

Northbridge Progress Association Inc
Minutes of General Meeting held at Northbridge Golf Club
on Thursday March 13 2014 commencing at 7.45pm

Attendance: 40 members and visitors.

Quorum: The Chairman, Rob Coote, noted that a quorum was present.

Apologies: Grant Sheldon, Linden Gulson, Ron Hicks, Jenny Roxburgh, David Synnott, Tracey Cahill, Veronica Hope, Dr Kate Grenot, Peter McNair, Don Wilson

Welcome: The Chairman welcomed guest speakers Sailors Bay Ward Councillors Acting Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney, Cr John Hooper and Cr Hugh Eriksson. He also welcomed visitors Cr Angelos Rozos and (later in the meeting) Cr Stuart Coppock, NPA members and other visitors.

Tribute to the late Mayor Pat Reilly

On behalf of NPA, Rob paid tribute to the 17 years of service to Willoughby City by the late Mayor Pat Reilly. He noted that there would be 10 candidates for the position of Mayor at the by-election on April 12, including Sailors Bay Ward Councillor Gail Giles-Gidney.

President's remarks

Rob Coote noted that NPA had several new, younger committee members. NPA General Meetings during 2014 would be held at Northbridge Golf Club. NPA had a new website and was making greater use of social media. It was NPA's aim to represent the entire community. The intent is to engage the community, obtain views on local issues (such as the Plaza car park, traffic, parking, etc) and form sub-committees on issues of significance.

Guest speakers

Rob Coote introduced the three Sailors Bay Ward Councillors and asked them to speak in turn on local issues.

Cr Hugh Eriksson said:

- A City-wide parking strategy had been approved by Council and would shortly be on exhibition. The strategy was focussed mainly on Chatswood CBD and Artarmon and Northbridge would not be greatly affected. More parking meters and resident parking permits are likely outcomes. He encouraged residents to comment on the strategy.
- Council was awaiting information from Northbridge Plaza management about Council's car park. His personal view was that some development along Eastern Valley Way would be needed to justify improvements to the car park.

Cr John Hooper said:

- He had withdrawn from the Mayoral By-election but would be supporting Cr Coppock's campaign.
- The cost to Council of the Mayoral By-election would be \$300,000 with a further \$100,000 for a Ward By-election if a current Councillor were to be elected.
- There is an efficiency audit of Council operations currently being carried out.
- In regard to the parking strategy, he mentioned that parking meters tend to push cars into streets where there are no meters.

- In regard to Northbridge Plaza and the Council car park, he was sceptical that current investigations by Council would have a useful outcome. Woolworths has a 20-year lease and would be unlikely to allow disruption to its business from a major development on the site.

Acting Mayor Cr Gail Giles-Gidney said:

- Council had approved \$50,000 funding for upgrading the War Memorial Clock Tower in Strathallen Ave. Council is approaching the RSL and Joe Hockey for further funding.
- There was strong community interest in maintaining the condition of Northbridge Baths and all Sailors Bay Ward Councillors agree that the Baths must be maintained in good condition. A meeting of interested parties is planned for Monday March 17. A “Friends of Northbridge Baths” has been proposed.
- Ward Councillors have agreed that Bonds Corner is the best site for a new children’s playground. There will be community consultation about equipment selection for the site.
- Community consultation about any re-development plans for Northbridge Plaza and the Council car park site is planned for April/May.

Questions and discussion

In response to questions, the Ward Councillors responded:

- Cr Eriksson explained that the high cost of restoring the Memorial Clock is due to asbestos in the mortar.
- Cr Hooper said that Council faced significant deficits in the future and that action needed to be taken to reduce costs or raise more revenue.
- Cr Eriksson said that there had been disagreement on Council about proposed new signage for Willoughby City and the matter had been deferred.
- Cr Giles-Gidney explained that her reason for not opposing the increased height (to 47 storeys) of the Meriton high-rise development on the Thomas St car park site was to ensure that Council received a \$6 million contribution from Meriton and because Council was not the consent authority for the development. Cr Hooper noted that he had opposed the proposal.
- Cr Coppock mentioned that Council employed an expert consultant in playground design whose judgment is highly regarded by Council officers.
- Cr Coppock said that Council’s accumulated \$94 funds had been spent on The Concourse and suggested that special maintenance funds should be established by Council for ongoing maintenance of assets such as Northbridge Baths.
- Cr Giles-Gidney said that State Government had gone quiet on Council amalgamation proposals, perhaps because of its failure to pass the new planning system laws. In the meantime, lower North Shore Councils are exploring further sharing of services.

General business

The Chairman noted:

- There would be a “Meet the Mayoral Candidates” session at the Dougherty Centre at 7.30pm on March 20.
- NPA’s Clean-Up Australia event would be held at Tunks Park from 2.00 to 4pm on Sunday, March 30.
- Northbridge Golf Club had been very helpful to NPA. He thanked the General Manager and urged members to support the club.

- Northbridge Rotary Club is seeking up to 100 volunteers from the community to assist on the night as well as sponsorship for its Northbridge fireworks event on May 10.
- Residents should consider joining NPA. It is a community organisation and members help give us stronger representation.

Next meeting

NPA's next General Meeting will be held on Thursday June 5 2014 at 7.45pm at Northbridge Golf Club

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....