



Malvern East Group

MEG Supports **PLANNING BACKLASH**

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MEG NEWSLETTER....SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2019

From the Convenor's Desk

I am writing this the day after Stonnington Council appeared at the Supreme Court in its second attempt to remove or modify the covenants on Percy Treyvaud Park. It was decided that this matter would go to trial and would not be heard before April 2020.

I am delighted to hear that this has been delayed whilst I deplore the appalling waste of money. Five Councillors on our present Council have allowed the expensive process to continue instead of dealing with issue of the covenants as a PRIORITY. Those of you who couldn't care less about what happens at the eastern end of Stonnington must surely care what happens with your 'rates' dollar. 'Squillions' would have been saved if the covenant issue had been dealt with first. Five councillors seem to think that our 'rates' dollar is monopoly money!! See Local News for names of councillors who don't!

To my further delight the immediate destruction of the trees and shrubs on Percy's Park is deferred and in the end we hope that the decision might just be their "close shave with death."

Breaking news.....I have just heard that the trial will commence on May 4/2020.

Better Apartments

In 2016 MEG lodged a submission with DELWP re "Better Apartments" proposed by Minister Wynne. At the time we were part of a Committee that met with Planning Ministers over a number of years and we had talked about mandating a '**minimum size**' with Mr. Wynne but he told us he '**had been persuaded**' that he could achieve 'good design' without requiring developers to build decent-sized apartments. (*You can, of course, make an educated guess about who had done 'the persuading.'*) So here we are, three years later after (and during) the cladding debacle, Mr. Wynne is having another go at trying to get "Better Apartments" without mandating a 'minimum size,' without mandating a maximum height and without mandating a 5% 'social housing element..... and he wants us all to lodge yet another submission.....and, collectively the MEG Committee said, "Why bother!" We seem to have '**submission fatigue**.'

At the Council Meeting September 16 Council resolved to lodge a submission with the staff report indicating that they "are supportive of the intent of the discussion paper." Whatever that somewhat obscure statement might mean!

Warning to buyers of real estate...cladding issues

On August 12 a report in the H.S. said that Monash Council paid \$22,040 to hire security guards for one building after the Grenfell disaster. The report stated that "*dozens of*

buildings in Monash municipality are sub-standard and shoddy cladding is at a cancer-care centre and in apartment blocks. One Permit shows that multi-board was to be used and instead combustible polystyrene panel system was installed."

Buyers are warned to look carefully at Section 32 statements for cladding specific clauses.

More about the cladding crisis

On August 19 The Age reported that to fix the crisis the estimated cost is \$6.2 billion....and this is a conservative figure....and then on Oct.4 Clay Lucas reported that *"thousands of Victorian apartment owners whose buildings are covered in flammable cladding are paying rates that fail to recognise that the value of their property has plummeted."*

Lucas also reported that the list is still a secret so it's difficult to do accurate assessments of properties. State Government asserts that *"it had received advice from Victoria Police not to publish the addresses of buildings with combustible cladding to avoid the risk of arson."*

On Aug.20 an Age report revealed that the VBA had suspended one Building Surveyor who *had repeatedly approved the use of the dangerous materials and had a history of disciplinary action."*

Well, they left that suspension a bit late, didn't they?

The same article reported that *"Mr. Wynne said building laws would be reviewed in the coming months to protect consumers and ensure those who did the wrong thing could not walk away from substandard building works."* (Whatever that means!)

Mr. Wynne is doing SO well as Planning Minister! Bit late with his review!

Infrastructure report

Mathew Knight wrote in The Age Aug. 14 that the latest infrastructure report is *"an alarm bell to state and federal governments."* He advocates *"a regional industry policy, underpinned by a regional water policy to create employment and investment in regional cities...and more needs to be done to save what remains of our urban green canopy."*

MEG has advocated for years for planned decentralisation. We have also advocated for retention and extension of the green canopy. Alas, our advocacy has fallen on deaf government ears....and are we surprised?

In the Oct./Nov. edition of Royalauto we noted that a 1954 report on the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme *"identified key challenges facing the city...traffic congestion, crowded public transport and (even then) sprawling outer suburbs with inadequate infrastructure."* **Here we are 65 years later...and what's changed? Just more people!**

Unit standards 'must lift'

Aug. 9 (The Age) *"The boss of Australia's largest apartment developers, Mirvac, has called for an urgent lift in building standards describing the sale of defective units as a "breach of faith."* When the CEO of a huge development company calls for swift improvements to construction practices we know that things in the 'new dwelling' sphere are really bad. She wants *"to raise building standards."* MEG wonders if she's had this conversation with our erstwhile Planning Minister. He likes listening to developers!

