



## Minutes of the Newtown Residents' Association October Meeting, 7.30pm, 18 October 2021, held at St Thomas's Community Lounge 200 Riddiford St.

**Present:** Rhona Carson (Chair), Hilary Watson (Minutes), Jane Patterson, Sam Somers, Penny Sturgess, Don McDonald, Kevin Lethbridge, Carol Comber, Michelle Wolland, Joyce Gibson, Kerry Finnigan, Avryl Brunley (visitor from Mt Victoria), Steve Cosgrove (apologies for lateness), Cr Fleur Fitzsimons, Paul Eagle MP, Brian Dawson.

**Apologies:** Cr Laurie Foon, Margaret Franken, Adam Awad, Martin Hanley.

Sam announced that the **Newtown Market** may be open Saturday 24th (**update** – opening 30<sup>th</sup> October).

**Workingmen's Bowling Club, Owen St** - Cr Fleur Fitzsimons reported that the Club has given up its lease. WCC now owns the building and they don't want to demolish it. Council officers are concerned however at the cost of repairs.

The future use is not decided. A number of community groups are interested. NRA is very clear that we can't lose community space in Newtown, and our Councillors agree.

**The District Plan, Cycleways and LGWM** are all coming up for community consultation between November 2<sup>nd</sup> and December 14<sup>th</sup>. At the time of this meeting the District Plan was due to be discussed by Wellington City Council's Planning Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> October, and then released for consultation.

Cr Fitzsimons discussed the consultation plans. Discussion and questions followed about District Plan related issues. District plan consultation will be in person and online, and will be combined with consultation on cycleways and LGWM, as these all fit together.

- On 1 November at 5.30 there is a webinar introduction to the whole plan. [Register for the launch event here.](#)
- 20 November there is an in-person Roadshow at the Salvation Army Hall 10am – 3pm, with input from the WCC planning team and the engagement team.

Also questions can be sent to an email at WCC.

NRA can ask for a Newtown specific presentation but we may not get it as there is already a busy programme for consultation.

**(Update** –the Draft DP was adopted by the Council on 20<sup>th</sup> October after considerable discussion and some proposed amendments. [See here for the minutes, a useful Q&A document and the link to watch the meeting.](#) In the meantime a new Government directive about intensifying housing was announced, so the Draft DP will need considerable revision.)

Cr Fitzsimons left the meeting at this point, having already apologised for a short attendance.

**Rhona noted that the Heritage week** opening event on 25 October, is an online and in person event discussing the growth pressures facing our city and how we manage heritage - <https://wellingtonheritageweek.co.nz/event/festival-opening-panel-talk/>. (**Update** – this was a lively discussion, the livestream has been recorded and can be seen by following the link above.)

**Introduction to LIVE WELLington.** At the Association meeting in July we talked about the development of a group to promote density done well. This organisation is now called 'LiveWellington – a liveable city by design'. Members of several Residents' Associations (including Newtown and We R Newtown) have been involved in the planning discussions, as well as other interested people such as planners, architects and developers. Watch this space. The launch will probably be on Sunday 7 Nov at 4.00. (**Update** – now expected to be 4pm November 14<sup>th</sup> at Mt Cook School).

**The Government Housing Policy.** Rhona commented that the recently released **Government Policy Statement on Urban Design** discusses a strategy for housing and contains a lot about community placemaking. It specifically says that there shouldn't be a one-size-fits-all approach, and yet the **National Policy Statement on Urban Design** (which has the requirements for enabling 'at least 6 storeys' in large areas of our suburbs) is very directive and we have said ever since it was published that it is indeed a 'one size fits all' approach. The text of the GPS-UD implies that it has precedence over the NPS-UD.

Brian Dawson pointed out that the GPS-UD was high level policy, and that the main concern of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Design (which published the GPS-UD) is the operation of Kainga Ora. Paul Eagle commented that the NPS-UD had been interpreted in Wellington more strictly than was really required.

#### **Hospital potential for parking and housing.**

The meeting went on to have a general discussion about options for housing. The large hospital carpark on the corner of Riddiford and Mein St was one of the sites considered, and the meeting agreed that would be good to see it used for housing, with hospital parking underneath.

**Mt Cook:** Carol Comber informed us that she had applied to Council for funding for a year's extension to her community job with Mount Cook Connect, and has been turned down. She is considering whether she wants to ask for a meeting with Jenny Rains (WCC Community Services Manager) to take it further. She was offered support from NRA if she wants to do this.

**A Good News story followup** about a WCC tenant who set up a small garden at her Council flat in Newtown, that was reported in the DomPost. A garden supplies manager in Bulls liked the story and sent her a load of peastraw, compost and other gardening equipment, which she was very happy to receive.

**The Newtown Festival** – Rhona reported that there is a lot of uncertainty about whether the Festival will go ahead as planned on March 6<sup>th</sup> – or the postponement date of April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Government announcements have said that Festivals will be able to operate with attendees having vaccine certificates – but it seems impossible to make sure that everyone at a free street Festival has a certificate, because there are a multitude of entrances, people living on site and a supermarket inside the Festival boundary. However the Festival crew are going ahead with planning as if it is going to happen until there is more clarity about what will be happening in March (or April).

The meeting closed at 9.05pm. Next meeting November 15<sup>th</sup>, 7.30pm, same venue.