



NOTES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID PLUMRIDGE'S DESK

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THE 'PROS AND CONS' OF CONSULTATION

Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed new Councillors have to learn many hard lessons early in their term, none more so than how to relate to and respond to the needs - and sometimes demands - of those who elected them. And not only their electors but also to the many others who may be affected by the decisions we want to make.

Councils used to have 'ratepayers' but now the management jargon is 'customers' and stakeholders' and now we cannot make decisions without consulting. So what is consultation? Wikipedia says:

Public consultation, or simply consultation, is a regulatory process by which the public's input on matters affecting them is sought. Its main goals are in improving the efficiency, transparency and public involvement in large-scale projects and policies.

The Local Government Act (Pt 5 Sec 50) requires Councils to adopt a Consultation Policy which defines which issues require consultation and which do not, the period of consultation, methods of advertising what is being consulted on and how Council shall deal with the results of consultation. Perhaps Councils should do more to ensure full and unbiased details of what is being proposed. **Adelaide City Council's Consultation Policy** is at: http://www.adelaidecitycouncil.com/adccwr/publications/policies_strategies/public_communication_and_consultation_policy.pdf

Consultation can and should occur before Council makes a decision such as when we are preparing Business Plans and Budgets, Strategic Plans, Events are being considered, Parks are to be leased for lengthy periods of time or changes in parking restrictions are proposed (and many others) or after Council has prepared plans for a proposal but before a final decision is made such as we do for Development Plan Amendments, Community Land Management Plans and major works (e.g. Victoria Park/Tarndanyangga and Victoria Sq/Bakkabakkandi). Now of course many key decisions, especially in the Planning area, are made with absolutely no consultation, thanks to the policies of the State Govt pandering to the 'build at any cost' lobby which can now evade the need to consult.

In many cases Councillors will have been given extensive briefings of all the technical, legal and risk factors affecting a proposal as well as costings of the various available options. This level of detail is hard to convey to the public and Council often holds public meetings to help people to understand all the issues.

All too often documents offered for consultation lack sufficient information such as with the current consultation proposals for events in the Park Lands (SACA in Creswell Gdns and AI3DE in Victoria Park)

Consultation often results in diametrically opposed views being expressed with Councillors having to decide which course of action is in the best public interest, within the law and politically safe thus alienating those with different views, views sometimes driven by strong emotions and/or sectoral and vested interests. For these and other reasons I believe that consultation can lead to mediocre, lowest common denominator decisions being made.

The other problem with public consultation is that it sets up expectations that well prepared and presented submissions will actually be effective – in my observation since becoming a member of the City Council, very few submissions make any real difference. To its credit, Council requires that all formal submissions are reproduced for all Councillors (and the public) to see, but the same people who prepare the proposals also review the submissions and report to Council. Thus the objectivity of the reports is often queried by disgruntled consultees.

I believe that the new Council to be elected in November should review its Consultation Policy. **Perhaps Council should set up an Office of Consultation, independent of the administration, to deal with all aspects of public consultation thus improving the efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of public involvement.**

TOWARDS A CITY STRATEGY

The Council of the Capital City Lord Mayors has made submissions to the Federal Government on a **National Urban Policy** for our Capital and Major Cities. The submission asserts that our major cities can house our growing population through smart, targeted renewal strategies that need only cover 10% of our total metro areas.

The 30-Year Plan calls for 30% of our projected growth to occur in the inner metro areas. **Adelaide City itself** can double its population in that time in a more sustainable way than occurs with fringe development. This can only be achieved by a partnership between all spheres of Government and it would pay voters to see which political parties are backing this kind of City Building. If I remember rightly the Coalition, over its 12 years in government put no funds into public housing, the building of better cities or provision of support for needy people.

The Capital City Lord Mayors have a good plan but it won't get very far without ongoing Federal support.

A TOPICAL TOUCH "I have been thinking that I would make a proposition to my Republican friends... that if they will stop telling lies about the Democrats, we will stop telling the truth about them." **Adlai Stevenson**

DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT PANEL – Meeting held 2 August. (next Meeting 16 August at 5.30)

■ **3. Applications for consideration on Merit**

■ (Item 3.1) Development Plan Consent **was granted** for internal and external alterations and change of use to residential accommodation to provide 6 apartments on 2 levels at **6A-8 Rundle Mall** (DA/622/2009). This is an interesting alteration which will activate the upper floors above a Rundle Mall shop, a change of use which Council is keen to encourage. ►►

■ (Item 3.2) Consent **was granted** to demolish exg structures and build a 2-level Mixed Use building – restaurant at ground and apartments above – at **161 Gouger St.** The Consent was subject to conditions and a Reserved Matter relating to soil contamination (DA/900/20090)

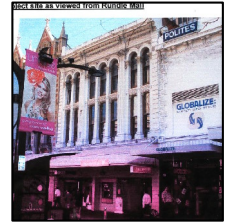
■ (Item 3.3) Consent **was granted** to demolish exg dwelling and pool and construct a 2-storey dwelling including cellar and garage at **281 Ward Street N.A.** (DA/217/2010)

■ **6 Other Business**

■ (Item 6.2) The Panel endorsed its **Annual Report** for submission to Council for the year **2009-2010**.