VCAT...Remuneration of Members

We read in the H.S. Sept. 19 about pay rises for MPs AND pay rises for VCAT Members and we thought you would like to know that your taxes are at work every day at 55 King St. as well as at Parliament House. The Deputy President of VCAT will now receive a salary of

\$369,755, a Senior Member \$295,765, a Senior Member's daily sessional rate is \$1259. An Ordinary Member's salary is \$259,062 and presiding daily sessional rate \$1217 and non-presiding daily sessional rate is \$1100. Not bad payment for finding so often in favour of the developer! We are, of course, thinking only of the Planning & Environment section of VCAT which is the subject of the Guest Speaker at our AGM on October 23. Members receive these salaries in all sections of VCAT.

Sale of public land

The Age...Oct.10 Just when we thought that everything 'the people' own in this State had been sold, we are informed that State Government *"is posed to massively ramp up its sales of publicly-owned Crown land around Victoria, with more than 2,000 hectares to go under the hammer."* The Victorian Greens propose to move in Parliament that the sales be stopped and the former schools, police stations, etc. be re-vamped to provide accommodation for homeless people. *"Land at Footscray, Clifton Hill and Essendon is slated for auction despite being identified by University of Melbourne academics as priority sites for housing to tackle homelessness."*

"Public land should be kept to meet public needs."

There is little doubt (if any) that these prime sites will be sold to developers and MEG finds itself in the extraordinary situation of actually agreeing with the Greens! In a Letter to the Editor of The Age on Oct. 11 the writer referred to the *'short-term thinking'* of this proposal and said she thought the *"let's keep our snouts in trough"* tactic had died with the Kennett Government. Alas, every Government since the Kennett government has sold public land. 533 hectares have been sold during the last 10 years. Now more than 2000!

A letter-writer to the Age on Oct. 15 declared State Government's in not using this land towards *"solving Victoria's public housing and homelessness crises"* exhibited a ***"a shameless disregard for disadvantaged Victorians."***

LOCAL NEWS

Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park

As we mentioned in our introduction the immediate fate of the park is in the hands of the Supreme Court. What we didn't mention was that at the Directions Hearing your 'rates dollar' paid for **a solicitor and a barrister** who requested a **4 day hearing** rather than a mere 2 days thus pushing up the costs for us, the ever-generous ratepayers of Stonnington who unwittingly (it seems) indulge the whims of the **five councillors** and for the residents who were willing to take the scary step of opposing Council in the Supreme Court.

We are indebted to Crs. Davis, Atwell, Griffin and Hindle for maintaining their stance against the huge expense of this entire project.

Thanks to our careful management over the 15 years of our existence and to your continuing membership subscriptions MEG has been able to make a donation towards the costs borne by residents and we hope that you are able to do so too. Every dollar helps!

We want you to know that we have supported the residents in their determination to save Percy's Park from the travesty of the Masterplan devised by myriads of people under the direction of "the five" **(at your expense)** because more than anything people need **open space**. We cannot afford to lose one more bit of **open space** in Stonnington nor can we afford to lose one more tree. Trees help to clean the air by absorbing pollution. They

provide shade and counter the heat island effect. Five councillors want to get rid of 150 trees and shrubs on Percy's Park.

An Armadale resident said to MEG recently, *'It seems that all this Council wants to do is put buildings on every bit of open space we have.'* How true!

St. Catherine'sEpping Rd.

On September 19 John Masanauskas reported that an application by St. Catherine's to change the front of the building by installing glass sliding doors to replace the existing narrow door had been refused by both Stonnington Council and VCAT on 'heritage' grounds. The original Methodist church built in the 1920s was taken over by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in 1983 and has functioned all that time with the original 'narrow door' at the main entrance but now the applicant wanted to give brides a "moment of awe" as they entered the church and there is *"concern that coffins are being damaged"* as they are carried through the narrow door. VCAT Member Vicki Davies said that *"Any benefits to the church do not outweigh the adverse heritage impacts."*

(N.B. *That's a good decision to use if you are objecting to the often outrageous "box on the back" in a heritage area!*)

Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust

The Trust has developed a website at a cost of....well, we don't know the cost! (Sound familiar?) The front page has pictures of the 'public' (a man) playing sport and using this 'public' land. Scrolling down to the section called..."What's happening" and we found that "what's happening" is that there are 6 major race meetings between August and January! Nothing else...just the race meetings! We must remember, of course, that not a lot of other things can happen on this **public open space** until the MRC moves horse training to another venue...and that won't be for another 5 years...BUT, never fear, the Trust has got a website!!

In a report from Glen Eira Residents' Association we read that the Trust is still fiddling around the edges apparently with no great need to **do** something...anything! MEG's representatives seem to think much the same but we are heartened by the appearance of a **website** and we want to assure GERA, "They've done **something** although it's not anything relating to community use of the land." (Gosh! We can't have everything we want!)

CRRT's Website

It commences with a photo of 4 athletic types playing with a ball. Rivetting! Then there's a list of items that are on the website....

- 1... How to access the reserve. (It's not easy to find an entry to this public land.
2. Land Management project overview. (This explains what they might do in the dim distant future.)
3. What events are happening at the reserve.
(Between Oct.2019 and Jan. 2020 6 major race meetings are listed.)
4. Reports and publications.
5. Frequently asked questions.

