



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports *PLANNING BACKLASH*

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MEG NEWSLETTER...NOVEMBER / DECEMBER...2017

From the Convenor's Desk

Another MEG meeting came and went in October and it made me wonder if we would ever have another AGM. We had the smallest attendance we've ever had and that's SO disappointing when people take time to come and speak to us about the issues which concern us all. Dr. Greg Moore made some significant comments about our desperate need for trees and other pollution-absorbing 'green' matter...like grass. He said he'd noticed the artificial turf at the nearby school...the surface that Council seems so fond of and which a majority of Councillors voted to have at Gardiner Park. **"It's cooking the kids,"** he said. He added that it contains carcinogens. In your travels you might note the excessive use of artificial turf in and around Stonnington and shake your heads in despair.

London...an urban national park

At the same meeting Mary Drost, Convenor of the Planning Backlash Network, spoke about an article by Jonathon Prynne in the London Evening Standard in . The Mayor of London announced in August 2017 *"a package of measures to make London the greenest city in the world."* (No artificial turf in the package!) There will be *"new planning regulations to give further protection to green open space and incorporate 'green roofs' into new developments."* His aim is to make London the world's first urban national park and this will provide an opportunity to improve the health of all Londoners.

Can we import him and put him in charge of Planning in Melbourne?

Gigantic oak tree

Sun.Age Nov. 19 *"Footscray Historical Society says the tree would be at least 120 years old. Its canopy is almost as large as 3 houses, spreading across 5 backyards."* A local developer is in the process of destroying this extraordinary tree and Maribynong Director of Planning said that it *"has not been nominated as a significant tree and is not a species native to Victoria. The private property is in an Activity Centre Zone and requires no planning approval for removal."* Unbelievable!

Do you know that Stonnington loses 1500 trees a year mainly because of development? How much shade would they have provided? How much pollution would they have absorbed? We'll never know.

Leafy streets and shady parks in jeopardy

Nicole Hasham reported in The Age on Nov. 14 that *"climate change severely threatens the health of more than a third of tree species in Australian cities, including elms and eucalypts."*

Trees provide shade, places for recreation and a sense of place and heritage. They cool the city, capture rain, slow stormwater and provide habitat for birds and other animals. *“Risks to trees were posed by both rising temperatures and the urban ‘heat island’ effect, where dark-coloured and paved surfaces, buildings and the emission of heat from human activities cause local warming.”*

We urged you to plant a tree in 2016. If you didn't do it then how about doing it NOW?

Friction in the ranks

Remember when Minister Wynne gave Crown permission to build Melbourne's highest tower? Well, Clay Lucas told us on Nov. 14 that Minister Foley has called it *“an unmitigated disaster”* and *“bad planning.”* He has criticised Mr. Wynne for not adhering to a standard process. Guess where Mr. Foley's seat is? He holds the seat of Albert Park by less than 3%...so close to Crown and so many residents in towers near Albert Park! Win some, lose some Mr. Foley. We know how you feel. We, too, suffer from Minister Wynne's bad decisions.

VCAT springs to mind when we talk of bad decisions

In The Age on Dec.2 Allison Worrall reported...*“There are now calls for a **parliamentary review into the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal...**”* This brought tears of unadulterated joy to our eyes. Is it possible that anyone other than residents might just find that in the Planning & Environment division of VCAT serious questions need to be asked. A planner on radio on Dec.2 said that *“VCAT doesn't make the rules...they just interpret them.”* Really? For a long time many of us have questioned VCAT decisions. We believe that the Tribunal is in thrall to developers who have deep pockets and can employ several expert witnesses to give **unsworn evidence.**

In the article we have cited, a resident said, *“Ours is a story which exemplifies a broken planning system, with VCAT as the root of the problem. Developers are using the council process as a formal stepping stone with the end game being a more obliging VCAT.”*

A broken planning system indeed!

