



Newsletter November 2016

The OEPA committee has been very busy this year. We are a much smaller group this year: voted in the the June 2016 AGM were: Adam Stephan-Slade (President) , Hugh Griffin (VP) Kate Gauthier (Secretary) and ordinary committee members are Stephanie Shean and Adam Stokes. Ewan Maidement resigned as Treasurer earlier in the year.

Our goals

At the June AGM a motion was passed to retain the 8 key issues the community determined they thought were the priority issues. These issues were determined by a well-attended community workshop as the goals the community wanted the OEPA committee to achieve.

As a reminder, the top goals in order of votes were:

1. Roads and footpaths - pedestrian crossings, halting illegal and dangerous parking on McEwan Avenue and traffic calming for George-Hazel-McEwan intersections.
2. Street trees - replace leaning trees on George Street and increase general level of street tree planting around the village.
3. Community Events - events where the local community can get together and some where we can showcase Oaks Estate to the rest of Canberra. These could include a festival, music in the park, open air cinema, art shows, markets etc.
4. Beautification - Both by TAMS and community working bees.
5. Water tower - seek funds to preserve and paint.
6. Robertson House - find ways to preserve Robertson House, as well as use it for the benefit of the broader Canberra community.
7. Toilets for the park and orchard.
8. Planning issues - continue to promote the wishes of the Oaks Estate community to protect the existing nature of the village.

Toilet update

Finally the toilet in Gillespie park is being installed. Its been a long and difficult road - the ACT Government denied OEPA's request for a toilet, saying our community is too small and TAMS prefers to spend their budget on larger areas (this was the actual reason stated).

The OEPA then applied for and won a federal grant of \$20,000 to have a toilet installed, and stumped up some money of our own. TAMS/TCCS still said no because they wanted us to clean it ourselves as we are too remote to service! In the end, after a campaign that included local member Steve Doszpot taking action for us, TAMS agreed to partner on the project.

The diggers have arrived and the toilet will be finished this month. As part of the deal, OEPA has to install the path from the BBQ area to the toilet. If you have concreting or landscape skills and can help, please contact oepea@hotmail.com.au

McEwan Ave upgrades

The OEPA met with the new director of TAMS/TCCS to raise issues about improvements around Oaks Estate. One of the key issues was the lack of parking on McEwan Ave, creating a problem with illegal parking on pavements and verges.

We later met with Roads ACT who have promised some upgrades to parking, as well as some new street tree plantings. We have not yet received any actual plans from Roads ACT as to what they propose. The OEPA will follow up to make sure it does not fall off their agenda.

As part of this overall upgrade to McEwan Ave, a new garden is planned for the corner of McEwan Avenue and Hazel Street, to create a lovely entranceway to the village. The garden will be planted after the heat of summer has passed

River walk

Info from TCCS website: Construction of the new Oaks Estate river walk has begun. The ACT Government has allocated \$230,000 for the design and construction of improvements to the informal trail that follows the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers.

A formal trail for Oaks Estate residents will improve safety and access as well as enhance recreational value by providing interpretative signs and upgraded seating.

Improvements to the trail will include minor upgrades to the existing entrance at William Street and stone steps leading to the Queanbeyan River. Timber steps will also be provided for better access along the return trail, to the Osage Orange trees.

New seating, picnic settings and signage will also be installed to provide directional advice and to tell visitors more about the environmental and historical significance of the river corridor.

Construction on the upgrade to the trail is expected to be completed in December 2016 in time for the summer holidays.

Community Orchard

OEPA has also worked with TAMS/TCCS on plans for a community orchard to be planted in the lot next to Gillespie park and just north of the COGs community gardens.

If you would like to be part of the working group and get your hands dirty digging holes, please contact oeпа@hotmail.com.au.

Signs

We sought and won another grant, this time from the Inner South Canberra Community Council. We are using this grant to partner with the ACT Government to have new heritage signs installed at the two entranceways, where the current blackboards are installed. We hope the new heritage signs will be installed before the end of the year, but we await the slow, slow hands of government to put them in.

Adopt-a-hydrant

The OEPA are organising for all the fire hydrants in Oaks Estate to be re-painted in heritage red. We can supply the paint if you would like to paint the hydrant on your street. If so, please email us at oeпа@hotmail.com.au and we will get you the supplies.

Townhouse development at old mobil site

The old mobil site at the corner of Railway Street and Florence was bought by a developer years ago, but for many reasons has not yet been built on.

Last year, a development application (DA) was approved for around 20 single story houses. Recently, the developer put in a new application for 29 townhouses and row houses. The OEPA lodged a strong objection to the plans citing a number of reasons: the density was too great, there was not enough open space for deep root planting, and the design was not in keeping with the heritage character. We asked that any development particularly reduce the density along Railway Street. The Heritage Council lodged similar objections to the plans.

The developer has since changed the plans and lodged a new DA. We were pleased to note that many of our objections were taken into account, although we still think the density is too high. We await the ACT Government response to see if it is approved.

Either way, the current lot is definitely an eyesore and more residents in Oaks Estate is likely to bring more services.

Capital Flowers

Capital Flowers has also recently lodged a DA, seeking retrospective approval for the poly tunnel grow house that was built without any planning approval, as well as approval for the fence that was built. This included cutting down the avenue of large pine trees which were protected as they were over 12m tall.

The DA also included a request to subdivide the lot into three separate lots, so two can be sold off to other businesses, with plans showing more warehouses and grow houses. The DA argued that growing flowers is in keeping with the rural and heritage character of Oaks Estate.

OEPA lodged an objection to the DA, saying that the poly tunnel has an industrial appearance and is not in keeping with a rural or heritage character, that more warehouses will block the view to the surrounding hills, that Railway Street cannot cope with more traffic.

The DA was rejected (except approval was granted for the fence) and Capital Flowers has lodged an appeal. The OEPA will again put forward the same arguments against the subdivision and increased density of warehouses.