



## **TRRA Inc GENERAL MEETING**

**Zoom meeting**  
**Monday 11 October, 2021 – 7.35 pm**  
**Minutes**

**Attendance:** 28, including 10 Committee members

**Apologies:** Margaret Wilkinson

**Minutes of the previous meeting** (Posted on TRRA Website)

1. Moved Judy Walsh, seconded Geoff Bassar, that the Minutes be accepted. Agreed by consensus.

### **Matters Arising**

2. None.

### **Correspondence**

3. None.

### **Treasurer's Report**

4. The Treasurer presented the monthly report and noted that once internet-related bills were paid in October the remaining balance would be in the order of \$1600-1700. Moved Denis Pittorino, seconded Geoff Washington, that the report be accepted. Agreed by consensus.

### **Reports**

5. *Nelson Bay height limits.* Nigel Waters recalled that new height limits had been adopted by Council in 2018 but only incorporated in the LEP in 2020. The 32 metre development at 11-13 Church Street was, at the time it was approved, 113% over the then height limits, but nothing had been done to build it. Now, with a larger site, the developer proposed a 36 metre building which was 29% over the new limits. TRRA had made a detailed submission objecting to it and had been assured by Council staff that it would not be determined until after the elections. One member pointed out that the

development proposal was unusually lacking in photo montages, presumably because these would reveal the visual problems it would create. Another member recalled that the Nelson Bay strategy aimed to avoid having any buildings higher than the ridgeline, which would be clearly exceeded by this proposal: building at the 28 metre height limit would be at about the ridgeline level.

6. Turning to the proposal for 17-19 Yacaaba Street, Nigel Waters drew attention to some design issues, especially the garage exit placement and lack of shopfronts, and said that the building would exceed the height limit by less than 10%, meaning that it could be decided by Council staff unless called up. He thought that the argument for exceeding the height limit in this case was reasonably persuasive. The independent design panel would consider it, but its report was only advisory. One member pointed out that consistent heights had been achieved along Honeysuckle Drive in Newcastle and wondered why Port Stephens seemed unable to hold the line. Another member said that a consultant's report some time ago found the "sweet spot" to be 8 storeys, but now that this had been incorporated in the LEP developers continued to ask for more. A member pointed out that 3 or 4 storeys now seemed to be the preferred height in waterfront towns, whereas earlier the buildings had been much higher, e.g. in Manly. Nigel Waters responded that this was true for buildings marketed to permanent residents but the reality was that developers in Nelson Bay were looking to sell as holiday units, despite their assurances that they were for permanent residents.
7. *Future of Tomaree Headland.* Geoff Washington reported that the Tomaree Headland Hereitage Group, representing nine community organizations including TRRA, was pressing for retention of the site in public ownership, development of a master plan for the use and management of the site, sustainable adaptive reuse of the assets and a management trust to oversee it. They had received \$20,000 in grants to develop an authoritative history of the site and a master plan. Council had produced a good heritage report. Things were now in the hands of the State Government to make decisions.
8. *Council Elections.* Ben van der Wijngaart announced the plans for a "Meet the Candidates" even to be held on 15 November, either by Zoom or at Nelson Bay Bowling Club or a combination of the two. A member suggested that if the meeting was held by Zoom, one person should be designated to coordinate the questions suggested on the Chat function and put selected questions to candidates.

## **Other Planning Issues**

9. John James reported on a number of planning issues:
  - a Place Plans. The by-invitation-only workshops were a disappointing approach to community input, with a limited agenda, opaque selection of participants and unclear timing. Reports from members confirmed these impressions.
  - b A proposal by Ingenia for a development at 16 Trotters Road, Bobs Farm, did not properly address environmental concerns. Moreover, it was proposed to eliminate the caravan park aspect altogether: these developments came under the rules for caravan parks, thereby avoiding many standards and paying less to

Councils in rates. TRRA was opposing the proposal but feared that it might come before the current Council, before it went into caretaker mode.

c A revised proposal for the Birubi Beach Resort, Anna Bay, now proposed to split it into a stage for each dwelling. The result of this would be to enable the developer to build a restaurant and pub there without having to build any accommodation, which would be an abuse of the rules governing use of rural land. A member queried whether there could be a condition of development requiring the construction of accommodation and tourist facilities.

d Salamander Centre. Piecemeal development of the area was continuing, without any oversight by Council. Council's intentions regarding the land backing onto the wetlands were unclear.

### **General Business**

10. One member pointed out that some participants in the meeting had had their cameras turned off. She proposed anyone participating should be visible.

The meeting concluded at 9.00 pm.

Next meeting: Meet the Candidates 15 November 2021. General Meeting 13 December.

Bill Salter

30 October 2021