



MINUTES

KALAMUNDA ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING 6PM THURSDAY 23 MARCH 2017 ADMINISTRATION BUILDING FUNCTION ROOM

1.0 OPENING OF MEETING – Presiding Member
The Presiding Member opened the Meeting at 6:00pm, and welcomed all in attendance.

2.0 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES - Presiding Member

Attendance

Committee Members

Kevin Goss – Presiding Member
Mark Schilling – Deputy Presiding Member
Rupert Duckworth – Deputy Member
Peter Forrest – Committee Representative
Joy McGilvray – Community Representative
Councillor Sara Lohmeyer – Councillor Delegate
Joanne Smith – Acting Coordinator Parks & Environment

Apologies

Councillor Brooke O'Donnell – Councillor Delegate
Councillor Noreen Townsend – Councillor Delegate
Mark Simpson – Committee Representative
Cameron Blackburn – Deputy Member
Mike Burbridge – Community Representative
Sam Assaad – Manager Operations

Members of Staff

Brett Byfield – Minutes Secretary

The Presiding Member confirmed Peter Forrest as the Member deputising for Mike Burbridge and Cr Sara Lohmeyer as deputising for Cr Brooke O'Donnell and Cr Noreen Townsend.

3.0 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

3.1 **Disclosure of Financial and Proximity Interests:**

- a) Members must disclose the nature of their interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting. (Section 5.65 of the *Local Government Act 1995*)
- b) Employees must disclose the nature of their interest in reports or advice when giving the report or advice to the meeting. (Section 5.7 of the *Local Government Act 1995*)

NIL

3.2 **Disclosure of Interest Affecting Impartiality**

- a) Members and staff must disclose their interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting in respect of which the member or employee has given or will give advice.

NIL

5.0 **CORRESPONDENCE**

Emails from Shire of Kalamunda Landscape Design Officer

Two emails were received from the Shire's Landscape Design Officer, with the request that they be forwarded to KEAC for consideration.

- a. Question of the Week from 2020 Vision Newsletter
"What are the ways in which government, community groups or businesses are incentivising the protection of trees on private land?"
Response from KEAC – Elizabeth Hobbs – bring it forward to next meeting
- b. The Landscape Design Officer is currently reviewing the option of targeting industrial feeder roads as bush corridors, as they provide wider verges and long spans of areas to be planted with low maintenance native species. That would add to the Shire's Urban Canopy quota. Noted as a reference the work being done by the City of Subiaco, link: [RAIL TRANSIT CORRIDOR GREENING - CITY OF SUBIACO](#).

Member Comment

Regarding the bush corridor proposal, Members noted that with flight paths for small birds, it is useful to have any sort of vegetation. Acting Coordinator Parks & Environment noted the Landscape Design Officer should liaise directly with Parks & Environment, as there is current planning underway with the Environmental Friends Group Officer.

The Presiding Member thanked the Landscape Design Officer for raising this proposal with the Committee. Also noted that a refresh of the Local Biodiversity Strategy would include this sort of planning. There was a query over the use of the words "Shire's Urban Canopy quota", as there is no policy relating to this.

6.0 **ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION – Presiding Member**

6.1 **Local Environment Strategy**

Background

KEAC's 2 February 2017 meeting resolved that:

- the proposed scope of the Local Environment Strategy follows the One Planet structure and its ten headings, as an in-principle position for further work;
- the purpose of the Local Environment Strategy (LES) is a framework for existing and new strategies and policies, for decision making of Council and for engaging the Shire Community; and
- it will allow for the benchmarking and reporting against internationally recognised principles.

A working group comprised Cr Noreen Townsend, Joy McGilvray and Kevin Goss met on 23 February (Mike Burbridge was an apology) and discussed the scope of LES options for further consideration by the Committee and recommendation to Council if agreed.

Details

The LES working group suggests that the Committee not follow the One Planet Strategy approach. It is too broad and challenging for the Shire at this stage; it may detract from some Councillors' and the community's primary concerns for the ongoing loss of natural environmental values; and Council may reject it.

However, the characteristics of the LES discussed and resolved at the last meeting should still remain.

