

MINUTES

Meeting of the Doncaster Hill Issues Forum

Meeting Details

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 9 April 2008

Time: 7.30pm

Venue: Function Room 3

Chairperson: Councillor Bill Larkin



Certified Quality
Management System



Certified Environmental
Management System



Certified Safety
Management System



SafetyMAP
Advanced Level



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

1. Present:

Forum members

Cr Geoff Gough, Mayor; Cr Bill Larkin (Chair); Cr Warren Welsh; Cr Grace La Vella; Cr Ron Kitchingman; Lydia Wilson, Chief Executive; Paul Molan, Director Planning and Environment; Teresa Dominik, Manager Economic and Environmental Planning; Nic Simmons, Doncaster Hill Marketing and Communications Project Manager; Miralde Bartlett, Maternal and Child Health Coordinator; Robert Dawson; Erich Reichert; Robert Anson; Paul Kounnas; Jillian Smith; Wayne Keating; Bradley Tibb; George Crowl; Fay Erwin; Maree McDonald; Cliff Wood; Ian Golding; Javad Macsood; Fred Chuah (JP); Rosa Miot; Alphonse Benoit; Ray Smith; Susie Howard; Jim Webber; Edwin O'Flynn; Bryan Saunders; Anna Molé; Cecilia Henderson; Eleanor Rieper; Kay Perkins; Meg Downie; Pam Meddings; Mervyn Hayman-Danker; Pearl Lubansky; John Delpratt; Lynn Heath; Diane Gleeson; Carolyn Vimpani; Carol Griffiths; Judith Conway.

Council Officers

Celia Haddock, Director Community Services; John Stamp, Manager Project Management; Sofi De Lesantis, Doncaster Hill Place Manager.

Observer

Danielle Crowe, Manningham Leader.

2. Apologies:

Cr Charles Pick; Barry Plant; Frank D'Assisi; Kewal Dhillon; Bryan Roberts; Paul Murphy; Nick Zoides; Elizabeth Guiver, JP; Peter and Denise Lynch; Ted and Linda Linmeiers; Joyce Berdy; Brian Morris.

3. Purpose of Issues Forum

Manningham Mayor, Cr Geoff Gough welcomed Issues Forum attendees and outlined the purpose of the Issues Forum - to inform stakeholders and community members about issues relating to the implementation of the Doncaster Hill Strategy.

Cr Gough stated that Council was extremely pleased to receive 52 nominations for the Issues Forum, from a wide variety of stakeholders including residents, real estate agents, local developers, Westfield, service clubs, residents' groups and senior citizens clubs.

Issues Forum members will be kept up to date about the latest Doncaster Hill developments and have the opportunity to have input into future Doncaster Hill planning.

4. Questionnaire findings

4.1 Meeting agenda

Cr Bill Larkin, the meeting Chair, also welcomed attendees and outlined the agenda for the meeting, which focused on three presentations by senior Council officers.

The content of the presentations was based on responses received from Issues Forum members to the questionnaire distributed last month.

The information pack made available at the meeting contained further information about the presentation topics, a copy of the meeting agenda, the Forum Terms of Reference and a number of Doncaster Hill fact sheets. Forum members who did not attend the meeting will be mailed out copies.

Cr Larkin advised that future meetings will place a higher focus on interaction between Forum members, Councillors and Council Officers.

4.2 Questionnaire findings

Last month Council forwarded a questionnaire to all Issues Forum members, seeking feedback on topics of interest. 27 responses were received.

The following topics were identified as those of most interest to members:

- 1/ Doncaster Hill Strategy overview
- 2/ Traffic and parking
- 3/ Planning permit applications and approvals
- 4/ Precinct 1 Concept Plan and capital works
- 5/ Public transport
- 6/ Environmentally sustainable development
- 7/ Manningham Planning Scheme Amendments

Other topics identified, in priority order, included:

- 8/ Marketing and Communications activities
- 9/ Doncaster Hill Local Law
- 10/ Streetscape projects
- 11/ Open Space improvement projects
- 12/ Development Contributions Plan
- 13/ Pedestrian and cycling links
- 14/ Public art.

Fifteen people indicated they would like to listen to a guest speaker on issues such as:

- The Doncaster Hill Strategy
- Planning and Melbourne 2030
- Similar developments in other states
- Transport and traffic management
- Sustainable buildings.

The preferred method of communication in a group was a round table or focus group discussion, and 18 people would prefer to receive correspondence via email.

5. Terms of Reference

Cr Larkin stated that the Issues Forum is primarily an information sharing group, with the key activities being based on:

- Progress updates on the implementation of Doncaster Hill Strategy
- An opportunity to raise issues relating to Doncaster Hill planning and implementation
- An opportunity to provide advice to committees with linkages to Doncaster Hill initiatives.

