



Point Lonsdale Civic Association Inc.

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Representing Point Lonsdale Residents since 1910

NEWSLETTER

23 October 2014

Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve – Council Decision

Next Stage – Further Study of Option 2

On 22 October the Borough Council unanimously approved the preparation of a detailed feasibility and financial analysis of Option 2 (Landscape Improvements). This means that no further work will be done in the next stage of the project in relation to Option 3 (Eco-Accommodation) or Option 4 (Thermal Spa & Boutique Accommodation). This approval was based on a review of community consultation outcomes and input from the Reference Group as well as recommendations from Planisphere and Council officers. PLCA was a very active member of the Reference Group.

The Council approval stated that the feasibility and financial analysis will include the suggestions about specific works to be completed in the Reserve made by the Reference Group. These are in addition to the works included in Option 2 as presented for community consultation in the Discussion Paper. The suggestions from the Reference Group to be included are those that were considered generally in accordance with Option 2 in the Discussion Paper.

A total of 26 suggestions from the Reference Group are to be included, some of which are similar to works in the Discussion Paper. The suggestions cover works such as interpretive signage, improved roads and pathways, a more orderly parking area, picnic and BBQ facilities, improved access to the lighthouse, a ship viewing area and information and toilet upgrade. The suggestions also include community working bees for vegetation plantings etc. The full list of the suggestions can be found in the agenda for the Council meeting at page 21 and 22 via this link to the Borough website:

http://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au/images/Agenda_Ordinary_Meeting_of_Council_22_October_2014.pdf

Capital Funding and Operating Costs

The Council resolution also stated that the detailed feasibility and financial analysis is to be expanded to include a financial assessment of possible sources of both capital funds and recurrent operating costs.

The Council officer report to the Councillors pointed out that Option 2 in the Discussion Paper is expected to cost \$900,000 in capital costs and \$83,000 in annual operating costs and that these costs are likely to increase if any modifications are included from those provided in the community feedback or suggested by the Reference Group.

During discussion of the Council resolution, Cr Merriman provided details of earlier studies that included various forms of accommodation on the Lighthouse Reserve that would generate revenue. He pointed out that one of the reasons the Council sought to become the Committee of Management for the Reserve was for the Borough to generate additional revenue from such accommodation. He then raised the issue of whether a specific municipal charge should be levied on some or all ratepayers to meet the costs associated with the Reserve, either in a single year or over a three year period. Finally, he proposed that the results of the financial analysis in relation to Option 2 be reviewed by the Council Governance and Finance Portfolio Reference Group.

PLCA has observed that the Council has been very effective in the past in obtaining capital grants from government for a wide range of projects in the Borough and anticipates that it would again be successful in obtaining capital grants for the Lighthouse Reserve. At the same time, it appears premature to be discussing the need for a specific municipal charge to be levied to meet costs associated with the Reserve in advance of the completion of the financial analysis and in the light of the fact that the Council has managed well a wide range of operating costs. Indeed, at the meeting on 22 October, the Council decided on the allocation to new projects of the cash surplus of \$117,000 achieved in the 2013/2014 financial year.

National Park and Other Reference Group Suggestions

The Reference Group had made a number of suggestions related to the Reserve that have not been incorporated into the further study of Option 2. These include an assessment process to determine the appropriateness of creating a National Park at the Heads which integrates the Lighthouse Reserve with the Port Phillip Marine National Park. Also, it was suggested that a walk be constructed from the Port Phillip Heads to Barwon Heads. Several suggestions were made about the need to maintain heritage structures particularly the military structures.

As reflected in the Council officer report and feedback provided to a Public Question at the meeting from a member of the Reference Group, the Council considers that the National Park suggestion in particular and the other suggestions should not to be part of Option 2 or pursued by the Council as the go to questions of governance, land management and/or development beyond the lighthouse reserve and were not subject to consultation with the community. However, the CEO, Mr Lenny Jenner, did advise that the Borough has been working with the City of Greater Geelong regarding the construction of a walk along the coast from the Heads to Ocean Grove, but that nothing concrete has emerged from these discussions.

Next Steps in Lighthouse Reserve Project and Need for Community Consultation

The Borough Community Bulletin regarding the Lighthouse Reserve Study published in April 2014 stated that Stage 3 included the financial assessment and business plan for the preferred option. This Stage 3 work is now to be undertaken by Planisphere as part of their original contract. Stage 4 of the project is for the preparation of tender documentation (if required) for the preferred option. Stage 3 was originally scheduled to be completed by May and Stage 4 by June.

In the Public Question Time at the start of the Council meeting, PLCA asked the following question:

If at this Council meeting, Council approves preparation of a detailed feasibility and financial analysis of Option 2 for the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve, will Council (1) establish a Project Reference Group to provide input on the detailed design of Option 2 and (2) conduct community consultation regarding the detailed design of Option 2 before implementation tenders are called?

The response was that this question will be considered later in the meeting as part of the discussion of the Council decision regarding the Lighthouse Reserve. Unfortunately this question was not discussed later in the meeting. PLCA will continue to seek a response to the proposition that a Reference Group should be established to provide input on the detailed design of Option 2 and related matters. It will also continue to press for a further round of community consultation regarding the detailed design of Option 2 before implementation tenders are called.

