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 TOMAREE RATEPAYERS & RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION INC.

'Meet the Candidates' Forum

2017 Port Stephens Council Elections

7:00 PM Tuesday 15 August 2017
 Nelson Bay Bowling Club Auditorium

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TRRA Newsletter July/August 2017

Meet the Candidates Forum, 2017 Council Elections

TRRA have booked the Nelson Bay Bowling Club auditorium for this event and the response from the five candidates that have nominated so far has been very positive, with only one East Ward candidate unable to attend due to a work commitment. The Mayoral race this time around has attracted a Melbourne cup field of aspirants, and all that we have contacted so far are attending the forum.

Nominations opened on 31 July and will close on 09 August. We will keep you posted on who has nominated for what, and more details of the forum when this becomes clear. We intend to video the forum this time and post it on YouTube. **So get your questions ready and encourage your friends or other community groups to attend this important opportunity to make an informed decision on who your representatives will be on Council for the next three years.**

The executive of TRRA has been canvassing the candidates as we contact them on some of the issues of principle that we believe that the community are most

concerned to see addressed in the new Council and we have had a positive response from most of them.

These Issues are:

- We feel that more consultation, transparency and accountability to ratepayers and their community groups is a top priority.
- A more strategic approach to planning is imperative, we need visionary master plans, not ad hoc decisions made to placate developers that will not serve our long term interests well.
- More respect is required, for ratepayers, staff, government officials and particularly other councillors. Residents have had enough of voting blocs, defamation proceedings and toxic code of conduct machinations against other Councillors, conducted in confidential sessions at Council meetings.
- More transparency and less Confidential Council sessions. We understand some matters are 'commercial in confidence' but too many matters are discussed in secret confidential sessions and details are never released to the public when discussions are completed, as required.
- More financial accountability is required. Council's Annual Accounts are now more complex than ever and harder to understand. The amount of information has increased exponentially, but the lack of detail is concerning. Everything is now aggregated. When we ask for specific detail they say it is unavailable.
- A return to the live streaming of Council webcasts that was discontinued by this Council. This would lift the standard of debate and make individual Councillors accountable to the public for their contributions.
- A return to the previous scheduling of Council meetings, still used by all adjacent Councils. Committee of the whole meetings on the first Tuesday of the month, formal Ordinary Council on the last Tuesday to allow proper consideration and consultation with the community between the meetings, instead of the current system of dropping out a massive paper on Friday for railroading it through on Tuesday.
- Candidates should provide full disclosure of any political affiliations.

Local issues

- The future of the Ngioka Centre.
- Nelson Bay CBD Strategy and Building Heights.
- Proposed Koala Hospital
- Future of the Tomaree Lodge disability care facility

There will be ample opportunity for your input in the public Q&A session.



DA Watch update August 2017

– Nigel Waters/John James, TRRA Planning Sub-Committee

Nelson Bay Town Centre and Foreshore Strategy Review



We are alarmed that Council planners have pre-empted the outcome of the Strategy Review in favour of much higher buildings. Staff assessments on two recent apartment buildings have effectively assumed that height limits will be relaxed and moreover accepted spurious arguments in favour of variations.

Council's General Manager reported recently that there were 82 individual submissions on the Nelson Bay Town Centre and Foreshore Strategy Discussion Paper and that hundreds more interacted through the web interface www.haveyoursay.portstephens.nsw.gov.au He is quoted as saying "There was one very resounding theme to the submissions received – that there is overwhelming support to keep the unique coastal character of the Bay and marrying the preservation of the natural environment with the enhancement of the built environment." This is certainly the strong message that TRRA received at our public meeting on the strategy attended by 200 residents, and yet Council has approved the two apartment buildings which exceed current height limits – one of them more than double the height at 32 metres.

Planners are currently considering the feedback on the Review along with traffic studies undertaken during Easter before a further report and draft revised Strategy is presented to the new Council later this year. It is disappointing that the draft is not available before the September Council election so that we can obtain a clear picture of how potential candidates will vote on the proposed changes before we go to the ballot box.

TRRA has obtained a special tabulation from the 2016 Census which again shows a very high vacancy rate in Nelson Bay flats and apartments. (71.8% of 3 storey apartments were vacant and 69.4% of 4 or more storey blocks were vacant). This reinforces our submission to the planners that more high rise apartments will not attract a huge increase in permanent residents which they contend is needed to revitalise the Nelson Bay town centre.