Issues Forum Members have been appointed for a two year term and Council will assess future direction and membership at that time.

The minutes will be circulated to:

- The Doncaster Hill Implementation Committee, an internal Council committee
- Relevant Council staff and
- All Issues Forum members.

Minutes will also be published to the Doncaster Hill website.

Council Officers will report to Council on outcomes from the Forum, consultation undertaken and issues raised regarding the implementation of the Doncaster Hill Strategy. Forum members will be advised by Council of actions undertaken.

6. Overview of Doncaster Hill

Attendees watched a Doncaster Hill DVD, followed by a presentation by Council's Chief Executive, Lydia Wilson, which is summarised below.

The presentation outlined Council's Vision for Doncaster Hill – a contemporary urban village with a strong sense of place and civic identity. Doncaster Hill aims to be a 21st century home for 8,300 residents and provide 10,000 employment opportunities by 2020. The motivating factors in the development of the Doncaster Hill Strategy include:

- Planning for a civic hub for Manningham since 1990s
- Doncaster Hill is part of a broader strategy to sustainably accommodate residential growth in Manningham (Residential Strategy, Doncaster Hill Strategy, Green Wedge)
- A proactive and strategic response to planning applications for high density in Doncaster Hill (since 1999)

- Desire to improve the existing low level amenity of Doncaster Road and the surrounding area
- Capitalising on the advantages of the site (proximity to city, public transport, services and facilities, views)
- Melbourne 2030 identifies Doncaster Hill as a Principal Activity Centre and targets it for high-density, mixed use development and a focus for civic and community facilities.

6.1 Precinct 1:

Council's vision for Precinct 1 is to create a vibrant, sustainable, accessible and engaging City heart for Manningham which has a strong sense of place and civic identity.

Precinct 1 will be a consolidated, prominent and accessible civic hub, incorporating learning facilities and community recreation facilities.

The key components of Precinct 1 include:

- A cultural centre
- Community library
- Art gallery and café
- Family services/childcare facilities
- Community meeting facilities
- Underground carparking.

\$20 million in funding is required over five years, and will be sourced from developer contributions, grants and State and Federal Government funding, which will be aggressively pursued by Council.

Council aims to commence construction of the new Precinct 1 facilities from October 2009.

6.2 Transport:

Manningham is the only metropolitan council in the State with no light or heavy rail. Council has taken a leadership role through the Strategic Transport Advisory Committee to improve the quality of public and private transport infrastructure and services for our community.

Council to take a lead role in facilitating a joint submission by seven neighbouring Eastern region councils to the Eddington Study, which has now been released. Council is preparing a comprehensive analysis and response to the Study, which will be submitted to the State Government in July.

Council has also recently undertaken the following transport initiatives:

- Local Bus Service Reviews - successful in bringing forward the timelines for implementation of State Govt. bus reviews (from 2009 to Feb 2008)
- Undertaking a tram feasibility Study along Doncaster Road
- Worked with the Park and Ride Advisory Committee to identify possible sites for additional park and ride facilities within Manningham

- Advocacy for early implementation of Orbital bus services and Doncaster Area Rapid Transit (DART) program and for improved bus services (both frequency and number of buses)
- Investigating traffic management and parking options for the development of Precinct 1.

6.3 *Priority Development Panel:*

On 8 May 2007, Council requested an independent peer review of the Doncaster Hill Strategy by the State Government's Priority Development Panel, which advises the Minister for Planning.

On 11 March 2008 the Minister endorsed the Doncaster Hill Strategy "as sound planning policy designed to drive growth and create a vibrant activity centre".

The PDP report identified a number of opportunities for Council to pursue, including:

- The completion of comprehensive master planning for the Civic Precinct (Precinct 1)
- Simplification of existing planning controls
- Working with the State Government and Vicroads to give prominence to public transport issues in Manningham
- Creation of an ongoing place management program to drive the Doncaster Hill Strategy into the implementation phase.

Council will consider the initial recommendations of the PDP at its meeting on 29 April and has addressed a number of anomalies in the Report in a detailed response to the Minister.

7. Current planning activity and amendments

Council's Director Planning and Environment, Paul Molan updated the Forum on current planning activity and amendments, including the \$600 million expansion of Westfield Doncaster, approved development and projects currently under construction.

Current amendments include:

- C70 - removal of the Public Acquisition Overlay from 1 Council Street
- C72 - Restrictive covenant
- C73 - extension of the interim Comprehensive Development Zone
- C76 - 600 Doncaster Road rezoning
- C77 - Permanent zone solution for Doncaster Hill

Environmentally sustainable development:

A number of processes are in place to ensure that all developments on Doncaster Hill include appropriate sustainable design initiatives.

