



NOTES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID PLUMRIDGE'S DESK

ISSUE NO18

DECEMBER 9 2008

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THE MEANING OF LIFE

I am writing this from a small place called Tin Can Bay, some 60 kilometres north of Noosa in Queensland where my wife and I have been spending a couple of weeks on holiday. It is a very relaxed lifestyle where the highlight of the day is wandering down to the local marina, watching the local boaties come and go and the occasional fishing trawler head out to gather the 'catch of the day'.

All this frenzied inactivity, tempered with a regular flow of news from Adelaide (thanks to the wonders of IT and the mobile phone), has given me time to contemplate the Meaning of Life for an Adelaide City Councillor in terms of his or her role as a member of Council and what has been achieved in the first year of this Council's term.

Recently someone posed the question to the Lord Mayor "what do Councils actually have to do?" to which he replied, in effect, "nothing" This of course is true in the legislative sense although many regulatory functions are passed on to Councils by State Governments especially in areas of planning, building and environmental health controls. In effect Councils "do" what they believe their constituents want them to do and what our constituents, as individuals, cannot sensibly do for themselves such as rubbish collection, road maintenance and caring for our parks and gardens. In essence we do what we can to make our city more prosperous, more pleasant to live in and more sustainable.

In addition Adelaide, as the capital city, plays host to the cultural, tourism and entertainment aspirations of the whole state. What this all means and how we are to achieve it is the subject of much debate, discussion and sometimes argument around the Council Chamber! This leads to the formulation of Vision Statements, Strategic Plans, Corporate Plans and ultimately Budgets all of which are then subjected to extensive public consultation and review before their final adoption.

Nowadays, Councils are regarded as active partners with the other spheres of government in developing our communities in a socially just and environmentally sustainable way. I do not believe that Australia can afford to have three spheres of Government unless they work in unison towards the same goals and are equitably and adequately funded.

Councils' own-source income is mainly derived from property rating and associated activities yet many of the services councils are expected to provide relate to economic, environmental and social justice programs. Until Councils gain a fixed share of Commonwealth revenues (in return for agreed outputs) there will continue to be a yawning gap between what Councils actually do and what our constituents now expect us to do.

FINANCIAL STIMULUS THROUGH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Federal Government has called on Local Government to assist in the stimulation of the economy with an initial \$250m package for capital works across the nation. ACC's share, on a population basis, is \$151,000 and how this is to be spent will be considered by Council in due course. Capital Cities and other major cities continue to negotiate with Minister Albanese to develop a program of funding for long-neglected city infrastructure funding. The projected downturn in the construction industries may provide an opportunity for Council to promote a major project such as the regeneration of Victoria Square in partnership with the Federal and State governments.

AND THE BEAT GOES ON.....

Recent major events – Stereosonic in Bonython Park and Feast in Veale Gardens – have resulted in many complaints from residents about excessive levels of noise over long periods of time. It seems to me that promoters are showing no respect for the concerns of residents with ever more powerful equipment and the running 'concerts' as all-day events which means up to 10 hours of sheer hell for anyone within a many-kilometre radius. This is very disappointing and a matter of concern to Council given that we have recently adopted more stringent operating guidelines for events in the Park Lands, which require detailed acoustic plans, the attendance of a sound engineer at the event and an improved complaints process. To be fair, Council is still fine-tuning these new requirements so these particular concerts have given us valuable experience. EPA standards are clearly not satisfactory for such events conducted over many hours and Council will have to be far more demanding of events organisers who want to use areas close to residents. *Meanwhile, brace yourself for a long summer of catastrophic cacophonies.....!*

Some recent meeting decisions.....

DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT PANEL

Meetings were held on 17 November and 1 December whilst I was on leave (next meeting 15 Dec at 5.30)

The decisions made at those meetings can be found on the Council's website.

The newly appointed Presiding Member is Ms Shanti Ditter and the Deputy is Mr Rob Cheesman.

ADELAIDE PARK LANDS AUTHORITY meeting held on 20 November (next meeting 11 December at 5.00pm)

I was not present at this meeting but decisions and advice to Council were made on the following subjects:

- Congratulations to all concerned in achieving the listing of the Park Lands on the National Heritage Register as announced by Minister Peter Garrett on Friday 7 November.
- A Trees for Life proposal to establish a Children's Forest in the northern part of Pk 23 Wirranendi was endorsed in principle
- The Community Land Management Plan for Victoria Park as presented with amendments was endorsed for adoption.
- Comments were made on the Development Plan Amendment Report for the new hospital on North Terrace.
- A confidential matter regarding lease arrangements for Next Generation at Memorial Drive was considered.

COUNCIL AND KEY COMMITTEES

Meetings were held on 24 November whilst I was on leave.

Details of the decisions made at those meetings can be found on the Council website.

COUNCIL MEETING held on 8 December (308 pages) (next ordinary meeting of Council 27 January 2009 at 5.30pm)

Motions on Notice were moved by Cr Henningsen to award the Keys of the **City to the Adelaide United Football Club** and Cr Francis Wong asking staff to explore opportunities to host a **multicultural festival** as part of 2010 Australia Day activities.