65-67 Donald St Nelson Bay



A 17 residential unit development on the corner of Donald and Church Streets rising to 19 metres was approved by councillors on 13/7/2017. TRRA were not necessarily opposed to this development but believed that the decision should have been deferred until the Nelson Bay and Foreshore Strategy was finalised. (Consistent with our position on the 32 metre tower at 11-13 Church St. approved back in May) This is Contrary to assurances from Council that **the earlier approval would not set a precedent for other developments exceeding the height limits** (currently set at 15 metres in the LEP) until the new strategy was approved.

The Donald St development is 6 storeys high with below ground car parking. This is within the guidelines of the current strategy which allows 5 storeys, plus up to an extra 2 storeys for design excellence. It is disappointing that in approving this development, council planners now quote from the new strategy, starting at 7 storeys with extra allowed for design excellence.

Another development has now been proposed in Government Road and both quote the precedent in Church St. of allowing heights above maximum height value of the current LEP in their applications.

97 Stockton St Nelson Bay

A DA has been submitted to convert the old Removalist and Storage building at 97 Stockton St to a marine sales and repair facility. Although this is zoned R2 Low density Residential, changes are allowed from commercial use to another commercial use. The original approval dates back to the 1960's.

5 Yacaaba St Nelson Bay

A DA has been submitted to demolish the existing dwelling in the front of 5 Yacaaba St and convert it to parking spaces for a small medical centre and two upstairs residential units in the converted existing building at the rear.

Salamander Shopping Centre

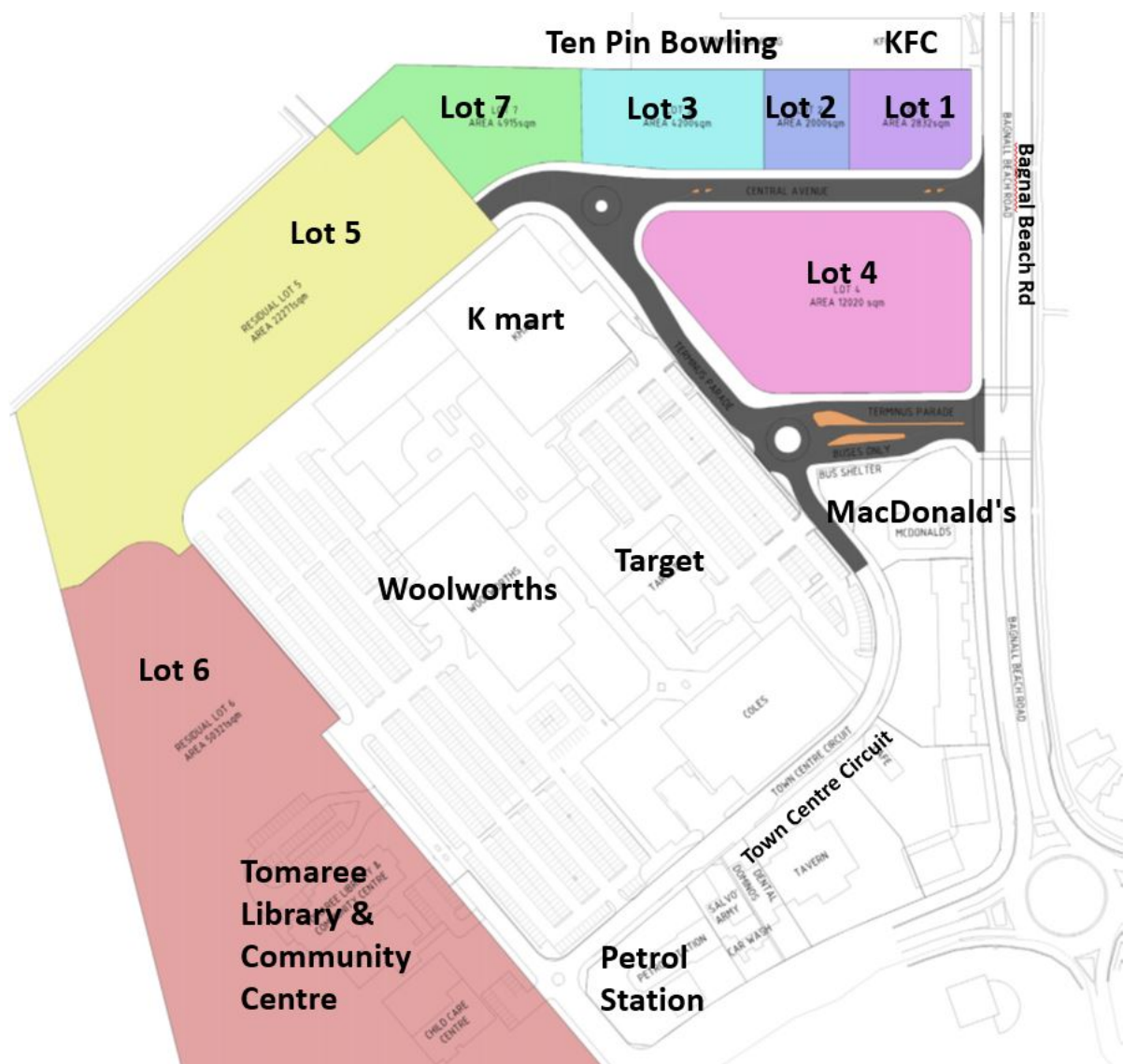
With new roads and infrastructure for the Council subdivision of the land between the existing shopping centre and the Rigby centre nearing completion there have been a number of approvals for some of the lots.

