



## **Minutes of the Newtown Residents' Association Meeting Monday 20 July 2020 at Newtown Hall, 71 Daniell Street**

**Present:** Rhona Carson (Chair), Steve Cosgrove (Minutes), Jane Patterson, Leonie Walker, Carol Comber, Sambrene Chandler, Walter Jobstl, Alison Borbeley, James Shannon, Mel Short, Sam Somers, Daphne Pilaar, Keith Powell, Ben Gittos, Warwick Taylor, Mark Johnston, James Harris, Giselle Bahr, Steve Dunn, Phillip Rose, Peter Frater, Kevin Lethbridge, Don Mc Donald, Alan Murray, Michelle Wolland, Simon Bannock, Emma Bennock, Patrick Morgan, Dorothy Moran, Richard McCormick, Joyce Gibson, Marion Leighton, Jan Gould, Grame Carroll, Jared Corston (WCC), Cr Fleur Fitzsimons, Cr Laurie Foon.

**Apologies:** Martin Hanley, Anna Kemble Welch, Merio Marsters

### **Agenda:**

- Update on Newtown issues.
- Coromandel Street Kainga Ora Developments

**Jared Corston, WCC Community Liaison Officer for Newtown, gave an update about his role.**

Jared explained that since the Covid lock down he has been working as part of the WCC welfare team. He is now active in Newtown again, but some changes have been agreed in consultation with the WCC Community Team and Rhona Carson and Jane Patterson representing Newtown Residents' Association. He used to have regular hours at Kia Ora Newtown, 6 Constable St, with an open door policy for people to bring their concerns to him. However this limited his ability to be proactive, and in future he will be out and about connecting with the community. He will still use Kia Ora as his office, and meet people there by arrangement. These are some of the things he will be paying attention to:

- Street maintenance and cleaning - monitoring street cleaner activities, trying to align these with times of greatest need. Monitoring adequacy of rubbish bins and frequency of emptying these, promoting responsible rubbish disposal.
- Furthering Business Connections.
- Carrara Park upgrade. [A number of community members have asked for toilets in the Park - recommended that we gather support, consider any objections, possibly create a petition, to put forward a case to WCC.]
- Addressing anti-social behaviour. Police are to appoint a new Newtown Constable, Jared will work closely with this person. They will be based in Kilbirnie.
- Jared will have a regular column in the Association's eNewsletter, giving information about WCC activities, ie road works in Newtown, etc.

Questions and issues from the floor -

- WCC put out a pdf of upcoming road works etc, can this be available on the website? A - Yes, Jared will put a link in his Newsletter item.
- Concerns about alcohol and drugs on the street. A - increased alcohol ban signage is underway. Jared asked anyone who observes problem behaviour to report it to the Police - 111 for emergencies, 105 if less urgent. The more reports, the more resources will be allocated to addressing them.
- Rubbish bins can spring open unexpectedly, or if knocked.
- The guttering along Riddiford St is a mobility hazard.

### **In Remembrance**

Time was spent reflecting on the life of Frances Acey, including her many contributions to the community. Frances was a long standing member of our Association.

There was a suggestion that a bench seat or similar memorial could be established in her memory.

### **Carrara Park upgrade**

This is expected to be completed in a couple of weeks. There is interest in having a re-opening party in Springtime.

When the townhouses at 4 Regent St were built the developer left the grassed area in the park in a mess. The developer hasn't responded to WCC requests to remediate this, so WCC will attend to it in early Spring. We will need to coordinate the timing in planning any events - eg the reopening.

### **Jan Gould and Graeme Carroll raised two policy issues:**

#### **Rates Rebate**

Noted that there are people who don't know about the Rates Rebate. It is possible for low income households to get up to \$655 off their council rates. The application process is managed by NZ Government and is quite complicated, requiring extensive information and proof of income, and the signature needs to be witnessed by an authorised person. Perhaps this could be made more accessible.

<https://www.govt.nz/browse/housing-and-property/getting-help-with-housing/getting-a-rates-rebate/>

#### **Dog Registration**

There is a responsible dog owner discount on the fees, but one of the requirements to be recognised as a responsible dog owner is to attend an approved Responsible Dog Owner Education and Obedience course. There is a fee for applying for RDO status, and the courses are quite expensive, and so the costs cancel out the benefit of the discount, at least to begin with.

<https://wellington.govt.nz/services/consents-and-licences/dogs/registration/responsible-owner-discount>

### **Kāinga Ora housing developments in Coromandel Street.**

**[The Kāinga Ora Team had planned to attend this meeting, but cancelled because of illness. They might be able to come to the August meeting]**

James Shannon outlined the plans for the developments and the concerns of local residents regarding the proposals.

- Proposed onsite carparking doesn't comply with the District Plan. The first proposal is for 9 town houses at 124-130 Coromandel St. There will be 14 onsite carparks but 3 street carparks will be removed to create driveways. At 131 Coromandel St, 21 apartments (20x2 bedroom, 1x1 bedroom) are proposed, with 7 onsite carparks. In total, following the District Plan requires 41 carparks but only 21 are proposed, with 3 existing street carparks removed.
- It is likely that most of the existing native trees will be removed.
- A vacant not-fit-for purpose building at 131 Coromandel St needs to be demolished, and there has been no information about how this will be managed.
- The proposed developments don't allow for communal space, playgrounds etc, even though the tenants will be families.
- The residents have been very disappointed that Kāinga Ora have been unwilling to meet to discuss concerns, instead preferring to engage with individual households which are immediate neighbours of the developments.

