

## **Ordinary Meeting of Council 6 May 2020**

The following statements were submitted prior to the meeting. Submissions made live during the meeting include some variations and can be listened via our live stream webpage:

<http://webcast.portphillip.vic.gov.au/archive.php>

### **Rhonda Small - For Community Alliance of Port Phillip (CAPP) - Item: 14.1 Notice of Intention To Sell 8 York Street, St Kilda West: Receiving of Submissions**

As identified in the report to Council of 4 March 2020, the sale of 8 York Street is seen as an 'opportunity to replenish the strategic property fund'. Its sale could also be seen as a loss to children's services in the municipality.

The decision to sell Council assets is always a serious one, to be weighted up very carefully, especially in our densely populated inner urban area. Once lost, means rarely regained. New public acquisitions are rare; competition is usually strong and prices are high.

Having been built in the 1970s as a community kindergarten the York St building is now considered to be 'based on an obsolete operating model – it is too small to be functionally or economically viable for a contemporary children's centre'. The relevant children's services team has advised that York Street is 'redundant' to service needs. Not used at all since 2015, the building and site are judged to be a burden on Council resources costing some \$10,000 to maintain annually. If sold, the proceeds will be allocated to the Strategic Property Fund.

CAPP has a number of questions about the proposed sale:

- A small number of council properties currently being used for early childhood services do not meet current standards (e.g. Eildon Road), as identified in the recent Children's Services Review. Will the proposal to sell York St be considered in light of overall children's services and building needs in this part of St Kilda/West St Kilda, before the decision to sell is made?
- Would a two-storey early childhood facility, for which there are now approved models, be a possibility at the York St site?
- Have the relative benefits of selling the York St site versus, for example, selling the Eildon Road site been considered, given a need for a more modern early childhood facility in this area of the municipality?
- If not needed for early childhood education, have alternative public/community uses of the site been thoroughly explored?
- If sold, will the funds be earmarked in the Strategic Property Fund for use in developing or maintaining Council's other early childhood properties?

Finally, given the effect of the COVID-19 crisis on the state of the property market, is now a wise time to sell in any case?

### **Clive Bowden Item: 14.5 Marlborough Street Heads of agreement – Housing First**

Through you chair, I would like to thank Council for your consideration this evening and your continued support and commitment to deliver on the "In Our Backyard Strategy" with the Port Phillip Housing Trust.

I am “virtually” here with you tonight to represent HousingFirst as Trustee of the Port Phillip Housing Trust and provide our absolute and continuing commitment to see the Marlborough Street project delivered. My time with HousingFirst as Trustee of the Trust has been relatively short at just over two years, but in that time, we, in partnership with the City of Port Phillip, have made significant progress toward the delivery of this project as envisioned in the In Our Backyard Strategy document.

This includes, more recently, obtaining a Notice of Decision to grant a Planning Permit in December with the Councils support. And an extension is asked to be considered largely due to events outside of our control.

With your continued support, we can enable this exemplar project to provide the kind of hope needed in light of this pandemic that has impacted us all. Marlborough Street is now a prime case for any economic stimulus for funding, which is exactly what Victorians and residents of City of Port Phillip need. The creation of jobs and safe, affordable and high quality family homes to look forward to in an area we are lucky enough to work and reside in.

Thank you for your consideration and time tonight.”

## **Bruce Armstrong - Ratepayers of Port Phillip, Inc - - Item 14.8 Council Plan and Budget 2020/21 - Direction Setting (Revised in consideration of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic)**

4.4.1 says "rates funding is not unreasonably subsidising services that provide private benefit"

Q1. Are Councillors aware that contrary to 4.4.1, the City of Port Phillip is one of only a handful (out of 79 Councils) that treat the private good of waste services, as a public good? Are Councillors aware that this is expressly against the Local Government Better Practice Guide 2014: Revenue and Rating Strategy, which states “it is more appropriate to recover the cost of services that have predominantly private good characteristics through user-pays charges and use property rates to offset the cost of public goods”?