The former Acting Coordinator Parks & Environment's outline presented to the last meeting informs an LES structure that retains these characteristics. Under the Land Use and Wildlife heading she identified three subheadings – Local Biodiversity, Urban Forest and Public Open Space. These align well with the primary concern for conservation and protection of tree and vegetation cover in the Shire.

While existing and proposed strategies cover local biodiversity and urban forest, there are apparently none for public open space. The LES could take a lead from the City of Fremantle's Green Plan 2020, as suggested by the Acting Coordinator Parks & Environment at the last Committee meeting, and strengthen this area.

Also, KEAC has agreed to include community empowerment and participation in the LES. Currently the Shire faces a dilemma – community contestation over scheme changes leading to clearing but low turnout for community forums where environmental policy might be discussed; and an extensive Friends Group network. The LES is an opportunity to improve community engagement.

The Fremantle Green Plan took 18 months to develop from initiation to adoption and involved a Council working group, a community forum and a public comment period. There is a five-year implementation schedule to 2019/20. Kalamunda Shire could learn from this.

Although not yet discussed by the Committee, the Shire has a longstanding District Conservation Strategy, which was reviewed in 2011. The Community Sustainability Advisory Committee, KEAC's predecessor, worked on the review

report, but there is no record of Council finalisation or adoption of the review's draft recommendations. The LES could draw from the DCS or replace it.

In the Kalamunda Shire's Strategic Community Plan there is provision for reporting progress against environmental indicators that cover biodiversity, sustainable water, waste diversion, clean energy and greenhouse gas level. These could define the scope of the LES.

These indicators are qualitative and not measurable, the baseline data has not been established (due 2014) except for the 2011 community satisfaction survey, and so there is no basis for measuring movement against targets. This could also be addressed in the LES.

For Discussion

If KEAC is to advise the Kalamunda Shire to adopt a more coherent and rigorous approach to environmental strategies and policies then the LES should have the following characteristics:

- An overarching strategy that makes clear the gaps and redundancies in the current suite of strategies and plans, identifies where new and proposed strategies and plans fit, and makes clear their interrelationships;
- Accountability – a strategy that refreshes the historic suite of strategies and plans and incorporates new ones into a common set of prioritised actions for implementation (annually), and specifies a monitoring and reporting framework for performance management at the strategy level; and
- Community confidence building – the strategy informs planning and regulatory policies for conservation and protection of natural environmental values.

The first step is to map the inventory and status of Shire strategies, plans and policies (prepared by the Acting Coordinator Parks & Environment) into an LES outline to make clear its scope.

The second step is prioritise what needs to be done:

- Which strategies or policies need updating, and when;
- What new strategies or policies are needed;
- A more complete set of measurable indicators and baseline data needed; and
- A timeline for these tasks that is realistic.

The third step is to take to the Shire a clear community engagement strategy for developing and finalising the LES, perhaps as done by the City of Fremantle:

- KEAC is the Council's advisory panel that stays with the process;
- KEAC sponsors a community forum or workshop to develop the LES outline; and
- The Shire is responsible for writing the strategy with KEAC guidance and with community input, then seeking public comment on the draft.

Member Comment

A working group of Joy McGilvray, Councillor Noreen Townsend and Kevin Goss met to further explore the Local Environment Strategy (LES). Members noted that the LES was part of the new draft Strategic Community Plan. A significant part of the already received feedback relating to the strategic plan was the importance of the protecting environmental values.

The working group discussed the One Planet Structure. A concern with One Planet was that the language, appearance and scope (which extends beyond the environmental mandate of KEAC) would likely cause a negative reaction at Council. The working group agreed that One Planet not form the base of the LES, though elements could be incorporated. The LES should still adopt a broad approach, however it should avoid use of the jargon in One Planet.

An important part of the LES should be using the talents of the Friends of Reserves network.

Members noted that the draft Strategic Community Plan had been recommended to Council by the Corporate and Community Services Community for consideration on 27 March. It was noted that Kalamunda Clean and Green had moved up from priority number 3 to 2.

