

Oaks Estate Progress Association

-serving our community



Minutes of OEPA Committee meeting, 7.40pm, 22 March 2012, at the Oaks Estate Community Hall.

Present. Karen Williams (Chair), Lillian Squire, Fran Lethbridge, Alex Saeck, Judy Saeck, Nick Saeck, John Bruggeman, Ewan Maidment.

Note.

Jody and Dan Heldon and Peter O’Dea have not accepted their nominations to the Committee.

Michel handed Ewan one file of OEPA papers, including minutes for the period 2007-2008.

Apologies: Bern Fitzgerald.

Minutes of previous Committee meetings held 1 February and 7 March 2012. In reference to the minutes of the meeting held 7 March it was noted that the deadline for comments in response to the Queabeyan Local Environment Plan is 26 March. Moved Alex, seconded Michel, that the minutes be accepted. Carried.

Matters arising from meeting on 1 Feb.

Website: Terry has it in hand and is adding content.

Public housing tenants: hold off organizing until master planning process can facilitate.

Old Mobil site: Michel has heard that the owner is keen on re-selling the site. The D.A. has not lapsed. .

Dual occupancy: to be considered by the Cmte under master planning agenda item.

Rubbish dumping: try to photograph rubbish dumps; phone Canberra Connect; or lodge info on-line; obtain job No.; keep record. Garry Byles gave a direct phone number – try to find it.

OEPA rules: Peter began to check them against the Registrar’s “model rules”; Karen and Terry have also checked them. Terry has reported on proposed changes. There will be a long term process to revise them. It was agreed to form a sub-Committee to report on proposed rule changes and membership fees before the next AGM. Terry (in absentia), Alex, Ewan and Nick (and Michel?) agreed to be on that committee.

Reports.

Expenditure. Ewan reported that he has an Australia Post invoice for \$93.00, annual rent for the OEPA PO Box and that he has receipts for four star pickets and food for the BBQ. It was agreed to rent the PO Box for another 12 months and then review whether it is necessary.

Queanbeyan Local Environmental Plan.

A draft OEPA response to the LEP, “Re. Rezoning of Railway Land (43 Henderson Road)...”, was circulated with the agenda for the meeting together with Karen’s notes on her conversation with Petra Oswald re the ESDD submission to Queanbeyan Council on the proposed rezoning of the Railway Land.

Karen reported that she had received no response to the draft from the Committee. She said that key points for addition to the draft are:

the proposed development assumes that the ACT will allow access from Railway St;
suggested possible uses other than light industry or housing.

Mrs Squire noted that the Railway Land on the Oaks Estate side had been used for cattle and pig yards.

Karen asked for help with re-drafting the submission. Michel offered to help. He said that he prefers no development on the railway lands – that it be space used as a buffer zone.

Alex suggested that a trade-off might be required. Michel asserted that no trade off would be needed – he preferred a blunt submission.

Judith said that she also liked the idea of a green park area.

There was discussion over whether the Railway Historical Society might support our submission. Ewan said that he had tried to make contact with them through Victor Isaccs but had been referred to the Secretary and had not pursued it. Michel said that they were mainly concerned with the Kingston area.

Karen noted that the deadline is 26 March. Ewan agreed to contact the Queanbeyan Council to ask for a fortnight's extension.

Michel reported that he is preparing board with blackboard paint for publicity slogans such as, "Shame! Overall! Shame!" It might provide a photo opportunity for the press.

Karen reported that Terry has written to the *Queanbeyan Age*. She asked if anyone would write to the *Canberra Times*?

Master Plan.

Karen reported that she had taken the ESDD officers and the two consultants on heritage walks in Oaks Estate and has given the sets of documents including her *No Man's Land*, the heritage walk leaflets, and a copy of her article to be published by the National Trust in May re the Oaks Estate built heritage precinct bounded by The Oaks, the Queanbeyan Railway Station and the Robertsons' House. She said that since 2001 the Government had learnt to access environmental and cultural factors, as well as economics, when determining plans for land development. It might be difficult to convince all Government agencies to recognize these factors.

On the heritage walks the master planning officials had recognized the value of the ratty, unsanitised rough edges of Oaks Estate, but that they had felt uneasy and unsafe at the lower end of George St which had the atmosphere of a ghetto – a dark feeling. A separate forum would be required to focus on public housing and associated social issues – historically, Housing ACT have had to be dragged to the table.

Michel commented that he did not have an issue with public housing in principle but the scale is disproportionate in Oaks Estate and there are on going problems with the management of the facilities.

The committee proceeded to discuss other aspects of the master planning which were worked up into a series of resolutions intended to guide the OEPA representatives in the reference group meeting on 5 April and subsequent meetings. The resolutions are attached to these minutes.

