



BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP INC.

Protecting the distinctive features of Blackburn since 1987

BULLETIN

Bulletin No. 80

July 2013

Secretary needed

Like to become more involved in the Blackburn community? Have good organisational and computer skills? Have a couple of hours a week spare? We need a secretary to help with preparing agendas, minutes and correspondence.

Contact Ray Summers on 9878 6965 if you would like more details.

Membership

Annual Subscription

The start of another financial year is upon us. A membership renewal form for the next 12 months is enclosed.

Join our committee

Our AGM is scheduled for the 31st October and we are inviting members with skills and knowledge that would strengthen BVRG committee to nominate for committee positions. Nomination forms are enclosed. If you have any questions please contact Ray Summers on 9878 6965.

New Members

Find enclosed a 'hot yellow' New Membership application for neighbours/friends who would like to become members.

Diary Note for Dinner - Friday 8th November 2013

We have decided to advance the date of our annual dinner in order to avoid the usual festive season rush. A booking has again been made at the Clarion Hotel for Friday 8 November and we ask you to make a diary note of that now with the intention of joining us there on the evening. See enclosed details.

104 Main Street!

As of Thursday July 25 no decision had been made by VCAT in relation to the proposed development at 104 Main Street Blackburn. It is now over six weeks since the hearing was completed on May 30.

A member of VCAT staff attributed the delay to the large number of Blackburn residents who had lodged objections to the proposed development. It was pleasing to see the number of residents who along with Mike Taafe of BVRG made submissions and/or attended the hearing; some for the full four days of the hearing. A neighbouring resident was represented at the hearing by a barrister.

The decision will be influenced in large measure by the interpretation of State versus local planning policies. Insofar as the former are accepted as having primacy over the latter then objectives related to urban consolidation and “strategic development opportunities” could assist in supporting the position of the developer.

In this vein the proximity to a “large” neighbourhood activity centre and the fact that this site is on a Smart Bus route and relatively close to Blackburn railway station could also favour the developer. If however the local planning scheme is given precedence then based on the evidence of the Council advocate there would appear to be no support whatever for this development. Relevant considerations here include such issues as “overdevelopment” of the site, built form and neighbourhood character.

New Residential Zones

In March 2013 the Minister approved new Residential Zones which became operational on 1 July 2013 and which must be introduced into the Whitehorse Planning Scheme by 1 July 2014. In May Whitehorse Council endorsed the implementation process and sought approval to draft the necessary Amendment but only on completion of the Housing and Neighbourhood Character Review after consultation.

Members should note that it is Council’s intention to consult widely on the Housing and Neighbourhood Character Review so as to provide the basis for the new zones and schedules, and, particularly as Council has sought exemption from giving notice of the Amendment, you are urged to take any opportunity offered to comment on the proposed changes as these will directly affect the planning conditions governing your home.

You will recall that the proposed Residential Zones are only part of a total reform of all existing Zones and consist of three main categories, namely the

- **Residential Growth Zone** to apply to higher density housing precincts,
- **General Residential Zone** to apply to the overwhelming majority of existing residential areas, and
- **Neighbourhood Residential Zone** to apply to those areas subject to specific local planning controls such as overlays.

You will also recall that the BVRG submission on these proposed changes, along with many hundreds of other submissions, was critical of many of them, not least on the absence of an adequate explanation concerning the proposed consultation and implementation processes. Some, but not all of those concerns have since been addressed and improvements adopted following the report and recommendations of the Ministerial Advisory Committee.

It remains to be seen how effectively these major changes will be implemented but some positive features have emerged, such as the ability to apply multiple schedules to a zone in order to recognise special local character. This would allow ResCode standard provisions such as height, site coverage, setbacks, open space, permeability and landscaping, to be varied. To reinforce such controls the “Purpose” of the zone is to be defined by statements that they ‘... *recognise areas of predominantly single and double storey residential development.*’ and ‘...*limit opportunities for increased residential development.*’ The building height default of 9m in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone has been amended to 8m. But the schedule to the zone can vary this height as deemed appropriate and consistent with precinct character. Similarly, where the exhibited minimum lot size was originally proposed to be 80m² in the Residential Growth Zone and 200m² in

the General Residential Zone these will now be 300m² and the lot size trigger in the latter varied to 500m². In the Residential Growth Zone buildings cannot be higher than 4 storeys and the maximum building height 13.5m.

The outstanding concerns which remain relate mainly to allowing other uses within Residential Zones and while what was defined as Office and Shop development has been prohibited. The 'as of right' entitlement is available for establishment of food outlets, medical centres, offices and shops throughout much of the residential zones areas. See item below on Planning Amendment VC100.

Community Parkland - Funding for Preliminary Works

As indicated in our last *Bulletin* local groups, including BVRG, the Blackburn and District Tree Society and Blackburn Lake Advisory Committee have, with the active assistance of Cr. Denise Massoud, seen Council set aside \$100,000 for new works on the Lake Road land in the 2013-14 financial year. These works will include gravel paths, fence renewal, tree improvements and removal of woody weeds. The Council has also agreed to close off several areas with bollards to help develop 'no mow' zones.

