

CLONTARF COMMUNITY FORUM
Minutes 7th August , 2019

Apologies: *Carlo Bongazoni, George Marsh, Michael Edgar, Pippa Stuart, Mike Smith.*

Attendees: *15*

Minutes: *July 2019 minutes: nominated and seconded: Accepted*

Treasurer's Report: *current balance: \$5,178.00. Outstanding Invoices to be collected. New Advertiser for newsletter needed.*

Welcome to Ms Trish Chaney, Northern Beaches Council's Community Liason Coordinator.

1. CCF Facebook Page Introduction and Set Up

Introduction to Ms Yasmin Gupta and Ms Leena Gupta, who will be setting up a closed Facebook Page which means that no one can just automatically join the group. Yasmin explained that interested people, who wish to join the group will either have to be invited onto the page by the administrator or will need to answer a few questions about where they live why they want to be part of the group and do they adhere to the rules that are listed. Once they are accepted as part of the group they then have a great opportunity to take part in the conversation.

The purpose of the group is to give residents of Clontarf a forum to communicate with each other and for uploading the newsletter and Council notices and to promote activities within the Clontarf area.

There will also be an opportunity for people ask for recommendations for businesses and tradespeople within the area. Other FB pages in our locality such as the Balgowlah Heights Notice Board where people do look for recommendations.

Yasmin will set up some rules for the page and keep an eye on, so that inappropriate postings such as shaming and bullying are not displayed. Residents can also make contact with Leena or Yasmin if they have any concerns about postings. Community cohesion, congeniality and respect of each other, is the aim. We wish to avoid personal attacks or adversarial political discussions.

There are 4 suburbs that are to be automatically approved which include Clontarf, Balgowlah, Balgowlah Heights, Seaforth. Some people who live a little outside of the area may also be part of the group, if they have a connection or interest in Clontarf affairs.

A meeting member raised the question of the danger of a defamation charge. It will need a structure and daily checking to keep a close eye on any posting. Leena and Yasmin will keep a close eye on the page and will also raise any questions with Lynne and Philip.

Revenue from advertising on the FB page.

There was a discussion around how this could occur, so that CCF does not lose the revenue stream that it currently needs and receives from local businesses who advertise in the printed Newsletter.

There are precedents with other FB pages, such as Northern Beaches Mums that can be looked at to understand the best model and appropriate fee schedule for us to follow. It was decided that the Treasurer and Leena would have a discussion on the best model for us to follow and present to the next CCF meeting.

Interest and Feedback. We would like many people to make the FB page interesting and post local photos and their own activities and family shots to share. We will also be looking

for feedback on the FB page to be able to gauge how CCF can respond to and support local interests and concerns.

People are encouraged to join and tell friends and neighbours in the Clontarf, Balgowlah, Balgowlah Heights and Seaforth area about the new FB page.

Thanks were given to Yasmin and Leena and CCF very much appreciate their assistance and expertise in this new attraction for Clontarf residents.

2. Councillor's Response to the Request for Removal of Ferry Wharf reference from Masterplan.

Philip stated the response he had from Manly Ward Councillors after he had strong representation from residents living close to a proposed ferry wharf, to contact Council with CCF's request that the reference to a ferry wharf in the Clontarf Reserve Masterplan be removed. He read Sarah Grattan's response which acknowledged there had been mixed responses from the wider Clontarf community and that Council would review multiple viewpoints and feedback received. She also pointed out that any ferry service would be a State Government matter with its own consultation process.

A meeting member wanted to clarify that the vote taken at the June 2019 meeting was for the removal of the reference to a ferry wharf be taken out of the Masterplan, and that there had not been a vote on opposing the ferry service. Philip clarified that this was indeed the case.

Another meeting member mentioned that when she had read the newsletter regarding the ferry wharf, she felt that it appeared that CCF completely opposed any ferry service and was disturbed that only some people in the community's voice was being heard. Philip expanded on the way Clontarf Reserve Sub Committee first heard about the inclusion of a ferry wharf mentioned in the Masterplan, and emphasised that there had never been any request or discussion of the inclusion of such a wharf in the masterplan discussions. It had been included by the Council Landscape Team, as an option that may be taken up at some time in the future and that infrastructure was considered for such an option.

Philip also spoke to how the vote had eventuated from the June meeting where there had been a very large representation of people living in the streets close to the Holmes Ave Reserve. A motion was proposed from the floor to add the opposition to the ferry wharf proposal in the MP, and he was pressured by the vocal and strong opposition in the room, to allow the vote to be taken.

A current meeting member requested to speak and put his passionate thoughts forward on the process of the decision that had been made. His position was that he had felt that the process of opposing the ferry wharf inclusion which was put to Council, had not been a transparent one and that it rang "alarm bells" with him.

He also put forward his thoughts as to why a ferry service from Clontarf may be desirable for many people living in the community, and not to just write it off. He believes it is a faster, greener and nicer way to travel to the city; that most people would walk to the ferry; that house prices would benefit and that it would be a way of attracting younger families and people to the area and be a way of keeping Clontarf "alive". There is a need to think about the future of the area and listen to all solutions and ideas. He does understand the position of the people living close to the wharf area, but there is a need to think about the future of the area and listen to all solutions and ideas and work through the problematic difficulties visualised.

It was noted that the implication of the decision, was that it was seen as an “opposition to the ferry service”, not just “opposition to a ferry wharf draft being included in the Clontarf Reserve Masterplan”. The distinction was lost in the “noise”. “Ferry or not” was what was heard. Another member felt that Council needed to know that this wasn't a representative position of the whole community.

Philip pointed out that Council had had a month of consultation with meetings in the Reserve and submissions to be put into Council on the “Your Say” space on the website.