The Presiding Member provided a presentation on the LES. A copy is attached as **<Attachment 1>**

The Acting Coordinator Parks & Gardens tabled a list of Strategic Plans, Policies and Initiatives; their alignment with corporate and strategic plans, and their status if there was to be a 2017 report card. Significantly the listing showed that the Strategies were at a high level, but were not reported back against objectives and KPIs. The Acting Coordinator Parks & Gardens advised lots of work has been done in the past, resulting in lots of strategies and plans, but they have not necessarily been adopted.

The proposed LES could bring together all the existing environmental policies and strategies underneath, with prioritisation and ownership for their implementation, and performance reporting. It would ensure there is no gap between strategies. Each action within the Strategy needs to have a purpose, rationale, methodology, timeframe and how are we going to measure it. KPIs that can be quantified and reported against baseline data need to be identified; an example KPI might be limiting tree canopy loss in the hills to less than 1%, and a maximum 3% loss of canopy in the foothills. Heat Maps might also be incorporated into a measuring system.

Another significant role of the LES could be rationalising existing strategies. This will require a combined effort between KEAC and Management to complete the strategy document review and build the framework for the LES.

Resolution

It was resolved that KEAC:

- Thanks the Acting Coordinator Parks & Environment for the work done in completing the inventory of environmental strategies and policies;

- Proposes to complete the framework provided, as a joint process between KEAC and the Shire of Kalamunda;
- Notes that the Acting Coordinator Parks & Environment will continue the review of the current documents on environment held;
- Agrees that the Local Biodiversity Strategy is a vital part of the Local Environment Strategy;
- Agrees in principle to developing an Local Environment Strategy, which provides for an opportunity to rationalise several strategies and policies, using the inventory of strategy documents;
- Agrees this review must be a disciplined process, resulting in fewer strategies, but improving clarity and focus;
- Proposes that when a strategy is agreed, it is important that Shire of Kalamunda assigns staff ownership for implementation, monitoring and reporting; noting that under the framework there is the opportunity to make far clearer targets and reporting on those targets; and
- Requests the support of a facilitator to work with KEAC to develop the vision and goals of the Local Environment Strategy.

Moved: **Peter Forrest**
 Seconded: **Mark Schilling**
 Vote: **Carried Unanimously**

6.3 **Trees on Private Property**

Background

The Kalamunda Environment Advisory Committee at its meeting of the 2 February 2017 reviewed the City of South Perth policy relating to Trees on Private. The decision of KEAC was to:

- Further investigates the reasons, and potential mechanisms for protection of vegetation on private property;
- Looks at the larger questions of why and how we would conserve vegetation in the Shire under existing policies and strategies; and
- Seeks answers to two questions:
 - Precision on how Deemed Provisions will actually apply. Request some examples or case studies; and
 - How a Policy on Private Trees would operate in a bushfire prone area.

Details

A KEAC Working Group was created to investigate the issues relating to Trees on Private Property, with members being Rupert Duckworth and Mark Schilling. **<Attachment 2>** Provides the notes of their meeting regarding this issue.

KEAC is to review the attached documentation for information, and to consider the implications of any policies relating to Trees on Private Property.

Member Comment

The KEAC Working Group reported some key findings, including:

- That private property protection of vegetation must fit in with an overarching plan and not just be an isolated policy. Specific policy options need to put it in perspective.
- There is the chance that a private property tree retention policy could create a lot of angst without significant gain.
- Education is vital. The typical resident's view is that it is their block of land, to do with as they wish. Turn the argument around, the Shire would need to be very clear on what loss of canopy will mean for health. Benefits of keeping vegetation must be emphasised, including financial impacts on land prices. It is vital that residents are educated that certain clearing of land is required by legislation, bushfire risk and power line levels.
- How can we replace lost canopy cover where development occurs? There is the opportunity for offsets by developers. Where should change be sought, in the central business district and built up areas, or put the resources to other areas. The strategy is within Council's domain.

The Working Group presented a comparison of aerial images showing tree canopy and tree loss associated with multiple dwelling development allowable under R coding using an example from within the Shire. The intention of using aerial images as a tool to assess loss of canopy cover would provide a visual aid to Council helping to put into perspective what further canopy loss is possible if such allowable development occurred on all blocks as allowed by the planning scheme.