The new Aldi store, which will lease the western part of Lot 4, was approved by councillors on 3 July.

A new medical centre planned for Lot 3, which is expected to be sold, was approved by Councillors on the 2 August. The development will include a General Practice, Imaging Facilities, After hours GP service, Pharmacy, Pathology Lab, Ancillary coffee shop and 52 car parking spaces..

A Caltex/Woolworths petrol outlet on Lot 1 (to be leased), was also approved on 2 August. This was delayed to examine the traffic flow which will only allow vehicles to enter from Bagnalls Beach Rd and exit into the new Central Ave.

The sale of Lot 7 north of K-mart was listed to be discussed in confidential items before council on the 2 August, but no details are yet available.



Soldiers Point Marina Extension

The proposed extension is strongly opposed by the local Soldiers Point community, TRRA and many other organisations, with the Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) refusing the application twice, most recently in March 2016. The Applicant has appealed to the Land & Environment Court, with the next hearing due 28-30 August 2017.

31 Leonard St Shoal Bay

A DA was submitted late last year for 31 Leonard St Shoal Bay for a 10 dwelling residential flat development, but was withdrawn in January this year after being advertised and generating strong opposition from local residents.

A new DA was recently submitted for the site for a smaller development of 5 units, multi dwelling housing. Due to the type and size of development this DA was not required to be advertised in the newspaper and only nearby neighbours notified, although Planners have the discretion to advertise when there is likely to be strong public interest. Although this new proposal is smaller in size the neighbours are still very concerned about the lack of advertising, lack of privacy and the management of storm water.

Latitude One Caravan Park 4495-4497 Nelson Bay Road Anna Bay.

Plans for this caravan park were originally submitted in 2009 and has had a large number of S96 modifications over the years. The most recent was for a new turning lane off Nelson Bay Road, this will involve the removal of some native and introduced trees. Site works appear to have started on the first stage of the park which will eventually have 229 homes and managers' residence, community hall and recreation facilities.

Expansion of Anna Bay Cemetery

The cemetery is proposed to be extended onto an adjoining parcel of Crown land, of which Council is the trustee. The development of the site to expand the lawn cemetery will extend the life of the cemetery for another 10-20 years through the provision of 1,200 additional burial sites and niche walls to accommodate 1,200 ash internments. The site is zoned RU2- Rural Landscape, which allows for use as a cemetery.

Clearing of approximately 0.6 hectares of vegetation is required in order to accommodate the proposal. Vegetation buffers are proposed along the western and southern boundaries to allow for the retention of vegetation (including the only identified habitat tree on site). A soil management plan will also be required

as the site contains class 4 acid sulphate soils. This DA is on exhibition until 9 August

Derelict resort at 74 and 84 Gan Gan Rd Anna Bay

A S96 application has been made to modify the approved Tourist Facility which was partly built and then abandoned several years ago. The plans remain substantially the same except that four unit blocks will be removed from the centre of the development, with the land reserved for a future stage, and all the remaining blocks will now be 2 storey. This DA is on exhibition until 9 August

