



GREENWICH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING

Our best wishes for a Happy New Year to all our Greenwich residents! We hope that this year will be a lot kinder than last. But there was at least one highlight: **Santa** managed to overcome all Covid problems to appear as usual at Greenwich Wharf on Christmas morning. Heartfelt thanks to him, Mrs Claus and the elves for delighting kids and adults alike.

This year will bring its own challenges. Last year at this time we were fighting Transdev to preserve our ferry route to Circular Quay; now we are trying to persuade our increasingly intransigent council to not install an environmentally disastrous synthetic turf playing surface smack bang in the middle of Bob Campbell Oval.

So when we meet, which will be on **Wednesday, 17 February, at 7.30 pm at the Greenwich Sailing Club, Manns Point**, we will have lots to talk about. Everyone is warmly invited to attend; there will be plenty of opportunities to have your say, and light refreshments will be available.

In this first meeting we will also conduct the AGM. All committee positions will be vacated so nominations are open for: president, two vice presidents, secretary, treasurer and seven committee members.

Nominations for the positions may be submitted beforehand in writing to Merri Southwood (southwood@bigpond.com) or may be offered from the floor at the meeting.

Please note that nominees must have accepted the nomination, be seconded and be 2021 financial members of the GCA. Only financial members are entitled to vote, so be sure to renew your subscription before or on the night. Sub slips are included with this newsletter and contain details of how to join or renew.

Please email our treasurer, John Southwood (j.southwood@spectrafin.com.au), if you need to check your membership status. People who have already paid for this year have had their membership extended.

THE BOB CAMPBELL OVAL CONUNDRUM

Four out of seven Councillors voted, on 16 November 2020, to support the synthetic surface at Bob Campbell Oval (BCO) despite overwhelming community protest. Because Councillors relied on the BCO survey to influence their vote, we applied for, and have now obtained, copies of all survey responses and we are in a position to report on the 'consultation' process. Here is what we now know about the survey:

- it was designed and analysed by Council officers.
- respondents provided no name or

address and, because the survey was web based, no email address.

- 12% of respondents live over 5 km from the ground and 39% live 1-5 km from the ground. 1-5 km is a large radius - how can Council actually identify those who are members of their local community?
- 45% of respondents who were 'very supportive' of the oval upgrade either never go to BCO or go only during the sport season so it is possible that some of the respondents may have no connection with BCO other than the occasional game of football.

- the question in the survey that was relied upon by Council as clear evidence that the 'community' supports a synthetic surface only asked if you were in favour of a 'sportsfield' upgrade. **The word 'synthetic' does not appear once in the survey.** We know respondents had to say if they had looked at the plans for BCO but, given the clear community concern around synthetic, as evidenced by the petition (see below) the survey should have been far more specific about what the 'sportsfield upgrade' would involve.
- the Council report dismisses the almost 200 written submissions against synthetic turf on the grounds that the writers answered the survey – how can they have reached this conclusion without names and email addresses in the survey? These written submissions should not have been dismissed.
- and 13 respondents who supported the upgrade in the survey clarified in later comments that they opposed synthetic.

Based on survey responses and written submissions, we calculate that more community members were against the synthetic surface than were in favour.

And that is before we count the 1600-signature petition, where, unlike the Council survey, the names and addresses of signatories were clearly identified and personal signatures provided.

Perhaps the majority of Councillors did not see community feedback as important. And they could not point to any Council plan for a **synthetic** surface at BCO – we can find no such plan in any of Council's published material.

Which raises important questions

Where are all the detailed plans for

BCO? And what about the technical and environmental reports needed before the BCO work can begin? It is astounding that Councillors passed a resolution to proceed with the BCO Master Plan that referenced just a one-page artist impression – there were no design details, no technical reports, nor was there any resolution to require that these be produced before commencement of works. And, most troubling, there was no requirement to report to Councillors or the community on the environmental impacts of the synthetic surface.

We now see on Councils' website that the Department of Planning has granted Council an extension for completion of the BCO upgrade to 4th Quarter 2022. Council has, however, agreed to commence the Shared User Path (SUP) component of the project with completion by the 4th Quarter of 2021.