Members noted that this 'potential tree loss' modelling could provide a compelling case for an overarching approach to vegetation retention and offsets within the Shire. It was noted that there will be canopy loss not under control of Council and therefore its effect on the community may need to be assessed and where possible, managed in other ways. For example, additional public open space, modification to areas within existing POS.

KEAC would like a better understanding of the boundary between the Western Australian Planning Commission and Shire of Kalamunda planning decision authority and enforcement for protection of vegetation,. Who is the controlling authority for what development type?

Resolution

It was resolved that KEAC:

- Asks that Council consider the value in assessing what the extent of tree loss on private land may possibly be within the municipality based on developments allowable under current R codes.
- Requests that Parks & Environment and Planning Staff inform the Committee on what planning and regulatory decisions the Shire has authority over, as opposed to the WA Planning Commission, for several types of development, including building extensions on existing properties, subdivisions, strata title developments, and planning scheme changes (R codes, land use change)

Moved: **Mark Schilling**
Seconded: **Councillor Sara Lohmeyer**
Vote: **Carried Unanimously**

7.0 URGENT BUSINESS WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE PRESIDING MEMBER

8.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
4 May 2017

9.0 CLOSURE

Attachment 2

KEAC Working Group – Trees on Private Property

Meeting held on 21 February 2017 at Alpha Bldg, Perth Airport.

Attendees :

- Rupert Duckworth (Alternate community member)
- Mark Schilling (Community member)

Apologies :

- Cr Brooke O'Donnell (Council representative)

Goal

To preserve trees on private property so that the benefits of trees are not lost to the community.

Perceived community issues to consider were likely to be:

- Freedom over their own land to do what they want
- Value of land – financial impact

Education

It is considered likely that the general perception issue is with land owners not understanding all the benefits of trees and assuming that land value and lifestyle are the main drivers for decision making in relation to tree removal. The additional benefits can be:

- Aesthetic
- Health
- Water Cycle (Environmental)
- Better Carbon Footprint (Environmental)
- Financial (Some people would pay more for a property with trees than an equivalent one without.)

Some of these items were discussed by guest speakers at a special KEAC meeting 13 October 2016.

In order to convey these items and the degree of their benefit there would need to be some degree of education undertaken.

Even with a goal of preservation, some tree removal is required by legislation for:

- Bushfire
- Power Lines

Perspective

Aside from the above legislative controls that impose clearing requirements on landowners, the limiting or controlling factor for private land within the Shire is the R rating or code.

Vegetation on larger lots (greater than quarter acre or 1000m²) is only at risk where sub-division is allowed by the R code. For example in areas currently listed as R5 an increase in

the R code is only possible through the provision of deep sewage or approval (by Dept of Health and others) of waste treatment units on smaller blocks of land.

In order to put the issue in perspective the group looked at what the Kalamunda municipal area is likely to look like with all trees that are likely to be removed (for the purpose of this exercise, via subdivisions) by using aerial imagery. The example given shows the area around Brook Street and Boonooloo Road in Kalamunda where the R code is R30 (average block size 300 m²). (Aerial images are easily accessed with today's technology and areas of dense infill relative to a single dwelling on a 'quarter acre' block are easily contrasted).

To better understand the risk to existing vegetation the group suggest an assessment of R ratings is completed for private property via the planning scheme to determine what land is legally subject to subdividing. To "visualise" the final result a typical infill area should be copied over land that could be subdivided on an aerial image to create an 'ultimate' scenario assuming a 'business as usual' case. The question is can this be done relatively easily?

Process

The group was unclear as to the planning and approval process and therefore where the tree policy would apply. There needs to be clarification as to what types of sub-divisions are approved by WAPC and which developments are approved by Council (and hence subject to this policy).

If the number of blocks to which this policy may apply is relatively low, is there really a need for this policy with the associated angst around introduction? The use of education (as above) may be more successful and appropriate.

Questions

1. Does Council see value in assessing what the extent of tree loss on private land may possibly be within the municipality based on developments allowable with current R ratings?
2. What situations (e.g subdivisions, building extensions on freehold land) are trees likely to be removed?
3. Which authority (Council or WAPC) is responsible for managing each of those situations?