrictive covenant from 1 dwelling to 3 dwellings.

37 Tooronga Rd. Pt. dem & constr. of extension to building on a lot less than 500sq.m in GRZ.

16 Thanet St. Malvern Pt. dem. bldg. & works to dwelling in H.O.

18 Tollington Av. Bldg and wks to dwelling in H.O.

1 Cawkell St. Malvern Pt. dem., ext. of existing dwelling & constr. of additional dwelling on a lot in GRZ & H.O. & reduction n car pking req.

40 Central Park Rd. 2 storey addition & renovation of dwelling.

7 Bretonneux Sq. Pt. dem., bldg. & works to dwelling in H.O.

809-823 Dandenong Rd. (Dan Murphy) Bldgs & works in Commercial 1 Zone.

2 Camiro St. 2 lot sub-division.

10 Camira St. 27 lot subdivision.

7 Copping St. Pt. dem., bldg. & works to dwelling in H.O.

1301 Dandenong Rd. Constr. of 4 dwellings.

776 Warrigal Rd. Removal of restrictive covenant.

7 Peak St. Existing single storey house to be demolished.

24 Ash Grove Demotion of existing dwelling & constr. of new dwelling.

92 Stanhope St. Malvern Partial dem. & alterations & additions to single dwelling.

125 Station St. Malvern Pt. dem., bldg. & wks to existing shop (as of right) in H.O.

113-117 Finch St. Pt. dem., bldg. & wks to dwelling in H.O.

10 Dixon St. Malvern Pt. de. & addns to existing residence on a site greater than 500 sq.m. in NCO5 and SB02.

1 John St. Pt. dem. & extension of dwelling on a lot less than 500 sq.m. in NRZ & NCO.

66 Central Park Rd. Pt. dem., bldg. & wks to dwellin in H.O.

11 Macgregor St. Pt. dem. bldg. & wks to dwelling in N.C.O.

39 Brunel St. Removal of one Chinese Elm.

43 Claremont Av. Malvern Pt. dem., bldg.. & works to dwelling in H.O.

6 Warley Rd. Proposed 1st floor addn to dwelling on a lot less than 500 sq.m.

14 Wilmot St. Dem. of existing dwelling. Constr.of new dwelling in NCO.

33 Ardrie Rd. Dem. & construction of 2 dwellings in NRZ & H.O.

1 Ash Grove Part dem. & ext. of dwelling in NCO.