2.7.2 Council says that in order to maintain a cash surplus, if required, it plans to

- cease paying down existing debt
- draw down on non-statutory reserves (also known as the General Reserves)
- borrow up to \$75m
- pause or reduce Fishermans Bend growth fund allowance

2.9: Of the forecasted \$2.6b in spending over the next 10 years; 20% is on community asset maintenance, 19% is on service contracts. Therefore 51% is discretionary spending.

2.6.3: Council will conduct a zero-base budgeting exercise (Ratepayers of Port Phillip asked for this last year at a Council meeting)

4.2.15: “over the medium and long term, fundamental changes to the way Council operates will be required to meet the rates cap challenge”

Q2. Instead of borrowing from the future and deferring spending, in order to balance the budget, will Councillors instead consider the much harder task of re-prioritising existing and upcoming spending programs and projects? To those that the community would consider essential, and those that provide the most benefit or ‘bang-for-bucks’. Will the results of the zero-base budget exercise be made public?

Perhaps Council's apparent strategy of simply borrowing from the future, is why it has recommended for years that those ratepayers who cannot afford their rates, should simply defer them to a later date, effectively reverse mortgaging their property.

3.6 Council "will require the consideration of a waste and amenity levy by a future Council and/or significant further reductions in other services to maintain financial sustainability"

2.6.7 says that the waste services expenditure increase will "contributes over \$64 million to the rates cap challenge over the 10-year outlook"

Q3 May we assume that if Council chooses to introduce a new levy to fund the \$64m, that *this* levy will be in addition to the existing rates base? Or is the opposite true, that for every dollar of waste levy collected in total, Council would reduce rates collected in total by \$1?

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The following statements were submitted prior to the meeting and a summary of the statements were read out during the meeting by the Coordinator Governance.

### **Maggie Zapadlo - Item: 7.1 Joint Letter – Visitor Parking at the Grace Community Living Facilities**

My name is Maggie Zapadlo, I have lived in the area for 50 years and don't drive. My partner and I, are and have always been a one car family and appreciate Port Phillip council's policy in this regard. By granting the visitors permits, it would not stop the visitors, just have them parking and paying. ***I have organised this petition, as I feel that the elderly demographic at the Grace needs special consideration. I'm doing this because I care.***

Although there are approximately 50 '1P Ticket 8 am -6 p Monday to Friday' parking restricted spaces' in the area between Stead Street and Kingsway, the nearest unpaid parking is roughly 10 minutes' walk.

Elderly friends, of residents, of The Grace, ***some using walkers***, who visit, some around the same age as the residents and pensioners to boot, paying for one hour, then if requiring a longer stay, need to move their car and pay for further time. Another concern is when the aged care facility at 114 Albert Road is up and running, those elderly in aged care, have a higher need for visitors.

***\$4-00 an hour is a lot pensioners.***

**Precedent:** I am of the opinion that this would not create a precedent.

In 2015, when the engineers report was written, and up to approximately May 2019, the Head Office of Australian Unity was at 114 Albert Road. The Australian Unity dental practice was part of the building. Dental patients would utilise the paid parking to attend appointments. Today, Monday 4th. May at 2.50 PM there were only 4 cars parked in the area. Even prior to Covid-19 the area did not have many cars using the area.

**Green Travel:** When purchasing we were only allocated 1 car-space in the building per apartment, and we are encouraged to walk and use public transport. The residents have no problem with that, all have downsized to one car.

To sum up:

- Age of residents at the Grace 128 Albert Road
- Future High care component being built at 114 Albert Road, whereby patients will have visitors at a critical time.
- Changing usage of area from offices to residential. Changing demographic.
- Elderly visitors, having to pay i.e. pensioners
- Elderly some using walkers not able walk for 10 minutes where free parking may be available?
- Health professionals who visit for therapy etc.

- Need to have services like cleaners etc.
- Family i.e. grandchildren wanting to visit (some residents have family from country areas)
- Would not take parking from other residents/ratepayers in the area. As noted, residents in the surrounding area have permit for parking in Palmerston Crescent etc. they don't use the area.
- Less commuter and short stay cars using the paid area even prior to Covid-19, therefore minimal loss of revenue, to council by granting permits.
- Although a high-rise building, The Grace is a residential retirement Village, it is not a business in the true sense of the word nor is it your average owner apartment building, in short the development could be assessed differently to other high rise apartment buildings.
- Ratepayers, when fully occupied envisage approximately 110 voters.