Queenscliff Lighthouse Reserve

It is of interest to note that at the meeting on 22 October the Council decided that both Option 2 (Landscape Improvements) and Option 3 (Eco-Accommodation) for the Queenscliff Lighthouse Reserve should be subject of a detailed feasibility and financial analysis. Four of the five Reference Group members voted in favour of Option 3 while the community feedback mostly favoured Option 2 (55% of completed responses preferred Option 2 and 33% preferred Option 3). The Council officer report observed that, while Option 2 is most favoured in the community feedback, the response is not overwhelming or emphatic.

PLCA Response to the Council's Decision

Fay Agterhuis, President PLCA has made the following statement regarding the Council decision: "The decision by the Council to approve the preparation of detailed feasibility and financial analysis of Option 2 is most welcome as it responds positively to the strong community voice expressed about the future of the Lighthouse Reserve. PLCA is also pleased that the Council provided for additional suggestions made by the Reference Group to be included in the feasibility study. At the same time, it is disappointed that the Council did not respond to the PLCA proposal to extend the work of the Reference Group beyond its initial tenure to provide input during the next phase of this project and to conduct another round of community consultation on the proposed changes to the Lighthouse Reserve before putting the project out to tender. The work of the Reference Group has been critical in achieving the present outcome and the continued input of its members will provide the community with a point of contact during the next phase."

Meet the Candidates Meeting – 7 November

PLCA and the Queenscliffe Community Association are jointly holding a State election "Meet the Candidates" meeting:

When: 6.45pm for 7.00pm start on Friday, 7 November

Where: Learning Common, Point Lonsdale Primary School, Bowen Road
Enter via main school entrance

Participants – Seat of Bellarine:

- Lisa Neville, Labor (sitting member)
- Ron Nelson, Liberal
- Brenton Peake, Greens

Participants – Western Victoria Region:

- Gayle Tierney, Labor (sitting member)
- Simon Ramsay, Liberal (sitting member)
- David O'Brien, National (sitting member)
- Lloyd Davies, Greens

This will be an opportunity to ask candidates about a range of State and local issues. Please advise the Secretary (plcasecretary@gmail.com) if there are any key issues and questions that you consider we should advise to participants in advance of the meeting.

Lawrence Road (Springs) Carpark Redevelopment

The period for the submission of community comments regarding the redevelopment of the Springs Carpark at the end of Lawrence Road concluded on 10 October. The Borough advised that after final plans are developed they will be published in December for "information purposes" only.

As PLCA is aware that a large number of Borough residents have concerns about the published concept plan and have suggested radical changes to that plan. Therefore, PLCA considers that a further community consultation should be conducted regarding the revised plans for the Carpark before the final design is determined. In response to a Public Question from PLCA regarding this proposition at the Council meeting on 22 October, the CEO, Mr Lenny Jenner advised that some 30 to 40 submissions have been received and that Council officers are presently preparing a briefing on the submissions. He advised that he will take under consideration the proposal for a further community consultation before the final design is determined.

No Licensed Retail Premises at 1 Kirk Road

PLCA and others who lodged an objection late last year regarding a development at 1 Kirk Road, Point Lonsdale have been advised by the Borough that the applicant has submitted an amended proposal. The planning application states that one of the changes is “deletion of the licensed retail premises at the front of the site, and replacement with a very small scale (less than 70 square metres office”. The office will be retained by the owner but could be leased to a small commercial tenant. The footprint of the building has been reduced by increased setback on both Kirk Road and Simpson Street.

As the area is zoned commercial, the PLCA Committee considered that the development no longer presents general community concerns and so no further objection has been lodged. However, we are aware that the adjoining properties have concerns about some aspects of the development.

Fort Queenscliff Precinct Tourism Plan – Feedback Sought

A presentation was made at the Borough Community Open House on 11 October regarding the Fort Queenscliff Precinct Tourism Plan in which the Preliminary Vision, Principles and Opportunities were outlined. A copy of the presentation can be found here on the Borough Website:

http://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au/images/Fort_Queenscliff_Precinct_Tourism_Plan_Preliminary_Vision_Principles_and_Opportunities_091014.pdf

If you wish to provide comment on the preliminary thinking outlined in the presentation, this should be done by completing a feedback form and returning it by **Monday, 27 October**. A copy of the form can be found here on the Borough website:

http://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au/images/FORT_QUEENSCLIFF_TOURISM_PLANFEEDBACKFORM_PDF.PDF

The completed form needs to be emailed to the consultants at this email address:

janet@trctourism.com

If you wish to be kept informed about the project, you can provide your name and email address in the feedback form.

Additional Time and Input to PLCA

The PLCA Committee was concerned that only limited time had been provided for members of the community to be informed about the feedback process and to provide feedback on the preliminary thinking regarding the Fort Precinct. We therefore wrote to Mr Lenny Jenner, CEO, Borough of Queenscliffe expressing this concern and proposing that the deadline for providing feedback be extended a further two weeks with a deadline of 10 November. Mr Jenner has responded advising that the deadline for community consultation cannot be extended due to strict

funding agreement timelines. However, he has provided PLCA with an extra week to complete the feedback form with a new date of 3 November.

Accordingly, any member who wishes to make a submission but needs extra time beyond 27 October should forward their feedback form to me so that it can be submitted as part of the PLCA submission. Additionally, any member who would prefer to contribute to the PLCA submission in lieu of a personal submission is requested to provide their views to me. In either situation, members are requested to send to me material for inclusion in the PLCA submission **by no later than Thursday, 30 October** (to plcasecretary@gmail.com).

Jasper Coghlan

Secretary

plcasecretary@gmail.com