The SUP is part of the Master Plan for BCO. How can Council do anything associated with BCO until it has developed detailed plans for the entire project, secured all necessary technical reports and subjected the entire project to the environmental assessments that it is legally required to undertake?

Finally, consistent with our December 2020 resolution, we call on Councillors to vote to make all this information available to the community.

DEVELOPMENTS PROPOSED FOR ST LEONARDS COULD PORTEND TROUBLE FOR ST LEONARDS SOUTH

We understood that the finalisation of the SLS Master Plan and the 2036 Plan for St Leonards and Crows Nest plan would provide assurances that future developments could not exceed the controls embedded in them. But two developments proposed for land controlled by Lane Cove Council below the huge St Leonards Sq and Landmark developments (a DA for 29-57 Christie Street and a Planning Proposal for 46 Nicholson Street) indicate quite clearly that developers are pushing for more height and FSR and that, according to the developers' documentation, they have actually had meetings with Council officers who knew of these plans.

These exceedances are significant. Which raises big questions about plans for SLS.

We know that the heights and FSRs in SLS are controlled by Council and that they cannot be varied under the Lane Cove Local Environmental Plan (LEP).

But what about the developer who decides they want more? Can a developer still lodge a Planning (aka re-zoning) Proposal to vary the LEP to upscale its proposed development? Council may not support this but, as we well know from the Pathways Aged Care development slated for Northwood Road, developers can challenge a refusal of support by Council and secure a re-zoning through the Department of Planning.

This appears to mean that, after all the community has been through, we still have no certainty about how SLS will ultimately be developed.

Whilst Department of Planning policy has a presumption against allowing Planning Proposals less than 5 years after amendment of an LEP, a developer can argue that a change is justified due to a change in circumstances, such as, eg, changing demographic trends that have not been recognised by existing strategic plans. Could demographic trends post COVID provide such an opportunity?

We hope that our Council can assure us that the new LEP controls for SLS will provide, for well beyond 5 years, the development certainty and transparency that has been lacking in our area.

ATTENTION GREENWICH CYCLISTS

The upcoming Beaches Link will have a major impact on the Gore Hill Cycleway, enjoyed by many as a safe, scenic, off-road route to neighbouring suburbs and the city. Under this proposed planning, Artarmon Reserve, Bicentenary SUPs and Willoughby Leisure Centre will effectively be inaccessible by bike.

Transport NSW is planning to construct a Control Centre on the Freeway Hotel site in Reserve Rd and a ventilation stack at Punch Rd, and divert traffic uphill from Station Rd to Clegg St and Reserve Rd. This raises concerns about safety, the extra length of journeys and increased hilly climbs, impacting pedestrians as well cyclists.

The GCA and Bike North are lobbying hard for the Gore Hill Cycleway /

walkway to be kept open during the construction period, by maintaining the underpasses at Reserve and Hampden Roads.

However, if Transport NSW insists on closing part of the Cycleway, we ask them to minimise any detour and consider Waltham Rd to Taylor Lane, with the Hampden Rd underpass to Punch Rd, then a **new** railway underpass to the lower end of Station Rd, where the detour could link back into the Cycleway. We consider this would provide desired safe separation from vehicles, a direct route and easy gradient.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSITION OPEN

We have a fantastic position open for a young(ish) person to practise and hone their social media skills for the GCA and get paid for doing it. Please reply in the first instance to Merri Southwood on southwood@bigpond.com; parents and grandparents, please don't hesitate to suggest this to your kids and grandkids.

COUNCIL MATTERS

Whilst we at the GCA are strictly non-political, we appreciate that Frances Vissel, one of our East Ward councillors, has shown us that she understands when the Greenwich community feels frustrated and ignored by Council on important issues that directly impact it, and her votes reflect that. St Leonards South and the Bob Campbell Oval Master Plan are issues in point.

We wish her well if she decides to stand for re-election this September. Speaking of council elections, NOW is the time to decide how you wish to be represented and take action to prevail upon possible candidates to stand in September. It will be upon us sooner than you think.

STAY IN TOUCH

We invite all Greenwich residents to join the GCA, or at least keep up to date by joining our mailing list by emailing John Southwood on jsouthwood@spectrafin.com.au.

Merri Southwood,
President 0412 361 331