- Council agreed to waive all statutory fees (estimated at a value of \$1.7m) associated with the Recycled Water Pipeline project.
- Closures of **Hindley St** on Saturday nights/Sunday mornings to create a mall environment will proceed to a 4-week trial in February 2009, the purpose being to increase pedestrian space and enhance public safety. Prior consultation will take place.
- Approval was given to **Electric Field Festival** to hold their event in Bonython Park on Sunday 8 February. Again this is to be an all day event going from 12 noon to 10pm; it is to be hoped that the control of noise levels will be better planned than of late.
- **Glendi Festival** was approved for **Ellis Park** on 14/15 March; the organisers will seek a new location for the 2010 Festival.
- The **Kings of Leon** concert will be held at the **Memorial Drive** complex on 11 March. This will run from 5pm to 11pm.
- Approval was given to the **Future Music Festival** for an event on Monday 9 March at Rundle Park and Rymill Park. This will involve closure of Rundle Road. This is a national festival which works in collaboration with the Garden of Unearthly Delights.
- Advice has been received that procedures have been agreed to 'streamline' the approach to resolving the **Kaurna Native Title Claim** affecting the city. The claim was lodged in October 2000 and involved the State and 29 metropolitan councils.
- Confidential items included
 1. ACC lease Palais Basement car park and purchase of Paxton's Walk and Tavistock Exeter lane.
 2. Construction of the Whitmore Square Affordable Housing – consideration of tenders for construction.
 3. Vendor approval for negotiations related to development of 102 and 114 Waymouth St Adelaide.
 4. Leasing of Grote Street Retail Tenancy (the bus station site)
 5. Consideration of potential strategic property purchase.

Whilst I am staunchly opposed to over-use of the confidentiality provisions of the LG Act I accept that it is justified where property dealings are concerned as in (1) (3) and (5). However, I am not persuaded that it should apply to the acceptance of tenders or to certain leasing matters as applies to items (2) and (4). *This is a battle 'yet to be won but still to be waged' !*

City Strategy Committee (249 pages)

- The Committee adopted the Community Land Management Plan for **Victoria Park/Bakkabakkandi** The plan incorporates the Masterplan which sets out 6 packages of work to be done over a period of years commits to detailed design work for stages 1 and 2 which it is hoped will be constructed in 2009 and 2010 respectively. The final plan incorporates the advice of the Park Lands Authority and many of the suggestions and comments made in the 1019 responses made by the general public.
- The project brief to review the **Community Safety Strategy** for the period 2009-2012 was endorsed. This follows earlier concerns about deficiencies in the strategy with respect to areas such as Gouger Street.
- The quarterly report on progress on the Council's **Carbon Neutral Action Plan** was noted. In the first 6 months significant work has been done in setting up the organisation required to deliver the project. Work has been done on UPark relamping to save energy, the Bicycle Action Plan which is to deliver improved on-road lane markings and provision of facilities in the CBD, the purchase of 20% additional Green Power bringing the Council's total to 40%, and the possible provision of 2 major solar panel installations in conjunction with the Adelaide Solar City Consortium.
- Council approved applications for Round 1 of the **Heritage Incentives Scheme (HIS)**. A total of \$386k was approved. This program is the most generous in the whole of Australia and reflects the Council's strong commitment to the preservation of the character of the city. Letters were sent to the **2200 owners of State and Local Heritage listed places** and 84 applications were received. Round 2 applications are now being called and there will be \$334k to be allocated in that round.
- Council has decided to pursue Veale Gardens as a site for a Community Garden and to endorse the idea of 'table garden' Sites at the Box Factory and the old Franklin St bus station. A major concern with 'in-ground' sites is the risk of contamination so Council will require soil contamination assessment reports before any development can proceed. This requirement is absolutely essential in any project that would involve food production where the risk to human health is very real.
- Council has agreed to support representatives of the 8 Precinct Groups and the China Town Group wishing to attend the Main Street Conference being held in Fremantle next February and to send 2 councillors and a staff member.
- The Committee agreed to the pruning of a significant tree in Park 12 Karrawirra. And to the provision of a root barrier to a tree at 329 Wakefield Street to minimise property damage.

VICTORIA PARK AND THE SAJC

Some weeks ago I reported that SAJC were about to finalise their lease of Victoria Park and begin removal of the ugly and unsightly buildings that they had built over the years. **It did not happen** and I think you will now begin to understand some of the difficulties Council has had in dealing with the leadership of the SAJC. If I was not bound by **CONFIDENTIALITY** I could tell you an incredible story of the difficulties, delays and at times apparent determination to frustrate resolution of what should have been a straightforward finalisation of a lease. It would seem that some lessees don't appreciate the generous benefits they have derived from the occupation of public lands on very beneficial terms thanks to the generosity of a well-intentioned landlord.

Perhaps one day the story can be told and the public able to make its own judgement about SAJC and Victoria Park

**The next edition of my Notes will be after the next meeting of Council on 27 January 2009.
I take this opportunity of wishing all my readers a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year**