



Community & Environment Committee

Agenda: *Community & Environment Committee*

Date: *Monday 24 June 2013*

Time: *6.00pm*

Outline of Meeting Protocol & Procedure:

- The Chairperson will call the Meeting to order and ask the Committee/Staff to present apologies or late correspondence.
- The Chairperson will commence the Order of Business as shown in the Index to the Agenda.
- At the beginning of each item the Chairperson will ask whether a member(s) of the public wish to address the Committee.
- If person(s) wish to address the Committee, they are allowed four (4) minutes in which to do so. Please direct comments to the issues at hand.
- If there are persons representing both sides of a matter (eg applicant/objector), the person(s) against the recommendation speak first.
- At the conclusion of the allotted four (4) minutes, the speaker resumes his/her seat and takes no further part in the debate unless specifically called to do so by the Chairperson.
- If there is more than one (1) person wishing to address the Committee from the same side of the debate, the Chairperson will request that where possible a spokesperson be nominated to represent the parties.
- The Chairperson has the discretion whether to continue to accept speakers from the floor.
- After considering any submissions the Committee will debate the matter (if necessary), and arrive at a recommendation (R items which proceed to Full Council) or a resolution (D items for which the Committee has delegated authority).

Recommendation only to the Full Council (“R” Items)

- Such matters as are specified in Section 377 of the Local Government Act and within the ambit of the Committee considerations.
- Matters which involve broad strategic or policy initiatives within responsibilities of Committee.
- Matters requiring the expenditure of moneys and in respect of which no Council vote has been made.
- Matters delegated to the Council by the Traffic Authority of NSW.
- Matters not within the specified functions of the Committee,
- Matters reserved by individual Councillors in accordance with any Council policy on "safeguards" and substantive changes.
- Parks and Reserves Plans of Management (Strategies, Policies and Objectives).
- Residential Parking Schemes - Provision and Policies.

Delegated Authority (“D” Items)

- Community Services and Programs.
- Library Services
- Health.
- Licensing.
- Liquor Licences.
- Regulatory.
- Fire Protection Orders.
- Residential Parking Schemes (surveillance and administration).
- Traffic Management (Traffic Committee Recommendations).
- Waste Minimisation.
- To require such investigations, reports or actions as considered necessary in respect of matters contained within the Business Agendas (and as may be limited by specific Council resolution).
- Confirmation of the Minutes of its Meetings.
- Any other matter falling within the responsibility of the Community and Environment Committee and not restricted by the Local Government Act or required to be a Recommendation to Full Council as listed above.
- Statutory reviews of Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Committee Membership:

7 Councillors

Quorum:

The quorum for a Committee meeting is 4 Councillors.

WOOLLAHRA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Notice of Meeting

20 June 2013

To: His Worship the Mayor, Councillor Andrew Petrie ex-officio
Councillors Deborah Thomas (Chair)
Anthony Boskovitz
Peter Cavanagh
Anthony Marano (Deputy Chair)
Elena Wise
Susan Wynne
Jeff Zulman

Dear Councillors

Community & Environment Committee Meeting – 24 June 2013

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, I request your attendance at a Meeting of the Council's **Community and Environment Committee** to be held in the **Council Chambers, 536 New South Head Road, Double Bay, on Monday 24 June 2013 at 6.00pm.**

Gary James
General Manager

Additional Information Relating to Committee Matters

Site Inspection

Other Matters

Meeting Agenda

| Item | Subject | Pages |
|-------------|--|--------------|
| 1 | Leave of Absence and Apologies | |
| 2 | Note Council resolution of 27 June 2011 to read late correspondence in conjunction with the relevant Agenda Item | |
| 3 | Declarations of Interest | |

Items to be Decided by this Committee using its Delegated Authority

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| D1 | Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on 11 June 2013 | 1 |
| D2 | Seed Catalogue & Propagation Program for Woollahra Indigenous Plant Species – 264.G | 2 |
| D3 | Removing Residential Subdivisions that apply to Cooper Park – 178.G | 6 |

Items to be Submitted to the Council for Decision with Recommendations from this Committee – Nil R Items

Item No: D1 Delegated to Committee
Subject: **Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on 11 June 2013**
Author: Les Windle, Manager - Governance
File No: See Council Minutes
Reason for Report: The Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday 11 June 2013 were previously circulated. In accordance with the guidelines for Committees' operations it is now necessary that those Minutes be formally taken as read and confirmed.