Thank you

Maggie Zapadlo

PS since the petition, two more of the residents have written expressing their need for this concession from the council.

### **John – Resident of The Grace Community Living - Item: 7.1 Joint Letter – Visitor Parking at the Grace Community Living Facilities**

As residents of 'The Grace' being in our early 80's, we request visitor parking permits to be provided to kerbside parking on the slip road to Albert Road outside 'The Grace' at 128 Albert Road, South Melbourne. It is very difficult for friends and relatives to visit as there are no visitor's spaces available at the Grace and only 1 hour meter parking on the slip road, mid-week.

When the full aged care facility is completed next door, the problem will be doubled. Currently the slip road is much underutilised, and a number of permit spaces would not disadvantage other users.

Your favourable consideration of this request would greatly enhance our wellbeing and would be much appreciated.

### **Ann and Alex McDonnell – Residents of The Grace Community Living - Item 7.1 Joint Letter – Visitor Parking at the Grace Community Living Facilities**

As newly arrived residents, we all love where we live, its access to amenities is unrivalled as far as retirement villages go. To support this and perhaps pave the way for future developments in the area we ask that the council provide permit parking for visitors • both social and professional. This is an opportunity for Port Phillip Council to show some leadership.

### **Peter Tolhurst – Item 7.2 Response to request from residents of Bridge and Glover Streets for extension of island in the middle of Pickles Street so that cars cannot cross over Pickles Street.**

I wish to submit this comment and observation, and raise an alternative approach to addressing the issues discussed in the Petition.

As owner occupier of a property on Cruikshank Street, Port Melbourne, my family, neighbours and local community would be significantly impacted by some of the suggested actions to deal with the issue raised in the Petition (tabled by residents of Glover Street, South Melbourne and Bridge Street Port Melbourne).

Please note: no member of my household was consulted with regard to this petition. We do not support it's suggested outcome of closing the centre median to prevent crossing or turning across the Pickles/Bridge/Glover Street intersection.

My objection is based on the belief that the closure of the intersection will create another "rat-run" into Cruikshank Street, as vehicles travelling south in Bridge Street and wishing to either cross or turn right into Pickles, will take the last alternative - turn right into Cruikshank to reach Liardet Street, where they can then turn at traffic lights.

Please consider the flow on effect :

- Increased traffic flows will result in heightened pedestrian risk;
- Cruikshank Street is a narrow, one-way street and apart from the Cricketers Arms Hotel, is completely residential;
- Parking is nose-in to the curb on both sides of this street;
- additional hazards will be introduced for residents reversing from their car's parking position into increased traffic volumes;
- impact of traffic build up at the intersection of Cruikshank and Liardet Streets, especially in busier peak times, will create a bank up of traffic in Cruikshank, creating increased pollution (air quality and noise) in this quiet residential street.

Similar impact will likely occur in other Port Melbourne streets which run between Bridge and Liardet Streets, south of Bay Street, with the added risk of traffic increasing in Liardet St near the Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre.

I recognise that the purpose of the Petition is to improve safety at Pickles/Bridge/Glover Street, and I support reasonable efforts to find a remedy, although reported accidents are not frequent.

However, **I do not support this proposal** which will have such a significant, detrimental impact on my immediate neighbours and the local community.

### **Alternative Suggestion.**

An alternative option is to address the actual problem with the intersection - poor "line of sight" for vehicles entering the crossing. The roads join at an angle that is not 90 degrees, and this creates poor visibility of traffic travelling along Pickles Street.

- cars travelling south along Bridge Street, and north along Glover, cannot clearly see traffic on Pickles Street, and many drivers first "edge" into the intersection;
- this creates indecision for drivers, who then accelerate quickly to cross/turn, or alternatively stop and let Pickles St traffic pass.

**The solution I propose** is to create clearer vision for the cars crossing, and this can be achieved by increasing the distance of "No Parking" spaces in Pickles Street.