It was not clear whether or not Peter O'Dea intended to stay on the Master Planning Reference Group. It was agreed that if Peter were to drop out then Alex Saeck would take his place.

Fund raising and membership. Deferred to next meeting. It was suggested that membership could be picked up by the constitution sub-committee.

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

**Resolutions on Oaks Estate Master Planning of OEPA Committee
at meeting held 22 March 2012.**

Resolutions made as a guide to OEPA representatives for the Oaks Estate Master Plan Reference Group meeting to be held 5 April 2012. The following changes are corrections made by Karen and Michel and reflect comments made during the discussion between Karen, Michel and Peter O'Dea in preparation for the reference group meeting of 5 April.

1. That Oaks Estate be recognized and maintained as a unique urban village:
- (i) an oasis – emphasising the importance of maintaining open space in Oaks Estate and a buffer of open space around Oaks Estate.
 - (ii) focused on sight lines between The Oaks (1838), the Queanbeyan Railway Station (1887) and the Robertsons' House (c.1913),
 - (iii) of historical significance to Canberra, Queanbeyan and the wider region, like Hall and Tharwa,
 - (iv) in a rural landscape,
 - (v) bounded by the confluence of the Queanbeyan and Molonglo Rivers,
 - (vi) comprised of a mix of predominantly single residential dwellings and also single commercial buildings on large to medium sized blocks.

The emphasis in point (1 vi) is to guide the planning process towards no consolidation of vacant land-release blocks. There should be no more large blocks used for commercial development and there should be no more blocks used for industrial development. There should be better lease exclusions to ensure empathy with residential blocks. Existing and future (should industrial development continue) commercial/industrial activity should be held accountable for providing off-street parking and landscaping.

2. That the historical land survey and sub-division of Oaks Estate be maintained (no splitting of titles is the central emphasis of this point, encouraging empathy with the existing character of Oaks Estate) and to that end there be:

- (i) no more multi-unit medium density or greater development;
- (ii) no consolidation of titles of existing residential blocks, now or in the future, and no consolidation of blocks to be released in 2015, now or in the future;
- (iii) no separate title dual occupancy and no sub-division of titles to existing residential blocks;
- (iv) controlled development of secondary housing on existing residential blocks, eg. granny flats, studio-residences, workshops & sheds.

3. Development of an art, artisan, craft and cultural precinct in part of the heritage area between Railway Street and Hazel Street, and adjacent areas, to accommodate workshops, studios, studio-residences, galleries, professional suites and similar activities which would create a positive image of Oaks Estate, together with:

- (i) additional parking facility in the area, and
- (ii) native re-vegetation of the landscape of that precinct.

4. ACT Housing to commit to reviewing Oaks Estate public housing and emergency housing in order to bring it into conformity with current social housing standards and the revised Canberra Social Plan 2011, particularly in relation to lower density, proximity to services and greater social mix. Emphasis should be on reducing the scale and density of public housing in Oaks Estate, a more sustainable and 'greener' standard of housing, with a better-managed outcome. This point is meant to focus discussion on ACT Housing's role and accountability in the context of the priority stated in the ACT Government's Social Plan (revised 2011) p38 - Delivery Diverse and Sustainable Housing: 'the focus is on development of sustainable, universally designed apartments and town houses to enable aging in place. Well designed infill housing in locations that will support access to services and sustainable public transport will encourage greater social mix and the richness of local neighbourhoods'.

Additional points made during discussion between Peter, Michel and Karen of the above points.

- Request that the community garden be extended to Hazel Street or, alternatively, to Florence Street (to form a garden gateway to Oaks Estate).
- Replace any trees that might be removed with appropriate traditional tree plantings. Trees planted in urban open space, in and around the park, and in vacant blocks could be arboretum plantings.
- Address the issue of the current dangerous driveway entrance off Railway Street to the community garden.
- Block the southern end of River Street.
- Request service barriers to keep cars out of the park.
- Address the dangerous T intersection at the corner of McEwan Ave and Railway Street.
- Mobil Depot site: encourage the developer (recognising that the site may soon be sold on to another developer) to respect the significance of the site as a gateway entrance to Oak Estate. Pursue the ideas of seeking a change in the DA to limit development to 8-9 dwellings or, alternative, encourage Government compensation to the developer (eg. Landswap).
- Explore the potential of resuming leases so that there is no more industrial development in Oaks Estate.
- Oaks Estate as a destination: the river is the destination. In support, the landscape we create should have a strong relationship to the development phases of Oaks Estate (The Oaks, the Queanbeyan Railway Station and the Robertsons' house are cornerstones in the history of the built environment).