

Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Technical Reference Group Meeting

30 January 2007 (7:15 – 8:45pm), Edithvale Bowling Club

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Independent Chair: John Arup, Arup Environmental and Planning

Tania Ireton (Bird Observers Club of Australia)

Graham Malcolm (Aspendale Gardens Residents Association Inc)

Andrew Silcocks (Birds Australia)

Michael Walker (local resident)

Les Williams (Friends of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Inc)

Paul Minifie (Minifie Nixon)

Melbourne Water:

Wayne Charlton

Salyana Williams (minutes)

Observers:

Pat Bentley (Frankston Foreshore Advisory Committee)

Jean Foster (local resident)

Sheena Grahame (local resident – David Danher delegate)

Ron Lyon (Frankston Foreshore Advisory Committee)

Carolyn Nelson (local resident)

Michael Ryan (local resident)

1. Welcome / Introductions / Apologies:

John Arup welcomed attending committee members and observers.

2. Apologies:

Mark Juler (City of Kingston), Greg Bain (Melbourne Water), Carolyn Briggs (Victorian Boonerwung Elders Land Council), David Danher (local resident), Toni Meek (Melbourne Water), Jane Satchwell (Mordialloc Schools Cluster) – late apology

The following committee members did not attend:

Stephen Compton (Bunurong Land Council), John Ronke (City of Kingston),

Max Pfitzner (City of Kingston)

3. Minutes of the last meeting:

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

4. Project status

EPBC Act Referral (Wayne Charlton, Melbourne Water)

Melbourne Water's Wayne Charlton presented a project update (*presentation attached*).

For the benefit of observers, an overview of the project and technical reference committee's background was provided. It was noted that this was the group's fourth meeting.

The committee and observers was briefed about the EPBC Act Referral, submitted to DEH by Melbourne Water in Dec 2006 – noting that the submission was available at DEH website, and would be made available on CD to interested committee members.

The referral detailed project impacts, hydrology study of the wetlands and opportunities presented by the project to improve the value of the site. Melbourne Water's position, backed by independent contractors Connell Wagner who were commissioned to prepare the submission, is that the project is a "non controlled action" within the site's Ramsar Management Plan guidelines. Based on interim discussions, where DEH clarified the project's scope (limited to the centre / surrounds only, with any future work on walking tracks to be the subject of a separate referral), it was expected that the Discovery Centre project would be considered a "non controlled action" providing conditions were met in relation to construction times and the centre's operations – this meant no further DEH approvals were needed and the project could proceed to functional design, planning permits and engagement of engineering consultants.

The statutory timeline for DEH's response was 2 February 07, and **it was agreed** to communicate the decision to committee members upon receipt.

Site survey / assessment (Paul Minifie, Minifie Nixon)

Minifie Nixon's Paul Minifie provided an overview of site surveys, including investigations of soil levels, mapping and profile. These investigations would inform functional design.

The committee was informed that under the site survey undertaken, there was some insertion of stakes and marking of trees that resulted in a few community queries about possible tree removal. It was noted that there would be some tree casualties, which would be kept to the absolute minimum.

The site survey also clarified flood level is 1.5m above ground that offered the side effect of a good view from the centre of the wetlands.

Estimated project timeline

- Initial sketch work (early March)
- Presentation to committee (March)
- Drawings / contract documentation (June)
- Possible turning of the sod (July)

5. Next steps – discussion

- If DEH decision is that the project is a “controlled action”, there will be a significant addition to the project timeline – more detailed information would need to be prepared and provided to DEH
- If DEH decision is that the project is a “non controlled action”:
 - we will be able to proceed to functional design and planning permits
 - it would be necessary to have a shorter time lag between committee meetings (possibly monthly, over three months)

Discussion ensued, and covered the following points:

(Les Williams)

- Impact of Edithvale South drain on the wetlands, as adjacent to the wetlands and could impact on this Ramsar site
- Possibility of a bore on the site
It was noted that bore water is managed by Southern Rural Water.

It was agreed that Wayne Charlton would discuss with MW’s Waterways.

- Sealing options – is the soil capable of foundations without penetration of the peat layer

It was agreed that GHD would advise about controls in relation to the peat layer.

- Acid sulphate management
It was noted that this would be managed according to the approved process outlined in EPA Vic’s bulletin.
- Non reflective glass – cleaning issue
It was noted that Minifie Nixon welcomed the idea of non-reflective glass, from an architectural perspective

(Graham Malcolm)

- External activity after 9:00pm
- Caution in relation to weekend activity

It was clarified that there would be occasional after-hours use by local community groups, that it was not intended that the centre would be usually open at weekends, and that all conditions would be included into the centre's Operations Plan, during the planning stage

- South-facing building - sunlight controlled by overhang
It was noted that this was one of the reasons Edithvale was the preferred site.
- Picnic / barbecue area – should not be a public facility, as noted at an earlier technical reference group meeting, but a controlled outdoor space (vs barbecue) specifically for students.
- Car park north of Edithvale Road
It was noted that MW had contacted VicRoads to discuss possibility of crossing. Issues raised were student safety - crossing / corralling / traffic flow. A new crossing would add to the project's complexity and cost. MW position is that a new crossing is not feasible.
- Car park south of Edithvale Road, around 15m from boundaries of housing
It was noted that the site survey indicated that the carpark could be located 40m from housing boundaries.
- Future of existing bird hide
It was noted that this was beyond the scope of the current project .
Melbourne Water and the Friends of ESW are aware of OH&S issues.
Access regulations are a MW / Friends of ESW issue and will be addressed in update of maintenance agreement .

(Andrew Silcock)

- Restricted construction period recommended by DEH (1 Jan to 30 April) – migratory birds / waders visit the site between October and April.

It was agreed that Wayne Charlton would clarify this required restricted construction period with DEH.

- Reason for separation of centre / surrounds and walking tracks in the project scope
It was noted that detailed design of any future walking tracks work was required, hence not included in current project scope. Also, current walking tracks are available. It was noted that the broader master plan was preferred, and does not detract from the centre's purpose as an education centre.

6. Questions from the floor

Pat Bentley sought clarification about the project funding. It was confirmed that the project is funded by the State Government of Victoria.

Jean Foster raised the issue of litter along Edithvale Road site / emptying of bins – who is responsible MW or Council?

It was agreed that Wayne Charlton would follow up to clarify roles / responsibilities.

Carolyn Nelson recommended that CFA should be included in discussions. She also queried the issue of grass mowing, which she had been informed was restricted due to budget issues. Wayne Charlton clarified that there were separate budget streams for maintenance and capital funding

Michael Ryan raised the issue of a firebreak issue (maintenance), people / animal control within buffer zone. It was noted that the upcoming Ramsar Management Plan review would provide the opportunity for comment and clarification of issues like these.

He also reiterated the issue of the centre's after hours use, noting the inclusion of small meeting room / kitchenette. It was clarified that the centre would not be used for major corporate events (conferences etc) and will not be advertised as a venue for such events.

He again raised the issue of possible vandalism, which was covered earlier in the meeting, and in earlier meetings. Graham Malcolm reminded the meeting that everyone was well aware of security / vandalism concerns (eg car park needs to be secure, security fence at front to guard building access / prevent damage, the issue of overnight drinking / broken glass). The issue had been raised and has been minuted in earlier meeting – concerns will be addressed at design stage.

7. Other business

Pat Bentley asked about the litter boom / trap at Miles Creek and queried which catchment / waterway that involved.

8. Next meeting

Second Tuesday in March, unless otherwise advised.

9. Meeting close

8:45pm