A wide ranging discussion followed this introduction. Points made included –

- Intensive developments like this will have a marked effect on the whole community in Coromandel St and the surrounding neighbourhood, but only the most immediate neighbours were informed by Kāinga Ora. This was compared unfavourably with a past consultation by Housing NZ in which the community was invited to a session where refreshments were served and possible plans were discussed.

- There was a Zoom meeting hosted by Kāinga Ora, but this was unsatisfactory because it didn't allow for dialogue – questions had to be put forward in writing, and not all were addressed.
- There are concerns about accessibility issues for people with restricted mobility (noted that a response from Kāinga Ora was that tenants would be selected accordingly).
- Flooding is an issue on Coromandel Street. Removing trees could make this worse.
- There was a general concern about whether the development will provide a healthy environment. Specific concerns included that there would be too many people in too confined a space, that the #131 plans show communal drying facilities that would require a lot of the tenants to carry loads of washing a considerable distance, and that the children of tenants would suffer from the lack of appropriate play space.
- Previous public housing developments – eg at 131 Coromandel St, and in Mt Cook – have been deemed not-fit-for-purpose after about 30 years, what are the assurances that the new developments will do better?
- This corner of Newtown could be improved significantly if a holistic approach was taken. Meaningful consultation would involve utilising the local residents' local knowledge, eg about potential walkways to improve access to local facilities, and a potential play ground/recreational area on the #124-130 site, below the proposed houses.
- The Draft Transportation and Parking survey for #131 acknowledges that 7 parking spaces isn't compliant with the District Plan, but also says that this will be enough parking if tenants are selected on the basis of whether they have cars or not. Meeting attendees noted that many of the previous tenants on this site were taxi drivers and needed vehicles. Even if tenants don't own cars when they move in this doesn't allow for their future choices of employment or changes in car ownership. The survey also says that there is spare parking capacity on the streets, which locals dispute.
- The community would like a public meeting, to discuss the local residents' concerns with Kāinga Ora. Cr Fleur Fitzsimons offered to facilitate such a meeting.

**The meeting agreed that the minutes should record that the community requests meaningful consultation with Kāinga Ora, with the Kāinga Ora team listening to and discussing the community concerns and suggestions, and allowing for the possibility of them having an influence on the final design.**

Other discussion covered other related topics.

- Rhona Carson reported on presenting the Association submission on parking in Newtown to WCC. It is likely that Newtown will be the first suburb to be engaged in Area Based Planning on Parking, to explore solutions for maximizing available parking based on community concerns.
- Carol Comber (Mt Cook Mobilised and Mt Cook Connect) spoke of the Mt Cook experience of developing a working relationship with Kāinga Ora.
- The concerns about this development are a sign of things to come with the Planning for Growth scenarios. Consultation about the proposed spatial plan will resume next month. There is a push for increased intensification in Newtown and other inner city locations. The District Plan is being reviewed during this process. There was a comment that the District Plan should be reviewed and then any changes to practice should follow, rather than allowing exceptions to planning rules now and subsequently changing the plan to match. The attendees were encouraged to take an active part in the Planning for Growth consultation when the time comes.

### **Other proposed Kāinga Ora developments**

Josh Clark, Kāinga Ora Stakeholder Relationship Manager, had sent through information about this for Rhona to pass on to the meeting –

*Over the next few years 540 new homes are in planning, feasibility or build stages across Wellington's inner suburbs. In addition to the two Coromandel St sites, these include:*

- **Owen St, Newtown** – 36 x 1 bed apartments. Challenging site, currently preparing the site for construction, completion 2022.

- **Evans Bay Parade, Kilbirnie** – 60 new apartments homes to replace 20 homes built in the 1950s, 56 would be one or two bed apartments in 3 or 4 storey buildings, plus 4 x four bed townhouses. Thirty homes fully accessible, other 30 bathroom accessible, lifts in the four storeys. Drop in sessions 23 & 30 July 3-6pm at Kilbirnie community centre.
- **Adelaide Road/Cowan Place, Luxford St, Berhampore** – feasibility stage to explore redevelopment options, including of the Victory Flats. Looking to build a greater number (34 homes) of warm, dry, modern homes to make the most of this site and location.
- **Rolleston St, Mount Cook** – Work is due to start next month on 80 homes (one and two bedrooms and studios, community space), including 20 supported living homes, completion early 2022
- **Arlington sites redevelopment, Mount Cook** – long term leased site from Wellington City Council to build 300 homes, most one and two bedroom, 40 supported living. Approx 233 public housing, 67 affordable housing currently proposed. Community spaces, gardens, play areas. Heavy demolition about to start of buildings. Completion 2023.

*If you or your members have any questions, regarding these developments, please contact me directly. phone 021 54 1624 or email [Josh.Clark@kaingaora.govt.nz](mailto:Josh.Clark@kaingaora.govt.nz) or freephone 0800 801 601 and ask to be transferred.*

### **Other Business**

#### **Newtown Community and Cultural Centre Upgrade**

Steve Dunn asked about this - he had been told this was going to be progressed during August. However there have been further delays, with a new Project Manager being appointed. The NCCC Trust members present hadn't heard anything further, although Peter Frater said he had heard that Building Consent wasn't going to be lodged until December.

**Meeting finished 21:06**