Trish Chaney, Northern Beaches Community Liaison Officer, encouraged community members to register on the “Your Say” site and put forward any opinion or issues in your suburb to Council. Council does appreciate the input from the Community Forums, but does see that this is but one submission and that individual input is also taken into It was also recommended to correspond with the 3 Manly Ward Councillors with any issues or ideas to put forward. Sarah Grattan is the Councillor who lives in our area and is responsive to emails sent to her.

3. CCF Structural Review

Philip stated that he was keen to capture a whole range of views on the structural issues of the CCF. He reiterated that this process was prompted by the prior ferry event and led us to question how we communicate to the community of who we are; what we are about; how we work and how representative we are. We have started to make changes and our Facebook platform is part of that. He started with the Objectives and Approach. He felt that we were trying to represent the broad majority view of residents living in the Clontarf area, including Balgowlah Heights and Balgowlah. He wishes to advocate what is right for the whole community to be able to advocate for the majority to Council and to the State and Federal Government bodies. He tabled a letter written by an active member of CCF, who apologises for not being at the meeting, but who had written down ideas. Other members at the meeting proposed that it was important to work towards ways of representing the majority and/or overall average of the community, not just the opinions of people just at the meeting.

- **Philip stated that in future, before any major commitment was made, there would be more steps in the process of decision making. The issue would be minuted, and an announcement made well in advance.**

One month's notice of impending motions or vote would be circulated through the minutes, newsletter, by email and by Facebook. This would be adopted as a policy by CCF.

A meeting member also felt that by just raising particular issues within meetings, was a valuable for the Clontarf community.

Other suggestions included using Survey Monkey to get more involvement from people not able to attend meetings.

Another meeting member wondered if Council had a mechanism to put out surveys.

Trish Chaney stated there was a Communications Team who were able to issue surveys with ways of writing questions that were open and unbiased.

Another meeting member felt that people are busy and that making the process very easy was important. Facebook has the facility for people to answer a simple “Yes” or “No” to a question and then also to add a sentence or two with their opinion on the subject. This will

give an indication of peoples' thinking and gauge the direction of where things are going. Keeping it simple was seen as an advantage.

Meeting structure.

- **Executive Members.** A suggestion was made that CCF members who held more “formal” roles should join the Chairperson and Secretary at the table at meetings. This would dispel any perception by new or irregular attendees of ‘nepotism’ or ‘cronyism’ re the committee representation. The composition of the CCF Executive would include the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and Facebook Co ordinator.

Transparency and even handedness are important aspects that has always been the aim of the current Executive Office Bearers. This will now be seen more clearly with the extra tools we will be employing.

- **Election of Executive Positions.** The question of the annual election of Office Bearers was brought up and it was decided that July was the appropriate month to hold the election. As Council is no longer involved in the formal structure of community groups, these groups now hold their own elections without Council overseeing them.
- **Sub Committees.** The making of sub committees was identified as an issue and should follow a more transparent process.
- Therefore, sufficient notice could be announced for a major project, and calls for volunteers to come forward, through the increased communications network being set up. The names of the members of the sub committees would be published.
- Monthly reports would also be made on the network to keep the community informed of the progress of the decision making on the project.
- **Social Media Co-ordinator.** The call for a Social Media co-ordinator was responded to and the setting up of our Facebook platform has been instigated.
- **Chairperson's Role.** Transparency is paramount when the Chairperson needs to make judgement calls. Thus, the policy outlined above, with the tools we will be putting into place will assist people in understanding how and why decisions are being made.
- **Councillors and appropriate Council Staff Members** would also be kept up to date on the progress.

4. New Business

Insufficient Lighting. A meeting member raised the issue of street lighting on the Graham Street Steps walkway, from the top of Peronne Ave down to Sandy Bay Road. The overhead lighting has been not working for 4 years.

There is also insufficient worn steps and street lighting on “The Walk” between Beatrice St and Gordon St. There is only 1 of 2 lights working and this has been for some time. These are dangerous places for walkers especially during the Winter months when people are walking home from work, children coming home from school, or people exercising.

Trish Chaney responded that any street lights that are out could be reported to Ausgrid. They have a website where the address of the light can be reported. Every light also has a number and this can also be reported, so they know exactly where the light is situated.

However, it is to be noted that, at the moment, Ausgrid are not replacing street lights as they had a technician was killed while changing a light. They are investigating and considering the need to cut off power to an area when they are needing to change a street light.

In any event, it is still possible to go to Ausgrid's website and make the report about a light out. There may be time to wait, as there will be a backlog of work to complete, but it will be in the system.

Certifiers for new buildings in the area. A resident raised the issue of the changes of the State Government laws regarding Certifiers and the problems that have arisen for a particular property in Clontarf, but which point to a much larger systemic problem within the granting of Development Applications.

A property next door to the resident had a history of going to Manly Council 3 years ago for demolition and a new building constructed which would block the views for neighbouring properties. The DA was rejected by Manly Council, but since then, there has been a change in the State Government rules with Certifiers now being the arbiters in approving DA's. There has also been a reversal of a former Foreshore Protection Area law, applicable in Clontarf. Views, formally protected have now lost that protection. There are other standards that have been changed by the NSW Government such as set backs from the street, and construction of houses larger than 2 storeys, when constructed on a sloping site. The only resort that neighbours have to appeal an approval is to apply to the Land and Environment Court and this can prove costly.

Councils were formally arbiters in DA approvals and it seems that NBC does have some concerns about the DA process. Changes by the NSW Government came about as there seemed to be a slowing down of approvals by some Councils. However, the problems of the certification process have arisen and there has been publicity recently in light of certain irregularities.

Meeting closed at 10.10 pm

Next meeting to be held at Balgowlah RSL Club, Ethel St, Seaforth on Wednesday September 4th, 2019 at 7.45pm.