

Oaks Estate Progress Association

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Notes on OEPA meeting with TAMS staff re Gillespie Park, at the Park, 11.10am, 23 Feb 2011.

Present: Diana Hill (Manager, Design & Development, TAMS), Fay Hug (Project Manager, Design & Development, Land Management & Planning, TAMS), Mrs Squire, Peter O’Dea, Alex Saeck, Fiona, Ewan.

General – Park boundaries. The meeting was called on 17 February by Fay Hug who is responsible for implementation of upgrade works at Gillespie Park. She asked for the site meeting “to ensure that ... a clear understanding of the requirements is reached.”

Fay referred to the letter from Peter O’Dea to Gary Bayles, dated 18 Nov 2010, which listed the OEPA’s key priorities.

She stated that she wanted to quickly deal with signage, the Park upgrade, safety issues and the community notice board. Allocated funds had to be spent within the financial year. Additional funds for further works might be available in the forthcoming ACT budget.

Diana confirmed that the time-frame for expenditure of the \$100,000 was 6 months. She wanted quick feedback from the OEPA. TAMS would then move to the construction stage.

Diana stated the first step was to produce a ‘Broad Concept Plan’ covering: –

- Upgrade
- Signage
- Sketch plan for development of playground, including fencing
- Community notice board

Mrs Squire asked what was the exact area which would be devoted to the playground.

Diana said that would be determined by the Concept Plan.

Mrs Squire asked what was the exact area of the Park. Fay replied that the Park land consisted of the 3 blocks along River Street, excluding the Community Garden which is under lease. The land use is determined by the Territory Plan.

TAMS reps stated that the 3 blocks on the western side of the Community Garden, along Florence St, are being prepared for sale to be developed as units.

Mrs Squire commented that residential development of the three blocks should be one block—one house, in accordance with the village status of Oaks Estate. The TAMS reps stated that the type of development is an ACTPLA matter.

Copies of an ACTPLA aerial photograph of the area with block boundaries superimposed were distributed to the OEPA reps.

Ewan pointed out that preservation of the line-of-sight from Queanbeyan Station across the Park toward The Oaks is an important consideration in the Park 'Concept Plan'.

Signage. Fay wanted immediate feedback on the type of sign to be placed in the Park. She did not mention the plaque for the Community Hall, as recommended in the OEPA letter dated 18 November, but had in mind 'interpretative signage' to be placed in the Park.

Fay said that a sign had already been erected at the Queanbeyan (?) cemetery and that Karen Williams is working with the Heritage section on citations and images for signs to be placed at Robertson House and on the site of the old Oaks Estate cemetery.

The proposed sign in Gillespie Park might include information about the history of the Park site (George and Mary Gillespie – their house, 'Wayside'), other heritage and environmental information, and directions for an Oaks Estate walking tour.

Mrs Squire commented that she has seen an example of the 'interpretative signage' at Hall and liked the idea. Mrs Squire added that she has information about the people buried in the old OE cemetery.

Alex asked if there was a template for the signage. Diana replied that the Heritage section would work out drafts with Karen.

Fay handed out photos of three types of signs:

1. a 2.1m high triangular pillar (cost \$7,000)
2. a shorter version of the pillar above, and
3. a low level sloped board

Ewan expressed concern that the sign might attract vandalism. Peter stated that he preferred a low impact style of sign. Alex stated that he preferred the high pillar style. The OEPA reps agreed that the type 1. sign would suit.

The OEPA reps suggested that the sign be located in the middle of the Park under one of the lamps.

BBQ. Fay reported that a picnic setting with all-weather shelter, including BBQ with running water (pressure release valve), would be installed. The OEPA reps suggested that it be placed near the rotunda.

Alex suggested that funding priority be given to the fencing and signage before the BBQ and picnic setting.

Rotunda. The TAMS reps confirmed that the rotunda would be preserved.

Fencing. Diana stated that fencing the whole perimeter of the Park would be prohibitively expensive.

The OEPA reps stated that it is essential to build fencing to protect Park users, especially children using the playground, from traffic in Railway Street. The TAMS reps agreed.

Ewan asked about improving fencing between the Park and the Community Garden. Fay responded that it was a COGS responsibility, not TAMS.

Playground. TAMS reps stated that the existing playground equipment is no longer acceptable to TAMS and would be dismantled.

OEPA reps stated that new equipment should include climbing gear and be physically challenging to children.

OEPA reps asked whether a basket ball ring could be installed for the use of older children. Diana said that there is a hoop-type piece of equipment available.

It was agreed that the playground would stay on the existing site.

Paths. Diana stated that the existing (over-grown) crushed granite path is hard to maintain. OEPA reps stated that concrete paths are not acceptable. Alex pointed out that the path was originally made of pavers. He added that the path needed to be built above ground level.

OEPA reps suggested a looped path for push bike riders would be beneficial.

Fay observed that there was no pedestrian path on the outside of the stone walls.

Peter stated that the OEPA would like to retain the rural style of the park.

Fay insisted that the Park needs to be accessible to all users. She indicated that the street curb may need to be broken to provide wheel chair access at the entrances to the Park.

Lighting. It was noted that the existing lamps have been replaced over the last month in advance of the 'Concept Plan'.

Diana agreed to investigate whether the unsightly galvanized steel light posts can be painted

Drainage. Mrs Squire pointed out that a water course runs under the western edge of the Park towards the old cemetery and the Oaks. Storm water drains had been dug under the park about 20 or 30 years ago.

Water. It was noted that the Park has an existing water connection and is irrigated.

Trees. Peter asked whether paint marks on trees in the Park meant that they were to be felled. Diana stated that they were survey marks only.

Alex reported that dying trees in the Park are not being replaced and that ten trees had been taken out of the Park over the last 10 years: eucalypts, willows & poplars.

Fiona preferred shade trees rather than more prunus.

Community notice board. OEPA reps pointed out that the notice board was to be erected at the OE shops, not in the Park.

Diana stated that TAMS have standard free-standing notice boards (costing up to \$16,000). They are designed for notices to be stuck to the board with tape, not pins (which are considered dangerous). The TAMS reps agreed to provide the OEPA with illustrations of the types of notice boards available. After the meeting the TAMS reps went to the OE shops to check possible sites for the notice board.

Other matters. Fiona asked about a time-line for cleaning up the River Walk. Diana agreed to take the issue to the appropriate authority.

The meeting finished at 12 noon.