



Newsflash

Spring 2006

General Meeting 21 August 2006

Seeking a vision for Carlton and to facilitate greater dialogue and understanding between residents and traders, we invited local traders to discuss with us:

“lingering longer in Carlton - traffic - greening of Carlton - pollution: bad for living, bad for business - variety/business diversity - sharing the pie - regulated and strangulated - from the outside looking in - what do visitors want? - a Community Centre for residents, business and visitors ”

It was a valuable exchange of views between business and residents with much thoughtful input. Particularly intriguing and exciting were echoes of CRA's long-held views for Lygon St: points made were roundabouts on Elgin, Faraday and Grattan St intersections, somewhere for people to sit to enjoy the ambience, weekend closure of Lygon St to through traffic to create one long piazza on Lygon.

Lord Mayor John So joined our meeting and promised his strong support for a Community Centre. Sue Chambers had battled for a decade for this long promised facility in Carlton. Our committee has been pursuing this vigorously, to date with much expressed support from the Lord Mayor and [most] councillors, but has resulted only in two half-hearted bids for the Carlton Movie House on Faraday St. Cr Brian Shanahan managed to allocate \$20,000 to fund a feasibility study for the Centre. Lord Mayor So has made countless promises! Hopefully his enthusiastic commitment in front of our united group will give these promises renewed potency.

Community Centre/Library

Carlton's population is 11,200; 15,000 commute here to work. **Carlton urgently needs a dedicated Community Centre in central Carlton, with the space and services which facilitate greater participation in community life as a whole.** Information centre, meeting spaces, activities, library, toy library, office for Council's place manager Kate Wright – such facilities would be a vital resource for all Carlton residents and businesses and integration of the diverse population which lives and works here. We have lobbied unsuccessfully for years towards this vision.

Carlton has no public buildings. Comparable inner suburbs have such facilities. This problem has now become acute. The Royal Women's Hospital notified CRA that access to the Kathleen Syme Centre, always a problematic venue, will now cease. We must now seek another venue for meetings.

Residential 3 Zone (R3Z)

Residential 3 Zone is a ministerial rezoning amendment, whereby Councils define and apply for specified areas within established suburbs rezoned to a 9-meter maximum height limit. The aim of the new zone is to protect Melbourne's historic neighbourhood character in sensitive residential areas.

The process was lengthy, involving reports to Council's Planning Committee on 3 May 05, and 4 October 05, subsequent to which the Committee voted to carry out a further consultative process. Following this consultation and analysis, Council planners presented a report which recommended Council introduce R3Z into the Planning Scheme (excepting in Carlton's case, the Public Housing Estates).

These findings were publicised and formally presented to a meeting of the Planning Committee on 5 Sept 06. Committee reaction to these findings deserves detailed reporting:

Council Management and their planning experts recommended that the Planning Committee request the Minister for Planning to amend the Melbourne Planning Scheme and introduce the R3Z to areas shown in its report.

Cr Ng, Chair of the Planning Committee, presented the proposal and the 36 written submissions received by Council, including from CRA. Several of us addressed the Planning Committee. The Coalition of Residents Associations had actively lobbied for the introduction of the new residential zoning. A large number of individuals also presented submissions which strongly supported the application of 9m mandatory height limit in stable residential areas. This would protect residential amenity and alleviate regular applications from developers seeking permits for buildings which exceed mandatory height limits.

Planning consultants, architects and relevant professional bodies, such as the Housing Industry of Australia and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, strongly opposed the new zoning, claiming it “*would affect design outcomes and limit development options. It would stifle innovative designs which respond to the site context and complement existing heritage buildings*”.

Crs Fraser Brindley and Brian Shanahan actively supported adoption of the protective code. However Cr Peter Clarke spoke strongly against, claiming it was “policy on the run” (!!!). He foreshadowed his intention to move an alternate motion, that Council request the Minister for Planning to appoint an independent panel to consider the Residential Zone 3, assess the submissions received as part of the consultation, and report back to Council. Cr Shanahan moved the recommendation contained in the Management Report. Cr. Brindley seconded. All Councillors present other than Crs Shanahan and Brindley voted against the motion. Cr Clarke moved his foreshadowed motion, seconded by The Chair, Cr Ng. Cr Clarke’s motion was put and carried.