I propose:

- a No Standing zone is created in Pickles Street, approximately 50 metres before Bridge Street for traffic heading East;

- a No Standing zone is created in Pickles Street, approximately 50 metres before Glover Street, for traffic heading West.

This solution will come at minimal cost. I do acknowledge it could impact homes which front onto Pickles Street, however most (if not all) of those homes have rear vehicle access via lanes. I would understand that a number of residents may prefer to park in front of their homes, but my suggested solution is far less disruptive, to far fewer people, than the proposal raised in the Petition.

I thank you for giving consideration to my comments and opinion, and wish to offer my ongoing insight and feedback into this topic if requested.

Peter Tolhurst & Debra Reys

### **James Woollett on behalf of the Middle Park Library Action Group Inc. (MPLAG) - Item: 8.1. Presentation of CEO Report – Issue 65**

MPLAG recognises the difficult decisions that Council will have to take over the coming months as a result of the impact of Covid-19 on Council's finances.

The agenda for the Council meeting of Wednesday 6 May states:

CEO Report Page 18  
"Areas for focus"

- Five service measures are available for the month of March 2020 with three on track, one at risk and one-off track.
- 16 per cent of the community are active members in the library, under the target of 20 per cent.
- 50 per cent standard of library items have been purchased in the last five years meeting the target of 49 per cent
- 5.34 visits to library per capita is under target 6.3 for this quarter, a drop was expected given the COVID-19 outbreak.
- 4.15 is the rate of turnover for physical items (loans per item), just falling short of target 4.5.
- The cost of the library service per person is higher than the target of \$6.47 with \$10.32."

We believe that these service measures warrant greater scrutiny and analysis before any final decisions are taken.

At the end of the agenda it states:

*"Council Plan and Budget 2020/21 Attachment 1 Portfolio Reductions  
\$200,000 reduction in library purchases"*

We are surprised and disappointed that a decision has been taken to cut the new materials budget by 25% (based on PLVN statistics 2018-19 new materials budget of \$807,967).

**We urge Council to reconsider this proposal and to postpone any action on its decision to cut library services and resources.**

There is a pent-up demand across Melbourne for libraries to re-open as the large number of letters in today's Age and the street library outside Middle Park Library demonstrate.

As soon as libraries are allowed to reopen MPLAG looks forward to working with Port Phillip librarians to encourage local residents and their children to make the most of their library.

Yours truly

James Woollett, President MPLAG Inc, Yvonne Lynch, Vice President MPLAG Inc, Ian Angus, Secretary MPLAG Inc, Amanda Best, Committee member MPLAG Inc & Julie Johnson, Committee member MPLAG Inc

### **Adrian Jackson - Item: 14.1 Notice of Intention To Sell 8 York Street, St Kilda West: Receiving of Submissions**

As a ratepayer for 38 years I support the sale of this former kindergarten site. The property sale prices will not be affected by the virus as this site is in a sought-after location in a trendy part of the municipality.

### **Adrian Jackson - Item 14.8 Council Plan and Budget 2020/21 - Direction Setting (Revised in consideration of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic)**

1. To rein in spending in these difficult financial times the Linden Gallery should be sold as a going concern to the art establishment and Gas Works Art Park should become self-sufficient by charging higher fees and increased ticket prices.
2. To help with the current financial problems council should sell most of the art collection. Most of it is in storage and never seen anyway so why have it or buy more of it. The council is not an art gallery either.

### **Campbell Spence - Ratepayers of Port Phillip, Inc - Item: 14.8 Council Plan and Budget 2020/21 - Direction Setting (Revised in consideration of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic)**

According to the Officers' Report 14.8: 2.6.9 City of Port Phillip proposes to use \$11m of the general reserve to fund a defined benefit superannuation fund shortfall call.

4.4.1 states: "Reserves will be used where appropriate to invest in one-off new or improved assets where this is considered more efficient than the use of debt."

According to the 2018-19 Annual report, the General Reserve is to be used to fund:

- major medium-term expenditure initiatives; and
  - future commitments that relate to the unexpended portion of government grants received.
1. How does \$11m of defined benefit super fund top-up meet either of the above General Reserve definitions?