Dick Smith and population growth

Sunday Age Oct.8...Dick Smith *“is enamoured of the suburban Australian idyll and he doesn't believe that our current immigration intake of 190,000 per year makes it impossible to preserve.”* He's waiting to be called to be a dictator of Australia and as dictator he would *“increase taxes on the wealthy, cut the immigration rate to 70,000, increase the number of refugees admitted and link foreign aid to education for women to slow population growth in neighbouring recipients.”*

He plans to spend \$2million backing candidates in marginal seats who support curbing Australia's population growth.

Decision by Labor Party to fund Council candidates

MEG has always believed that Party politics should not be involved in Local Council. We've seen some disasters when this has occurred. The Greens always endorse and fund their candidates. Neither Liberal nor Labor endorse candidates though they may provide some funding. The Age on Nov. 13 reported that *“an internal review by Labor saw an outpouring of frustration at the ALP's disconnectedness from communities.”* GOSH!

The ALP will probably endorse and resource candidates in some municipalities. Let's hope Stonnington is not one of them and that the Liberal Party doesn't follow Labor's lead.

Senate inquiry into political influence of donations

Eryk Bagshaw quoted Monash University academic Charles Livingstone in the Age on Nov.3 *"You can get a politician for \$2000 a year, a party for \$100,000 a year and policy for \$200,000 a year,"* he said. The inquiry was told that *"Australia's system of political finance law is broken, open to exploitation and soft-corruption."*

The inquiry has heard arguments for donations to be capped as low as \$1000, that there should be 'real-time' disclosures, a ban on foreign donations and campaign expense limits. Sounds like common sense to us.

Further action from VCAT to make it harder for residents.

In September 2017 we received information that Form B on which objectors may give their "statement of grounds" will no longer be sent with all the information that VCAT usually sends. Henceforth it has to be **found** on the VCAT site, downloaded and printed by the objector.

With its usual utter disregard for anyone who is not a developer with deep pockets VCAT has told anyone who doesn't have a computer and a printer that 'we'll make it as hard for you as we can.' Now just to give you a little heart, MEG has been advised that legally VCAT is obliged to accept a "statement of grounds" even if it's written on toilet paper.

How we would love someone to test that!

Reform of the Victorian Planning Provisions.

MEG lodged a submission regarding the disastrous proposals made by DELWP for (not reforming) but changing the VPPs. The suggestions came from industry groups. No resident group was invited to any of the preliminary discussions regarding these so-called reforms and it was quite by accident that we heard that submissions were due on Dec.1. In essence the 'reform' is simply a massive free kick to developers...as if they needed any more free kicks! A few MEG members also lodged submissions. MEG's submission can be found on our website.

20,000 properties empty in city

On Nov.10 Benjamin Preiss reported in The Age that over Melbourne's 16 municipalities there are 20,000 vacant dwellings. These properties have been vacant for more than 6 months. From January 1/2018 a vacancy tax will apply to properties that have been vacant for more than 6 months in a calendar year. The Government hopes that this will stop "land banking."

"Census figures from 2016 showed that Australia had 200,000 more homes sitting vacant that it did a decade ago." We wonder if there are any heads hanging in shame.

Why are permits issued every day for thousands of apartments to be built in this city alone when so many vacancies are listed? Is someone paying someone?

The vexed question of 'cladding'....

On Dec.2 James Dowling reported in the H.S. that *"Up to 1400 Victorian buildings have potentially combustible cladding similar to the type that fuelled a deadly fire in London..."*

Eight hospitals have non-compliant cladding that has to be removed and there may be as many as another 12 hospitals. Further testing has to be done. The rest of the 1400

buildings have not been named by the Victorian Cladding Taskforce but as far back as Oct.21 it was reported in The Age that the builder of the Lacrosse apartment tower is seeking a Supreme Court injunction to stop the VBA from issuing a “*direction to fix*” 6 other towers that he has built.....Milano, Aura, Atlantis, Guilfoyle, 463 Docklands Drive and 42-56 Franklin St.

But, never fear....Planning Minister Wynne said all hospitals were safe...WHEW! Such a relief to get that announcement...and from such a reliable source!

