

Minutes of the Newtown Resident's Association Meeting, 7.30pm 21st June 2021 at Newtown Hall, 71 Daniell St.

Present: Rhona Carson (Chair) Steve Cosgrove (Minutes), Steve Dunn, Ann Devoy, David Jenkins, Michelle Wolland, Joyce Gibson, Penny Sturgess, Graham Carroll, Jan Gould, Gavin Jolly, Allan Murray, Sam Somers, Léonie Walker, Jii Ford, Hilary Watson, Carol Comber, Anna Kemble-Welch, Brian Dawson (representing Paul Eagle MP)

Apologies: Councillors Laurie Foon and Fleur Fitzsimons, Jude Bleach, Warwick Taylor, Martin Hanley, Jane Patterson.

Rhona warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1) Jan G. shared her experience as a consumer representative at the Regional Hospital, and the information discussed in that context. She reported that emergency presentations had increased from around 300 per year for adults and 100 a year for children to over 600 for both years to date. This, in addition to COVID increasing waiting lists due to non-urgent appointments and surgery having been postponed has further contributed to a strain on the hospital's resources and budget.
Discussion at the meeting noted that difficulty in affording GP fees means people wait until they are in crisis, leading to the increased emergency presentations. We hoped that the restructuring of the whole health service, together with better support for primary health care, will improve the situation. It is also anticipated that health IT changes (electronic patient records) will bring benefits.
- 2) Jill F. (cycling advocate) sought the support of the meeting to petition the council to reduce the speed limits in Newtown. She pointed out that our suburb has higher limits than many others, and that reducing speed even by 10 km per hour considerably reduced the risk of severe injury or death to cyclists, vulnerable pedestrians and children. The meeting supported a reduction to 40 km per hour down Constable Street, and to 30 km per hour on all the residential side streets. The meeting also supported calling for more cycle awareness education, especially for the need for better road usage, appropriate lighting and bright clothing.
- 3) Steve C. updated the meeting on the situation with the Carrara Park community garden. He now has administrator rights to the [facebook page for the community gardens](#), and has updated and re-invigorated this group. He reported an increased enthusiasm and numbers of volunteers who may be encouraged to become active in the maintenance of the gardens. He also signalled that Kai Cycle will be extending their subscription waste collection service for compostable material and are arranging for a compost collection bin to be positioned in the Park – this will have a combination lock and subscribers will be instructed in appropriate materials. There was also discussion of community fruit trees, and problems with fruit being picked before it was ripe – children observed throwing them around. Community education and signage was suggested to reduce waste and improve community engagement. Brooklyn community gardens have good signage and have found this helpful.

- 4) Gavin J. noted that several trees in planters on Owen Street need attention as there are low hanging and dangerous branches. The horticultural team at the council (Via Jared Carston if needed) is the appropriate route for getting this remedied.
- 5) The newly released second version of the Draft Spatial Plan was discussed at length. While it was noted that there had been an increase in the protected character areas in response to the community concerns, there was still a large area designated "Type 4 - enable 6 storey developments". The Association has continuing concerns about the effects of 6 storey developments on the residents of existing 1 and 2 storey homes – eg excessive shading, increased wind flow. A lively discussion was had about the need for amenity preservation, good housing design with appropriate green spaces, and improvements to the transport and infrastructure (water systems) to be appropriately sequenced to enable intensification.

Anna K-W. presented the Red Design submission to the Council outlining the case for development to largely take place in the Newtown Suburban Centre, on underdeveloped commercial and industrial sites. She ably demonstrated that their plan:

- Would produce more appropriate housing than the DSP pepper-pot approach.
- Would place the high-rise housing adjacent to the transport and water infrastructure
- Would improve the visual and amenity value of the area.
- Utilise currently empty and wasted space efficiently, as new builds would be far more easily consented.
- Many current land owners have indicated that they would be very supportive of such development.

The meeting heard a proposal from the team to the council whereby the Association could support Newtown being prioritised for appropriate growth – IF the concerns and opportunities above were adequately addressed, and developments in the residential streets outside the heritage precincts were limited to 3 storeys. We agreed that there was a need for more housing, for unfit housing to be able to be replaced by warm dry homes, and for a proportion of the housing to be designated social housing to produce genuinely affordable rents.

The meeting discussed a draft Position Statement outlining the proposals above and agreed to support this move, and that the Residents' Association executive could finalise the wording of the Newtown Position Statement to go to the council having heard suggestions from the floor.

The meeting thanked Anna and Martin (who was absent with a bad cold) for the considerable work that Red Design has put into this project, and for Anna's presentation.

The meeting closed at 9.pm

The next meeting will be on Monday the 19th of July at 7.30 p.m.