This all followed the preparation by local groups of a draft landscape development plan that was forwarded to Central Ward councilors last year in an attempt to initiate some action on this long neglected and valuable area of public open space.

Fortnightly Weeding Bees have been established on alternate Wednesdays with locals more than welcome to help out. For further information on working bees contact Anne Payne Phone: 9878 1152 or email annepayne@optusnet.com.au, or Peter Dempsey, Phone: 9878 6829 or email pdempsey@bigpond.com.

The Friends of Healesville Freeway Reserve - Call to Action

The Friends of Healesville Freeway Reserve (Whitehorse) Community Open Day on Sunday 26 May 2013 was well attended with estimated numbers of people through the day exceeding 1000. With Federal, State and Local Government representatives also in attendance. The purpose of the rally was to support the retention of the 35-hectare ex-freeway reserve in Forest Hill/Vermont/Vermont South for open space and demonstrate that the community values open space for many recreational uses including:

- Protection and enhancement of Bellbird Dell and other rare and endangered patches of remnant vegetation thru the link;
- The potential for a fantastic alternative cycle, pedestrian and 'biolink' thru the reserve from Springvale Road to Boronia Road;
- Retaining Nadrasca farm where it is and strengthen its links even further with the Whitehorse community; and
- The need for more sporting and recreational facilities (e.g. at Davy Lane)

The campaign for the Healesville Freeway land will continue. Watch this space!

Other local Issues

Blackburn Road Rail Crossing Removal

The proposed new railway station at Mitcham associated with grade separation has generated anger from local residents because of the omission of a lift in the plan leaving aged and disabled people to negotiate a ramp. The same number of parking spaces as previously existed have been provided which seems short sighted given the station will service the growing community for the next 50 years and beyond. Access and traffic management issues have also been highlighted in the proposal.

Grade separation at Blackburn Road will bring its challenges and the local community needs to be active to ensure the considerable taxpayer funded investment addresses congestion and access issues around the station and doesn't just serve the needs of transiting motorists moving through the centre.

Planning Amendments

Planning Amendment VC100

The impact of sweeping changes to residential zones is yet to be played out however council will be working furiously to meet the state government imposed deadlines and residents will need to be watchful for unintended consequences.

The Planning department website explains the changes as follows:

The Government has approved changes to Victoria's residential, commercial and industrial zones as listed below. All the rural zones are proposed to be amended.

<i>Delete nine existing zones</i>	<i>Create five new zones</i>	<i>Amend 12 existing zones</i>
Residential 1 Zone Residential 2 Zone Residential 3 Zone Business 1 Zone Business 2 Zone Business 3 Zone Business 4 Zone Business 5 Zone *Priority Development Zone	Residential Growth Zone General Residential Zone Neighbourhood Residential Zone Commercial 1 Zone Commercial 2 Zone	Low Density Residential Zone Mixed Use Zone Township Zone Rural Living Zone Green Wedge Zone Green Wedge A Zone Rural Conservation Zone Farming Zone Rural Activity Zone Industrial 1 Zone Industrial 2 Zone Industrial 3 Zone

*The Priority Development Zone will be removed from the Victoria Planning Provisions and all planning schemes through a later amendment, in consultation with local government.

The three amended residential zones, two new commercial zones and three amended industrial zones were introduced into the Victoria Planning Provisions and planning schemes by Amendment VC100, gazetted on 15 July 2013.

What is changing?

The existing Residential 1 Zone, Residential 2 Zone and Residential 3 Zone are to be replaced by three new residential zones:

- the Residential Growth Zone
- the General Residential Zone
- the Neighbourhood Residential Zone.

Councils will have 12 months from 1 July 2013 to introduce the new residential zones into their local planning schemes. Where councils have not finalised an amendment to implement the new residential zones by 1 July 2014, the General Residential Zone will be implemented to replace all land zoned Residential 1, 2 and 3.

Blackburn Activity Centre - Approval of Amendment C143

Late 2009 saw the start of several years of public debate and deliberation which eventually led to Amendment C143 that was approved by the Minister on 16 May. It introduces new Design and Development Overlay (DDO) schedules to the Blackburn Neighbourhood Activity Centre and to the Mega Mile (west) Major Activity Centre to the east of Blackburn.

The basis for the changes is the Urban Design Framework which has been retained as a reference document, but with some changes as recommended by the Planning Panel and adopted by Council. The Amendment includes rezoning of sections from Business 3 and 4 to Business 2. Maps in the Planning Scheme show the changes to Zones in central Blackburn. The Planning Scheme Overlay map likewise indicates how the whole area is covered by DDO Schedule 8 and that in turn sets out requirements for the height, set back and built form of developments proposed within each of the specific precincts.

The former local Policy Areas 22.11(Queen and Albert Street) and 22.12 (Blackburn Station Shopping Centre) are subsumed into a new Clause 22.09 (Blackburn and Megamile (West) Activity Centres)

Committee News and Membership

If you think that you can assist the Committee or know someone who might do so, please contact David Morrison or a member of the Committee (see contact details below).

Committee Members – Phone 9894 2531 or email bvrg@ymail.com

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