The Doncaster Hill Smart Energy Zone, a joint initiative with Sustainability Victoria, identifies strategies and energy saving initiatives as part of a plan for Precinct 1.

The Doncaster Hill Water Plan will be developed in partnership with Yarra Valley Water and Melbourne Water. Council will explore opportunities to capture and reuse storm, grey and black water, particularly in Precinct 1.

8. Communications

Councillor Larkin introduced Doncaster Hill Place Manager, Sofi De Lesantis, who was appointed under *Creating Better Places* grant funding. Sofi briefed Forum members on communications and marketing activities currently being undertaken as part of the Doncaster Hill Communications and Marketing Strategy, including promotion of Doncaster Hill through the Doncaster Hill website, Manningham Matters, local media, brochures and fact sheets. She encouraged members to read information in the information pack provided and to use the www.doncasterhill.com website.

Council has continued liaison with local developers and real estate agents and other key stakeholders such as Westfield Doncaster and Box Hill Institute. Doncaster Hill has also received wider promotion through nomination for awards, articles in industry journals and through presentations at conferences and seminars.

9. Clarification of issues raised

Cr Larkin invited questions from Issues Forum members.

1. Question: Is a link between Westfield and Precinct 1 being developed to make it easier for pedestrians to access the facilities such as the library?

Response: Paul Molan stated that the decision to relocate the library adjacent to the Council offices was a difficult one, but the community will be able to access a range of community facilities in one location with the future development of Precinct 1. Council has committed to improving pedestrian access between Westfield and Precinct 1, through Doncaster Boulevard work and the planned construction of a major public transport interchange for cyclists and pedestrians at Doncaster Road, outside the Council offices.

2. Question: What benefit does the \$600million capital improvement of Westfield have for ratepayers and is Council going to receive additional rate income as a result of the redevelopment?

Response: Lydia Wilson stated that rate revenue from Westfield is increasing and she will arrange for future rate projections to be forwarded to Mr O'Flynn (who raised the issue) in writing. A copy of this letter is attached to these minutes. Cr Gough added that Westfield had requested a rate reduction, but Council determined that their rate payment would be based on the improved value of the site.

3. Question: A Forum member raised a concern that while Doncaster Hill has a special classification to allow enhanced access for people with a disability, some developers are not including high level disability access into their developments.

Response: Paul Molan advised that the additional standards for accessibility were incorporated into the Manningham Planning Scheme and Council encourages developers to incorporate access for people with a disability into all developments.

4. Question: The Priority Development Panel report recommended expansion of the Comprehensive Development Zone to cover the whole Doncaster Hill area, excluding Westfield.

Response: Paul Molan clarified that this does not apply outside the Doncaster Hill boundary. Council will be working with the State Government to come up with appropriate controls for the area. Council is unlikely to support the same controls applying across the whole area.

Lydia Wilson advised that a report regarding the Priority Development Panel report will be going to the Council meeting on 29 April and members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting.

5. Question: A Forum member had a concern that developers are requesting a reduction in parking requirements for major developments.

Response: Paul Molan responded that requirements for parking are included in the Planning Scheme. Car parking rates in general are currently being reviewed by the State Government. The parking ratio for one and two bedroom apartments has been set by the State Government, however residents still have concerns that the ratio is not appropriate for the number of people living in these dwellings. Council has a Parking Precinct Plan in place which identifies a slightly lower car parking space allocation for visitors. Some recent major developments have actually increased their car parking capacity.

6. Question: Why Council can't insist on more car parking spaces, ie. a two bedroom unit should have provision for three cars on site. Council needs to listen to residents' concerns over parking and traffic.

Response: Paul Molan responded that car parking consultants and Council surveys are telling us that ample spaces are being provided for car parking. Car parking will continue to be a major issue for Doncaster Hill, particularly as people will continue to park on the street, instead of utilising visitor basement car parking. Over time it is expected that there will be a higher usage of underground carparking when it is provided for in major apartment developments.

10. Group discussion

Cr Larkin asked attendees to answer the following question: *Why did you nominate for membership of the Doncaster Hill Issues Forum and what outcomes would you like to achieve?*

He then invited each table to have a group discussion, and requested each group to identify their top three topics for discussion at future meetings. Responses will be collated and presented to the next meeting of the Issues Forum.

11. Closing remarks (next Issues Forum date 23 July 08)

Cr Larkin thanked Issues Forum members for their attendance, their enthusiastic discussion, and the positive spirit exhibited in the discussions.

The next meeting of the Doncaster Hill Issues Forum will be held on **Wednesday 23 July at 7.30pm** in Function Room 2.