Now we've got YIMBYs

Sunday Age Dec.3 This new movement is to counter the NIMBY cry. Instead of **Not In My Back Yard** we're going to be subjected to **Yes In My Back Yard...YIMBYs** The new breed is not going to buy a sheep paddock, build and design a **new** city. NO, they want to ADD even more to the existing city. They want to “*see developers providing 'community dividends'...parks, community gardens or new cafes....*” (Gosh!...We should have thought of that!)...and they want “*the community consulted before plans get under way.*” (Gosh! We should have thought of that too!)

Melbourne University lecturer Max Holleran and Jean Darling , architect and planning expert, are co-founders of YIMBYs Victoria.

Parliamentary Inquiry

There is an inquiry into the Government's proposal to demolish nine ageing public housing estates across Melbourne. Once the housing is demolished the Government will sell the land to developers to build thousands of new dwellings...some in towers up to 20 storeys. At least 10% of the dwellings would have to be public (or social) housing. Estates in Brighton, Prahran, Hawthorn, Brunswick West, North Melbourne, Heidelberg West, Clifton Hill, Northcote and Ascot Vale are in the sights of the Labor Government.

The Age Oct.30....Councils employed consultants to assess whether this would provide sufficient public housing and they said NO. Minister Foley dismissed the reports as “*cheap, politically inspired lies spread by Greens Party and Liberal-dominated councils.*”

Really, Mr. Foley? The present Government would certainly be practised in recognising 'politically- inspired lies.'

Some Local Snippets

Christmas cheer in Stonnington

H.S. Nov. 27...“*Inner city councils like Moreland and Stonnington spend hundreds of thousands to make December special, other rich councils like Yarra and Port Phillip have closed their wallets.*” Yarra is spending \$30,000 on Christmas decorations and “*this pales against Stonnington (\$287,000) and Boroondara (\$103,000).*” Port Phillip is only spending \$4,000. So good to know that we win the 'big spender' competition!

Sports stadium Feasibility Study.....Chadstone Bowling Club

After receiving a HUGE report 4 days prior to the Council Meeting October 30 Councillors considered the recommendations made by ...

- 1...Otium Planning Group....Stadium Operations Report
- 2...Traffic Impact Assessment....O'Brien Traffic
- 3...Social Impact Assessment...Public Place

4...Chadstone Bowls Club Strategic Options Assessment...Corengal Group

5...Site Review of the Chadstone Bowling Club and 2 sites within Orrong Romanis Reserve which was an appendix to Hansen Partnership Feasibility Study that was included as an Attachment to the report in the Notice Paper.

We admire the ability of the 9 Councillors who were able to read all of the above (as well as the all the other Items listed on the Agenda) and make a considered decision based on the either the facts or the mis-information presented to them. Having read the details 6 Councillors voted to accept the recommendation with an Amendment from Cr. Griffin. The Recommendation confirmed PercyTreyvaud Memorial Park as the site for the Stadium. The Park will also house the Chadstone Bowls Club, the Tennis Club, the Recreation & Civic Club and summer and winter users of the sportsground.

Point 3 of Recommendation...Consult with Chadstone Bowls Club and its members to discuss their facility preferences and confirm their preferred option.

MEG would have thought by now that Councillors would be well aware of their preferred option so why would they consider consulting yet again?

East Ward Councillors Davis & Atwell and South Ward Councillor Hindle put forward alternative recommendations to abandon Percy Treyvaud Park as the site for a stadium.

63, 65 & 67 Waverley Rd. From Epping St. to Turner St.

This proposal abuts the Heritage Overlay of the Gascoigne Estate. There is no lane at the rear of the site. Council Planning Dept. refused the application and the developer went to the developers' friend (VCAT) and the following is an excerpt from the lengthy VCAT report.

