

Wagait Shire Council
Half Yearly Community Consultation Meeting
6.30pm Thursday, 21st November 2019

Present: Vice President Tom Dyer, Cr Graham Drake, Cr Michael Vaughan

Wagait Beach Community Members

Wagait Shire Council Staff

Apologies: President Peter Clee, Cr Neil White

Vice President Tom Dyer welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Half Yearly Community Consultation Meetings are part of Council's communication and engagement strategy. Tom explained the meeting would be conducted in two parts; firstly, Councillors would provide updates on several matters; and secondly, there would be a number of matters for discussion and he would also be calling for suggestions from the floor.

Hard Waste Collection – Tom outlined the history of waste management in the Shire and following the closure of the community dump, a contract was awarded for domestic kerbside waste service. This was complemented by a quarterly hard waste collection. The new waste management contract with Veolia, includes the provision of hard waste bulk bins, that are located in the waste compound on the Council grounds. He reminded the meeting that the hard waste collection scheduled for Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th November 2019 will be the final quarterly hard waste collection service. This will be replaced with an annual pre-cyclone hard waste collection. A resident pointed out that some community members require assistance with large hard waste items. Residents requiring assistance should contact Council to discuss their needs.

Cloppenburg Park Irrigation Project – Tom provided an overview of the project and advised the meeting that Council was now waiting on the outcome of the water extraction licence application. He stated that whilst the project did not proceed in a manner Council would have liked, improved project management and budgeting processes were now in place. There were questions and comments from the floor regarding the timing of the licence application, and Tom assured the meeting that improved governance arrangements were now in place.

A resident suggested Cloppenburg Park was under utilised and Council needs to program more events, such as a market day, to attract more people to the area. There was general agreement that the facility was under utilised and Council should program more events and activities. Tom described Council's current Sport and Recreation Program that catered for children and adults and also Council's role in supporting volunteer and community groups with activities that benefit the community. Council will certainly take on board this important feedback and review its activity program.

Communication – Graham Drake brought this issue to Council's attention when he joined Council. Tom noted that Council has become more transparent and is trialling a one page update in the *Wagait Watch* regarding Council decisions and plans, rather than expecting the community to read the minutes.

A suggestion from the floor was for Council to establish an email directory and circulate an e-newsletter in addition to the printed version and to also include this on the website. The suggestion of an email or sms style of communication had been raised as early as 2014 with no follow up by Council. It was suggested Council establish an email service and those who do not wish to receive it can opt out. Council will follow up this suggestion.

Dog By-Laws – Tom advised the By-Laws are to be gazetted before they can come into force. Council will take a common sense and slow approach to the implementation of the By-Laws. Emphasis will be placed on community awareness and education to encourage responsible dog

ownership, rather than By-Law enforcement. The implementation strategy will also be based on low cost and not profitable principles.

A question from the floor asked if limitations would be placed on the number of dogs permitted on a property. It was explained that Council has not made any policy or procedural decisions at this stage, but Council's approach would not be adversarial and common sense would prevail.

Australia Day Nominations – everyone was reminded to nominate an event or worthy person for the Australia Day Awards.

BMX Track Redesign – Tom advised the current track requires modification and future engagement events with users and young people to workshop options will take place. Residents are encouraged to raise awareness.

Constitutional Arrangements – Tom explained the requirement for councils to undertake an electoral review during each term. He referred to the consultation exercise that was undertaken by True North for the strategic planning exercise and the view at that time that the current system and arrangements were appropriate. Tom stated the community values its small council and does not want to see further change. There was a comment from the floor regarding the adequacy of representation and that Council made an error when it recommended the number of elected members be reduced from seven to five. Graham Drake commented that another issue to take into consideration is the level of interest from the community to stand for Council and noted at the last by-election there were only three candidates for two vacancies.

Rates – Tom discussed the basis of levying rates and noted that Council is currently in a good financial position with reserves amounting to approximately \$1.5M. Council will be holding a combined Budget Workshop in February 2020 with the Audit Committee, at which ratios of sustainability and viability, expenditure trends and levels of service provision will be examined. This will underpin the 2020/2021 budget deliberations and rating decisions. The draft Budget will be released for public consultation as part of the annual planning process.

Community Infrastructure – Tom asked for ideas from the floor and reminded the meeting that suggestions can be provided to Council at anytime. One suggestion was for a solitary play and recreation facility to be included at the courts, for individual tennis, etc.

Berry Springs Middle School – The school contacted the CEO to request this matter be raised at the meeting. Berry Springs Primary School are gauging community interest. The meeting felt the distance required to travel was a barrier and that Wagait Beach children have convenient schooling options currently.

Recyclables – A resident requested Council consider revisiting the possibility of offering a recyclable collection service. Tom advised Council will look into the costings and feasibility over the next twelve months.

Postcode – A resident requested Council advocate to the appropriate authorities the possibility of changing the Wagait Beach postcode from 0822. The current postcode presents issues for real estate listings and causes direct disadvantage to residents. There was considerable response from the floor with many recounting examples of lost or misdirected parcels, or the inability to order items on line. A resident recounted the success of Darwin River residents in securing a unique postcode.

Tom agreed Council will pursue the matter on the community's behalf.

The Next Half Yearly Community Consultation will take place in May 2020.

The meeting concluded at 7.50pm.