The decision of the Council to ignore its own expert advice and to yet further delay consideration of protection for our remnant Victorian heritage streetscapes is disappointing in the extreme and may have major implications, viz. CRA’s recent VCAT appeal (below) to protect Drummond St. Once again, Council leaves itself open to the charge of being more concerned to support the interests of developers than the important task of preserving and enhancing streetscapes, heritage and amenity in Carlton.

VCAT Appeal, 262-276 Drummond Street

Council approved Evolve Development P/L’s application for a four storey building with 58 apartments, despite the expert advice of its own planners, and 22 objections, last March.

CRA objections to the proposed development are:

- The Proposal is an overdevelopment of the site and exceeds the mandatory 10.5m height limit for the area (DDO48) without commensurate improvement of the amenity or urban character of the area.
- The Proposal will cause severe loss of amenity to neighbouring properties.
- The Proposal provides insufficient parking for the proposed occupancy, and will cause traffic problems in University St.

CRA is concerned that the recommendations of the Council’s Delegated Planning Report were largely ignored by the Council in its decision to grant a permit for the proposed development. CRA broadly supports those recommendations.

The VCAT Hearing was a bruising experience. Our very carefully prepared opening statement and submissions appeared to be well received. Evolve’s expert witnesses then made their statements. We learned new words and concepts, eg a four storey building in a 10.5 metre height limit would improve the streetscape, because at two stories it is ‘squat’ and in need of ‘verticality’!! In cross-examining, we had not anticipated being unable to raise ‘car parking’ because it had been ignored by the expert witness. We were told we would have needed to have our own expert witness and to have pre-submitted a statement to cross-

examine on this matter. Likewise on height: the expert witness could not be questioned on Melbourne Planning Scheme C60, Clause 21, with its specific statements on Carlton, because he referred to Clause 22, which Evolve's Senior Counsel argued was a more general statement. More encouragingly however, the Presiding Member hearing the case assured us he would view the site and surrounds as part of his decision making process.

We were left licking our wounds, and thinking about where this leaves CRA in battles with well resourced high profile developers. A VCAT judgement on the proposal is expected in the near future.

Public Housing Development

Following a year of being largely ignored by our local politicians, we were at last granted not one, but two interviews with Minister Bronwyn Pike MLA, and one session with Glenyys Romanes MLC, unfortunately to little effect. Minister Pike continually referred back to the Kennett Govt. and its poor record in housing and transport. The bottom line according to both of Carlton's parliamentary representatives is, the redevelopment will include 550 privately owned units spread over the 3 sites, and that there will be no net loss of public housing. Nor, indeed, any gain, despite a waiting list of over 35,000 for Public Housing.

Much of the minimal open space on the three sites will go. It was willingly admitted that green space in Carlton is at a premium, and is essential for physical, psychological, emotional, mental health. However, it was glowingly stated, Carlton has compensations, e.g. restaurants, shops, good public transport etc.

The Panel Hearing, at which we have an opportunity to present our viewpoints, will commence late November. The Panel will advise Planning Minister Hulls on the redevelopment.

Please Note change of CRA's telephone number

0408 024 046 – for incoming calls only.

When Sue and Don Chambers left Carlton, the CRA landline number was diverted to our private line to save money. We had not realised that a diverted line is unlisted, and this resulted in some people experiencing difficulty locating CRA. To overcome this problem, CRA has acquired a mobile phone to take incoming calls only. The caller is asked to leave a message and a contact number, and the call will be returned from a landline. This will provided a CRA listing in the web directory, and in due course in White Pages (the new addition), and has an added advantage that the mobile can be passed between committee members for continuity of contact during absences of individual members.

***For your diaries** The CRA Christmas Party is scheduled for Monday, December 11 at La Mama, 6pm.*

Also please note

CRA needs your input and support. Please remember to renew your subscription, and consider joining the committee.

Greta Bird
President

