

Northbridge Progress Association Inc

Minutes of the General Meeting held at St Marks Hall, Malacoota Rd, Northbridge on Wednesday July 18 at 8.00pm

Present: 153 members and visitors (of whom approximately 45 were members), including:
Gladys Berejiklian MP
Mayor Reilly and Crs Johnston, Norton, Lamb and Rutherford
Representatives from AMP Capital Investors, Helen Deegan and Gavin Boswarva
Representatives of Castlecrag, Castle Cove, Naremburn, Chatswood East and Willoughby South Progress Associations

Welcome:

President John Becroft opened the meeting and welcomed the visitors.

Apologies: Greg and Sue Sheldon, Annette Holder, Michael Conder, Stewart Truswell, Jenny Roxburgh.

Previous minutes:

RESOLVED that the minutes of the General Meeting held on May 16 2007 be confirmed and signed by the chair.

Northbridge Neighbourhood Watch (NNW):

Area Coordinator Howard Lardner summarized crime statistics in Northbridge for the past four months. He noted the need for more NNW street coordinators. NNW Treasurer Ron Hicks said that NNW had \$418 in the bank.

New Northbridge Progress Association web site

Ron Hicks noted that NPA members could access meeting minutes and other information on the new NPA website. The website also included information on NNW.

Northbridge Plaza expansion issue:

John Becroft opened the discussion on the subject "A major Plaza expansion – do we want it or not?" He noted that what happens to the Plaza shopping centre and the adjacent Council car-park could have a profound impact on local traffic, shops and businesses, not only in Northbridge but in surrounding suburbs. He said it could literally change the character of our suburbs.

Malcolm Lye summarized the background to the Plaza expansion proposals and outlined the outcome of recent Council meeting debates and resolutions. He said that NPA was still opposed to AMP (rather than Council) managing the Masterplan process and NPA objected strongly to Council negotiating a memorandum of Understanding over the car park land until the Masterplan is completed and approved.

A representative of AMP Capital Investors, Gavin Boswarva, said that the existing centre would not be demolished, only enhanced. He said that AMP wants to work with Council and the community to move forward with the Masterplan process.

Mark Monk, from a new residents' action group, Willoughby Residents Against Plaza Overdevelopment, told residents that the group was not against development of the Plaza, only retail expansion. He said that a retail expansion would create five times as much traffic as residential development.

John Hooper spoke on behalf of Chatswood East Progress Association and Bruce Wilson for Castlecrag Progress Association. Peter O'Shaunessy spoke on behalf of residents of Northbridge Gardens retirement village.

Dr Ruth Ratner emphasised the need to reduce traffic congestion to ensure that emergency services operated efficiently. Rob Marish noted that NPA had represented the community well for many years and that Council should listen more carefully to its views.

A number of residents queried AMP about recent market research carried out on Northbridge residents and requested copies of the questions used, which AMP declined to release.

Mayor Pat Reilly assured the meeting that Northbridge Plaza had always been a community shopping centre and will stay a community shopping centre. He said that if AMP could not accept a 10% retail expansion, perhaps the shopping centre needs another owner. In regard to the potential for NSW Department of Planning to take over as consent authority for the site, Mayor Reilly said that Council wants to control the Masterplan process and that Council won't give the Planning Minister easy access to the site.

Cr Judith Rutherford said the car park land is community land, owned by all residents. She said that Council has to keep control of the land.

Willoughby State MP Gladys Berejiklian said that no development should take place without the direct involvement of the community in an open and transparent process. "The last thing we want to see is the project landing on a Minister's desk," she said.

Cr Wendy Norton noted that she hopes to have a rescission motion approved that would have Council conduct the Masterplan over the site, not AMP.

There were a number of questions from residents to AMP and good further discussion of the issue.

Resolution:

John Holder proposed and Peter McNair seconded the following motion. A number of suggested amendments from residents were incorporated into the motion with the consent of the proposer and seconder.

RESOLVED that this meeting does not oppose the redevelopment of the Northbridge Plaza site with a high quality shopping centre and residential units (including seniors' units) provided that:

1. Ownership and control of the car park land will remain with the community.
2. Retail space will expand by no more than about 10% compared with the current retail and other space in the centre.
3. There will be minimal impact of the redevelopment on current traffic volumes or on local neighbourhood shops and businesses.
4. Any residential units built on the site will be in keeping (that is, in height, bulk and quality) with existing residential units in Northbridge.
5. Improvements will be made to access within the shopping centre for elderly and disabled members of the community.
6. Improvements will be made to car park safety, security and convenience, whether or not the car park is relocated underground.
7. There will be minimal impact on the residents of Harden Avenue, Tenilba Rd, Northbridge Gardens Retirement Village and the Paulian Villa Nursing Home.

The resolution was carried, first unanimously by NPA members present, then unanimously by the entire meeting.

John Becroft closed the meeting at 10.00pm.

Refreshments were provided.

Chairman

Date