■ (Item 6.3 and 6.4) The Panel received Outcomes of Schedule 10 Development Applications resolved by the Development Assessment Commission in respect to 1) **113-115 King William Street** for Brinz Holdings to build a 25 level office building contrary to the advice of the DAP (DA/211/2010) and 2) **Architecture and Plaza Bldg G8** for UniSA to build a 3-level educational building adjacent to the architecture building.

■ (Item 6.5) A program of **w/shops** was adopted and it was agreed to **invite DAC** members to attend the w/shops.



CITY DESIGN AND CHARACTER COMMITTEE – Meeting held 3 August (next meeting 7 Sept at 5.30pm)

(Note: decisions made at these meetings are recommendations for final decision at Council Meeting on 30 August)

■ (Item 1.1) A **Workshop** was conducted to brief members on the Office of the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner's discussion papers 'A safer Night Out' and the Code of Practice for Licensed Premises. One of the key issues discussed was **licensing hours**; there was considerable support for a 3am to 6am break in trading.

■ (Item 3.1) The committee recommends to Council that all properties listed in the City Heritage and Character Residential and Mainstreet (Hutt) Zone DPA (Part 1) should go to the **Local Heritage Advisory Committee** for recommendation to the Minister. This includes the 36 which were objected to by the owners, 18 of which had been recommended for de-listing.

■ (Item 3.2) 2010/2011 Round 1 **Heritage Incentive Scheme** funds amounting to \$43k (6 applications) plus \$26k (3 applications) for State-listed properties which had not received State funding were recommended to Council.

■ (Items 4/5) was **Confidential** dealing with Public Toilet options for **Hindley Street Entertainment Precinct**.

■ (Item 7) A **Key Progress Report** on actions in the areas covered by the Committee was received.

CITY GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE – Meeting held 3 August (next mtg 7 Sept at 6.30pm)

■ (Item 1.1) A workshop was held on the **Sturt Living Project** which is currently undergoing an Expression of Interest process to select a development partner. The project will deliver a **mixed use** retail/carparking/residential development comprising 184 units includes **72 affordable dwellings** with Commonwealth support. Council's **Strategic Plan** is to deliver **150 affordable dwellings** and a permanent city population of **25,500 by 2012**.

■ (Item 3.1) It was recommended to Council that the **Go Green with Public Lighting Implementation Plan** be noted and that Stage I LED lighting roll-out in 2010/11 proceed at a cost of \$700k. This will cover approx. 10% of Council's street lights and will be funded from the Council's 1% 'rates levy' \$1.3m **Climate Change Action Plan** fund. Public lighting is a major contributor to carbon emissions and this project will reduce those emissions by 50% which is equal to an estimated **1300 tonnes per year** with annual energy savings of **\$50k** at today's prices.

■ (Item 4) A **Key Progress Report** on actions in the areas covered by the Committee was received.

CITY VIBRANCY COMMITTEE – Meeting held 10 August (next meeting 14 Sept at 6.30pm)

■ (Item 1.1) Workshops were held on 1) **Adelaide Town Hall Business Review** and 2) **Community Policy and Strategy** – The Project Brief will set out the proposed approach and timeline for delivery of 2 documents, a **Community Policy** and a **Community Strategy 2011-2015** for consideration by Council. The study will involve all who live, work, study or visit the City.

■ (Item 3.1) It was recommended to Council that sponsorship of the **Australian International 3-Day event** should be lifted from **\$5k to \$31k for 2010/2011**, based on their commitment subject to ticketing only to Rymill Park.

■ (Item 3.2) It was recommended to Council that The draft **(Disability) Access Action Plan 2010-2012** as set out in Attachment A of the agenda be endorsed The Plan aims to progressively improve access for people with disabilities at • Council buildings • Kerb crossings and footpaths • Bus stops and • Access to the HACC Program. New initiatives will include safe access for Gophers, better street signage and communication strategies.

■ (Item 8) A **Key Progress Report** on actions in the areas covered by the Committee was received.

CITY AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – Meeting held 10 August (next mtg 14 Sept at 7.15)

■ (Items 1 and 4) The meeting comprised 4 **Workshops** one being in confidence at the request of the presenters. However, due to a lack of time the committee **deferred until a later date**, workshops on 1) Tracking progress on the **Top Ten Strategic Projects** and 2) A complete review of Council's **Procurement Policy (Purchasing)** and 3) A w/shop to seek **Council's views** on how to effectively report on **Council Performance**.

■ (Item 3) A confidential briefing on the Oval Redevelopment was given by the **Stadium Management Authority**.

■ (Item 7) A **Key Progress Report** on actions in the areas covered by the Committee was received.

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING – Held on 10 August 2010 at 8.30pm (Next Ordinary Council Mtg 30 August at 5.30pm)

■ Council adopted the Recommendation from the City Vibrancy Committee that sponsorship of the **Australian International 3-Day event** be lifted from **\$5k to \$31k for 2010/2011** on the basis of no ticketing in Victoria Park.

■ Council appointed myself to be its representative at the AGM of the Board of the Local Government Finance Authority of SA and it was decided to not put forward any nominations for the vacancies on the Authority Board.

■ **Confidential** items were 1) a **Whitmore Square** Affordable Housing Matter and 2) a **Wingfield** Property Matter.

