

Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Technical Reference Group Meeting

20 March 2007 (7:15 – 8:30pm), Edithvale Bowling Club

MINUTES (DRAFT)

PRESENT:

Independent Chair, John Arup, Arup Environmental and Planning

Carolyn Briggs (Victorian Boonerwung Elders Land Council)

David Danher (local resident)

Tania Ireton (Bird Observers Club of Australia)

Mark Juler (City of Kingston)

Graham Malcolm (Aspendale Gardens Residents Association)

John Ronke (City of Kingston)

Michael Walker (local resident)

Les Williams (Friends of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands)

Paul Minifie (Minifie-Nixon)

Melbourne Water

Greg Bain (Waterways)

Wayne Charlton (Infrastructure – Project Manager)

Salyana Williams (Communications & Community Relations)

Observers:

Jon Belling (Boonerwung Council)

Michael Ryan (local resident)

1. Welcome / Introductions

John Arup welcomed attending committee members and observers.

2. Apologies

Max Pfitzner (City of Kingston)

Jane Satchwell (Mordialloc Schools Cluster)

Andrew Silcocks (Birds Australia)

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed by all present.

4. Project Status

Wayne Charlton confirmed:

- EPBC Act referral approval

- Appointment of Connell Wagner as project construction contractors – Melbourne Water has a good working relationship with this organization
- Information on elevations is still awaited and will be provided at the next meeting

EPBC Act Referral

Wayne Charlton confirmed that the Federal Department of Environment and Heritage had formally approved our referral, with conditions that were discussed at the previous meeting (*see presentation attached*). Given DEH approval, we can now proceed to statutory planning permit stage.

With construction times now restricted to autumn and winter, David Danher queried whether project completion would be delayed to 2008. Wayne confirmed that detailed planning, assessments and some offsite construction could be undertaken in 2007, with onsite construction commencing in autumn 2008 and estimated date of completion being late 2008.

David recommended that this appeared to be the best option, so that the project is not rushed towards completion. The committee agreed with the proposed timeline.

Les Williams's view is that no external onsite construction should be undertaken between August and end February / March, to accommodate the migratory birds – for example, Latham's Snipe starts arriving from August. Wayne confirmed that DEH had referred to Latham's Snipe in their response regarding potential impacts of the construction on migratory birds and that Melbourne Water would ensure that the project construction met all Ramsar Convention requirements. It was agreed that Wayne would confirm recommended construction dates with DEH.

Site Surveys

Wayne confirmed that site surveys were being undertaken. As discussed at the previous meeting, surveys of trees with more than 100mm diameter have been completed.

David Danher asked if the other side of Edithvale Road was also to be surveyed, given the original concept design idea of linking the northern and southern wetlands areas. Wayne confirmed that information on property boundaries and fences is available, but not on levels for this site. David expressed concern that by not surveying both sites, full information will not be available to the committee. It was agreed that Wayne would investigate undertaking a contour levels survey of this site.

Wayne also confirmed that that site surveys undertaken clarified that the proposed Discovery Centre site meets existing buffer issues.

Carpark

David Danher raised the possibility of replenishing the existing carpark as the site's carpark, relocating potential constructed wetlands and landscaping the forecourt. Paul Minifie said that an ecogarden / wetlands could be considered at

the front, as a signing presence for the building. Les Williams would like to see further plans to ensure minimal impact on the birds.

David also queried the 30m offset from site boundaries. Wayne to confirm. It was also noted that some vegetation would need to be removed if the carpark remains at the proposed location. It was mentioned that if the existing carpark is replenished, there would be no need to remove vegetation. Incorporation of landscape / carpark into the one design was discussed.

Wayne and Greg Bain again confirmed that the proposed carpark met the site's Ramsar Management Plan buffer requirements, based on contour levels information. Wayne to discuss with Council.

Cultural Heritage

Wayne Charlton confirmed that preliminary assessments have been completed and that specific project assessments now need to be undertaken. Carolyn Briggs said a cultural management plan / risk process is required and that she and her group are available to assist Melbourne Water here.

Interpretive displays

The committee agreed to establish a small group to progress interpretive display planning, as this is required now to guide floor layout. The group should include representation from Friends of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands, Mordialloc Schools Cluster, Boonerwong Council and Melbourne Water. Salyana Williams to arrange follow-up meeting.

Les Williams reminded the group that earlier discussions included the possibility of including a live camera to enhance interpretive displays. It was agreed that the scope of interpretive displays would be bound by budget.

Salyana tabled a summary of the proposal for wetlands multimedia interactive tools that could potentially be used at the centre, or for pre-visit / post-visit purposes, in order to enhance visitors' learning experiences.

David said the above was a good working list. He also informed the meeting about his visit to the Taipei wetlands education centre in Taiwan. He will provide a link to the website.

Comments / questions from the floor

Michael Ryan asked if the proposed carpark size could be reduced, with the possibility of using the existing carpark. Paul Minifie responded that the intention is to keep carpark size as minimum as possible. Wayne will discuss with Council, in relation to general planning scheme requirements, while considering EPBC / Site Ramsar Management Plan.

Michael also showed his diagram, investigating peat layer and plants. Other points raised by Michael included: 2005 design for Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands, history, biodiversity, vegetation, tapping underground water, hydrolic control, toxic pollution, buffer zone, volume of traffic along Edithvale Road. He was reminded that he would have the opportunity to forward a formal submission

as part of the upcoming Site Ramsar Management Plan Reivew. He was also reminded that the proposed Discovery Centre site was recommended after extensive consultation across local stakeholder groups – information is available at the Melbourne Water website melbournewater.com.au/wetlands

Graham Malcolm raised the issue of water flow to the existing wetlands. This has been crudely altered over time and we are now looking at a “savanna”. If the drought does not break, he asked about Melbourne Water’s plans to rehydrate the area. Greg Bain responded that there was no danger of savanna in one period. He said issues like these would be considered within the upcoming Ramsar Management Plan Review.

Other business

None.

Next meeting

As a guide, the next meeting is expected to be after five weeks, to provide time to receive geotechnical reports.