Furthermore, according to CoPP's website, "Council will draw upon general reserves to fund the voluntary refund scheme" in relation to the mismanaged car parking fine appeals process; up to \$8.8 million.

2. How does funding parking fines appeal refunds meet either of the above General Reserve definitions?

According to the same website, these General Reserves "will be replenished over coming years".

3. How does the City of Port Phillip plan to replenish these general reserves if it has a huge budget hole, and millions are being used to pay for fine refunds and a top-up of the defined benefit super fund?
4. Is using up the General Reserve in this way simply preventing the City of Port Phillip's future ability to use the General Reserves for the community's benefit, that is to fund infrastructure and productive asset spending?

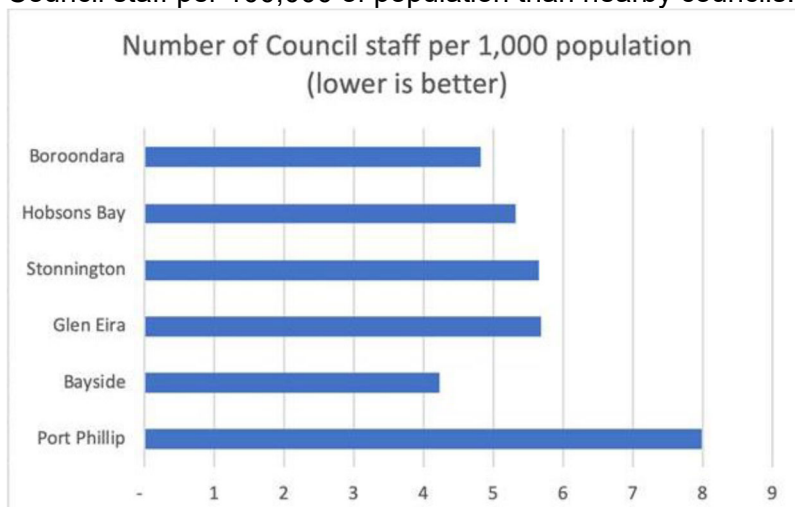
**Christina Sirakoff - Ratepayers of Port Phillip, Inc - Item 14.8 Council Plan and Budget 2020/21 - Direction Setting (Revised in consideration of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic)**

The Fishermans Bend funding gap is described in the Financial Risk section of the 10-year financial outlook from 4 December 2019 as an "almost certain" event with "extreme" consequences and a "catastrophic" risk rating. In report 14.8 section 4.4.3 Council has now disclosed that they will apply to the Essential Services Commission to raise rates by more than the rates cap to fund the Fishermans Bend funding gap. In 4.3.5, it states that future spending for Fishermans Bend has not been included in the 10-year outlook.

1. Can Council please further explain the controls that it says will reduce the "catastrophic" risk rating down to "medium", as it calculates?  
 Do Councillors agree that it is appropriate that this "catastrophic" financial risk is not included in the 10-year outlook?  
 Does Council realistically expect new residents to the area, such as those at the nearing completion huge building at 320 Plummer Street, to simply wait to have the facilities that other residents have?  
 What will Council do when new residents inevitably apply pressure to build additional new infrastructure, such as the millions already spent on Kirrip Park and the nearby community facilities?

**4.3.1 Discloses that Officers propose to reduce Council FTE from 883 to 868 by the end of the 2020-21 financial year.**

2. Do Councillors agree that this is a sufficient reduction to meet the current economic climate and outlook for the future? Particularly when Port Phillip employs more on Council staff per 100,000 of population than nearby councils:



2.7.1: Council says that it will use the upcoming 2% rates rise to fund increasing waste costs and increase support for the community.



3. *Isn't it true that in fact the upcoming staff EBA pay rise on 1 July 2020 will consume almost half of the 2% rates rise?*

**4.3 shows the assumptions that Council** has used to create report 14.8, which includes basing the 10-year outlook on historical inflation projections.

4. Do Councillors agree that Council should be using historical data to create the 10-year forecast, rather than using updated data that accounts for the current unprecedented in our lifetime economic climate? Perhaps the "pessimistic" scenario, which results in another \$33m of budget problems over the 10-year outlook, is more appropriate.