Do you ever wonder just where your taxes go?

And a snippet about the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve

In the H.S. on Oct 3 we read that *"a trampled jockey is taking legal action against the club*

(MRC) which owns the racecourse..." Gobsmacked? So were we!

Could the H.S. be right and the MRC does actually OWN it all and we have been misleading our readers for years?

851-853 Dandenong Rd.

The applicant for an 8 storey building on this site is also applying to acquire the lane to the north of the site. A report about this is in Council Notice Paper Sept. 30. Council resolved at that meeting to remove the road from Council's Register of Public Roads. The closure must be advertised indicating that Council proposes to sell the land to adjoining owners for market value.

Wouldn't it be good if Council had resolved to keep it and plant the entire lot with trees....a green and shady nook near Dandenong Rd. where 62,000 cars pass every day? Even MEG can dream!!

14 Wilmot St.

The application for this site was for a dual occ. in an NCO. There were more than 7 objections so a Consultative Meeting was held with Ward Councillors. Council's Planning Dept.'s Recommendation to Council was to approve the development with conditions. Objectors continued their opposition to the application by emailing and ringing Councillors asking for a Refusal to Grant a Permit at Council Meeting on March 4/2019 Councillors acceded to their request and the applicant appealed to VCAT and on September 16 VCAT's decision was to agree with Councillors. No Permit was granted because the requirements of the Neighbourhood Character Overlay were not met.

MEG has a list of such cases. You can find it on our website.

More legal expenses for Council....your rates at work!

The H.S. Sept, 13 reported that "*a legal battle between traders and Council*" is about to occur. Over 30 traders have been "*bled dry*" since construction work began at the **multi-million dollar** Cato Square project ...now Prahran Square project. Traders have consulted lawyers regarding a class action against Council for loss of income.

Have you SEEN the work being done in that area? Initially it was supposed to be "open space" for an area of Stonnington which has very little. All we have seen are large concrete structures. In the plan there are to be 3 'food and beverage' venues.....as if Chapel St. doesn't have enough of those!

East Ward Meeting....October 10

This is the first East Ward Meeting for some time when the 'stadium in a park' was not the dominant topic. No doubt that was due to the fact that the issue is in the hands of the Supreme Court. Ageism was evident.

A couple of men claimed to be 'the youngest' in the room. We didn't quite understand the relevance of that. Did that make them and their issues more or less important? Who knows!

A BIG issue was "the box on the back"in the Gascoigne! Council was blamed for the proliferation of these aberrations. Not only does the "box" look awful ...(we agree)...but it also means more people.. (gosh!).. often with cars and THEN these cars are parked in the streets of the Gascoigne! HOW can residents STILL be unaware of the overriding powers of State Government in ALL planning and population issues? Doesn't EVERYBODY know that Minister Wynne has said that the "middle suburbs" are lagging in new development and there has to be more housing here rather than have Melbourne spreading out even further. Stonnington is one of his targets!

Rubbish bins were also to the fore. Apparently Council' rubbish collectors don't "leave the place tidy" with bins tipped up and lids off after collection and "if Monash Council...a lesser Council... can do it properly why can't Stonnington? "

Dean Hurlston, President of Victorian Ratepayers and Stonnington Ratepayers questioned Council's capital expenditure on large projects....Prahran Square \$65million, Victory Square \$20 million, Percy Trevaud Park \$44.6 million...just to name a few. MEG also questions this outrageous use of the 'rates' dollar. The meeting closed after an ex Q.C. advised residents to get together and arrange to have covenants put on their properties.

A few of the Planning Applications in and around Malvern East

39 Winter St. Malvern. Dual occ. In GRZ

1141 Dandenong Rd. Use as a Medical Clinic. Advertising signage and car pkg dispensation in a GRZ and H.O.

1707-1709 Malvern Rd. Glen Iris Eight 23 storey townhouses.

22 Finch St. Dem. & alterations to existing single dwelling in H.O.

6 Lomond Terrace Constr. of four 2 storey dwellings.

4 Bellevue Av. Limited Licence renewal.

15 Deakin St. Pt. dem. & extension of existing dwelling on a lot less than 500sq.m. in NRZ and H.O.

1111 Dandenong Rd. Reduction in no. of car spaces req. to use land as a Medical Centre and application for Business signage in RGZ.

909 Dandenong Rd. Constr. of student housing in RGZ.

851-853 Dandenong Rd. Mixed use dev.in Commercial 1 zone. 1st fl. Studio/office, 44 apts. on floors 1-8. 56 car spaces in 3 level basement parking and reduction in car pking req.

13 Tooronga Rd. Dem. of single storey house and constr. of 4 townhouses with basements.

61-67 Chadstone Rd. Existing service station....extension of hours of operation to 24/7 and unattended.

If you wish to make a donation to
"RESIDENTS AGAINST THE STADIUM"
at Bendigo Bank

BSB 633000 ACCOUNT NO. 169 215 381