*"I agree with objectors in that the proposal will be different from the dwellings in the Heritage streetscape, **given the flat roof, the lack of eaves, the 3 storey height and the width of the building to Epping St.**"*

(From the Convenor...the Member showed astonishing perspicacity in writing that. Of course it will be different from anything in the Gascoigne! It's not rocket science!)

The Member's view was...

"that the relevant Planning Scheme provisions and policies anticipate that a contemporary response is acceptable and seek to avoid a mock Heritage building." There is

"a respectful interface with the heritage and neighbourhood character values of the street"

She concluded from that statement:

"that an intrusive and dominating appearance will be avoided."

And there are pages and pages of that sort of stuff!

Suspended Enforcement Officers...is the dispute settled?

Cameron Houston and Chris Vedelago reported in The Age on Oct. 1 that "Stonnington Council has suspended four enforcement officers accused of rorting the ratepayers by using their mobile phones while outside the municipality." According to the article, "a council source who asked not to be identified, claimed the four suspended officers were the subject of a vendetta by the council which was moving to restructure its enforcement team to reduce costs."

Down in Chapel St

You might remember that ex-Planning Minister Guy removed heights limits in the northern section of Chapel St. S.Y. and the 90m tower at 661 Chapel St.is nearly completed. An advertisement in the Leader on Oct. 24 tells us of the wonders of this vertical community

and one of these is a 25m lap pool ***“that dramatically cantilevers over Chapel St.”*** Is that an invasion of the Public Realm?

Also in Chapel St. the Jam Factory faces demolition...Once part of Prahran’s heritage area the only bit of ‘heritage’ that’s to be left is *“the historic factory chimney.”* It was reported in the Age on Oct.10 that Newmark Capital, owner of the Como Centre, propose a 15 storey office and retail complex over the 2 hectare site with a public plaza that will wrap around the chimney.

590 Orrong Rd

You might remember the saga surrounding this site and the battle fought by residents against the LendLease proposal to cover the two and a half hectare site with buildings that would house 450 apartments. It looks as if the buildings are completed and we have heard on radio a number of advertisements telling the listeners that anyone who shows an interest in buying an apartment there can live in one for 5 days FREE so that they can really see what a wonderful development it is. They call it, “Try before you buy!” Can’t they sell them? MEG has heard on the grapevine that only 50% has sold. A very unusual situation in that area!

945-947 Dandenong Rd. (Masonic Temple)

Council Planning Department has issued a Permit for this site. A previous Permit had lapsed some time ago. A Permit has been granted for the construction of a 4 storey building for 87 units of student accommodation and 2 parking spaces. We all know that students don’t drive cars so clearly there is no need to provide a reasonable amount of parking.

Some Planning Applications in and around Malvern East

302-308 Waverley Rd. Pt. dem. bldg. & works ass. with a mixed use dev. in Commercial Zone 1, H.O. and S.B.O. with reduction in car pking req.

45 Washington St. Dual occ. 2 storeys, basement car parking. In NCO.

32 Chadstone Rd. Four 3 storey townhouses.

41 Fisher St. Constr. of multi-dwelling in GRZ and reduction in car parking req. Appeal Against FTD. Merits Hearing for 2 days ...Jan.17/2018.

46 Coppin St. Pt.dem., construction & addns tto dwelling in H.O.

74-76 Chadstone Rd. Multi-dwelling development. Oct. 18 Refusal to Grant from Pl.Dept.

14 Camira St. Constr. of multi-dwelling dev. in GRZ and reduction in visitor car parking req. Appeal against Decision to Grant. VCAT Merits hearing...Feb.2/2018.

26 Chanak St. Pt. dem. and 1st floor extension to existing dwelling on a lot less than 500 sq.m.

103 Brunel St. Demolition and constr. of new dwelling in NCO.

152 Darling Rd. Pt. dem, to allow addns & to allow constr. of extra dwelling on a lot partly covered by an SBO.

79 Brunel St. Construct 2 two storey townhouses with double garage to rear of property.

28 Hughes St. Dual occ. in an NCO.

36 Hughes St. ... Dual occ. in an NCO.