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**BCO Update**

1 message

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To: barbara@edentity.com.au

3 October 2021 at 15:41



Issue No. 91

3 October 2021

Dear Community Member

Time for an update...

**The GCA fact checks Mayor's FAQs**

In the past week, we understand that many community members received an email from Pam Palmer in her capacity as Mayor of Lane Cove and Councillor.

This email included a set of FAQs relating to the works at Bob Campbell Oval.

Several community members have copied the email to us, concerned by statements in the [email](#) and the [FAQs](#).

The email includes a statement that ***"I'll certainly be insisting that the contracted works (at BCO) do not commence before lockdown restrictions are eased on Oct 11th."***

How can such a timeframe be named when the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for the BCO Master Plan has yet to appear?

Council will be in breach of legislation if it starts work before it assesses the REF and has formed a view as to whether its proposed work is likely to significantly affect the environment.

We find it extraordinary that the email draws an analogy between synthetic turf at the environmentally sensitive Gore Creek Reserve and synthetic turf on tennis courts and in Lane Cove Plaza.

We have looked closely at the FAQs attached to the Mayor's email and are concerned that:-

- several of the statements as to technical aspects of the BCO project are unsupported by references and, in some cases, are inconsistent with information in Council reports and
- many statements are inconsistent with information made available to the GCA under GIPA (FOI) or is otherwise in the public domain.

**We have included with this broadcast [our review of the FAQs](#).** Please email southwood@bigpond.com if you wish to receive copies of documents referenced in this review.

We highlight just a few of the statements in the FAQs:-

- ***“Council had funds committed for the project, so receiving the \$3.6m grant was a bonus”.***

Council had not committed its own funds.

The 2020-21 Budget is clear that “*Bob Campbell Oval (was to be) funded from Government Grant”.*

We now know that the Government Grant will still leave Council (by its own estimates) with a **shortfall of \$1.6 million to deliver on the project that was meant to be fully funded by the government grant**, not to mention the cost of all the other (uncosted) elements (including the enlarged car park, playground, off-leash dog area, fitness track, fitness equipment and picnic area) that a new Council will have to fund.

- There are no technical references to support the statements that ***“4G fabric is constructed from a single polymer and as such is fully and easily recyclable”*** and that the 4G turf has been developed to ***“overcome”*** the problem that *“the synthetic grass strands detach from the backing material and pollute the harbour”.*
- ***“BCO is a sporting field. However, the oval covers less than 40% of the open space. The remaining 60% will be parkland, playgrounds, a running track, dog off-leash area and an expanded carpark”.***

The remaining 60% of the Gore Creek Reserve site is not “open space”. It is segmented and offers none of the flexibility for passive and active recreation currently enjoyed by the community.

Below is our assessment of actual allocation of available space based on the Sportsfield Documentation on Council's website

<http://ecouncil.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/trim/DocumentLink.asp?ReclD=29601/21>



<b>Soccer and associated areas</b>		
Fenced synthetic oval	41.7%	
Car park and road	10.8%	
Path and surrounds outside fence (East, West)	12.5%	
New amenities block	8.0%	
<b>Total</b>		73%
<b>Family/general recreation and dogs</b>		
Playground and picnic area	12.5%	
Dog area /picnic/ paths (northern end)	14.5%	
<b>Total</b>		27%



The FAQs do not address the many questions the community has for 4 of its Councillors:-

- The DPIE grant was to fully fund project preliminaries, the synthetic ground, the amenities block and the Shared User Path (SUP). Why has the budget blown out so badly?

- How much will Council need to find from its own funds to provide the amenities block, the SUP, the enlarged car park, playground, off-leash dog area, fitness track, fitness equipment and picnic area?
- Why wasn't the option of an upgrade using natural grass followed up, as proposed by expert scientists, which would mean that the whole Master Plan could be delivered using the government grant?
- Why has Council proceeded with forcing the synthetic turf solution, during COVID times, when ratepayers cannot physically attend Council Meetings, or meet with Councillors or Council staff for the purposes of discussing the issues of concern?
- Why has Council proceeded with the synthetic turf solution when 200 community members made submissions/wrote to Councillors and 1,600 Lane Cove residents signed a petition, all opposing the synthetic sportsground?
- Why is Council proceeding with the synthetic turf proposal when just 4 Councillors have voted in favour and 4 have voted against and the Mayor has used her casting vote when she knows that the proposal is enormously sensitive and divisive within a community that has already suffered nearly 2 years of COVID restrictions?
- Why has Council decided to proceed now when 3 psychologists told Council in public forum how the proposal will adversely affect community mental health?
- And why has the Council decided to proceed with the synthetic turf solution now, with a potential wasted cost of a contract break clause, when our current Councillors have just 2 more months in office before a new Council is elected?

### **GCA supports the activities of Natural Grass at Bob Campbell Inc (NG Inc)**

As has been explained previously, the GCA committee felt that legal action to protect Bob Campbell Oval is something the GCA could not contemplate.

Knowing that community members are greatly concerned about the environmental impacts of synthetic turf at BCO, the GCA committee has agreed to donate \$5,000 of GCA funds towards the cost of a multi-disciplinary assessment of the environmental impacts of the BCO project that has been commissioned by NG Inc. NG Inc welcomes this financial support by GCA.

There will be a balance of \$14,400 remaining in GCA funds after the payment to NG Inc.

### **What is happening in Canberra Avenue? Demolition of # 21-25.**

The DA for the large Top Spring development at the cnr River Road and Canberra Avenue awaits assessment by Council and determination by the Sydney North Planning Panel.

The DA for the Top Spring development has attracted 65 submissions, including one from the GCA.

Council will be required to assess the DA and submissions to make a report to the Sydney North Planning Panel for determination.

A Panel hearing date has not been set.

In the meantime, the developer has used the Complying Development process to secure approval of the demolition of the dwellings at 21-25 Canberra Avenue.

Approval was issued by a private certifier, McKenzie Group Consulting.

### **Councillor Pam Palmer re- elected as Mayor**

The Local Government Act required Council to conduct an election for Mayor in its 20 September meeting.

Councillor Pam Palmer was re-elected as Mayor and Councillor Daniel Strassberg as Deputy Mayor until mayoral elections are held after the local government election on 4th December.

### **GCA October Meeting**

The next general meeting of the GCA will be held on Wednesday 20 October.

Who knows! We may be able to meet face to face.

We will wait until the long-anticipated date of 11 October before we make a decision as to the meeting format, so please watch out for our emails.

### **And for more involvement in local issues**

In the Cove's Lane Cove Council Election Survey [Fill out the Survey Here.](#)

Natural Grass at Bob Campbell Inc

[Natural Grass at Bob Campbell Association](#)

– [Natural Grass at Bob Campbell Association \(naturalgrassbco.com\)](http://naturalgrassbco.com)

Kind regards

Merri Southwood

**President**

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