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the Community and Environment Committee Meeting of 11 June 2013 be taken as read and confirmed.

Les Windle
Manager – Governance

Item No: D2 Delegated to Committee
Subject: **Seed Catalogue and Propagation Program for Woollahra Indigenous Plant Species.**
Authors: Adriana Lucas and Bruce Rann
File No: 264.G
Reason for Report: In response to Notice of Motion 22 April 2013 requesting that staff prepare a report on the establishment of a seed catalogue and propagation program of indigenous plant species.

Recommendations

- A. That Council note the work done to date on seed storage and propagation of local plant species as outlined in this report.
- B. That Council staff maintain a basic spread-sheet catalogue of seed currently on hand for Council use only.

Notice of Motion

On Monday 22 April Councillors Robertson and Kirillova put forward a Notice of Motion;

That Council request staff to prepare a report on the establishment of a municipal seed catalogue and propagation program for Woollahra's indigenous tree species.

Background

For the past twenty five years Council has had an active bushland management program which has seen an incremental yet significant increase in the rehabilitation of our main natural area parks, including:

- Cooper Park
- Gap Park
- Trumper Park
- Parsley Bay Reserve
- Harbourview Park

More recently we have seen an increase in the number of volunteers working in our natural areas and at the moment we have around 60 active volunteers working at a number of sites in these parks.

The primary goals of these programs are to protect the integrity and diversity of naturally occurring native plant communities within the Woollahra Local Government Area (LGA) and to enhance the accessibility and visitor experience to all our natural area parks. This has been achieved by encouraging natural regeneration of plant species and through the application of best practice methods in natural resource management such as seed collection and local species propagation.

An important aspect of natural area management is to maintain the genetic integrity of our plant communities, and where possible, use local provenance plant species particularly in relation to revegetation (as opposed to regeneration) projects. Council ensures the maintenance of our local plant populations through the sourcing and propagation of Eastern Suburbs plant material. In this way we maintain the correct levels of genetic diversity within our native plant collections.

Due to the time consuming nature of this important work, at present this approach is only applied to our natural area parks and is not applied to our ornamental street and park plantings.

Our current seed collection program

As propagation by cuttings produces many identical plants, in most cases we choose to propagate from seed to maintain a genetic diversity, and to retain variation within the plant species population. Seed is collected when it is available at various times of the year.

Collected seed is often sown directly into the ground in our parks, or into potting media in the Quarry Street nursery. Some fleshy fruit must be used immediately as it deteriorates rapidly. Seeds to be kept for later use must be properly extracted, dried, cleaned, labelled and stored.

At present Council staff store hardier seeds in envelopes in a store room, and more fragile or putrescible seeds in a bar fridge. These “low tech” methods of seed storage are common to many councils and nurseries around Australia; with more complex collection, storage, viability testing and dissemination programs largely restricted to institutions like botanic gardens, universities and conservation agencies.

Best practice in seed storage generally means having a range of cool room temperatures and ultra-low humidity conditions. Some organisations keep seed under vacuum sealed conditions with the advantage of less room required for storage.

Our current cutting program

Unfortunately seed is not always available or may be hard to germinate due to dormancy mechanisms which are hard to break. In these instances, many native plant species must be propagated by cutting material.

Propagation by cuttings produces many exact replicas of the parent plant which is good for mass production of plants but can create issues of poor genetic diversity especially in obligate outbreeding species.

Uses of our propagation stock

Council’s propagated plant stock is used across the Woollahra LGA at events and programs including:

- National Tree Day
- Nation School Tree Planting Day
- Corporate Volunteer Programs

The propagated tube-stock plants are also used in the revegetation of degraded areas in our natural bushland parks to re-establish or increase species diversity or in some instances for the introduction of a better suited native plant species to an area.

The methods outlined above supply most of our planting needs for our natural area parks at a relatively low cost to Council. From time to time we have received plants or propagation material from specialist suppliers and from National Parks and Wildlife who have more extensive and more advanced living plant and germplasm collections stored in best practice conditions.

Potential seed catalogue

Woollahra Council staff have notes on what seed is stored in and around the nursery, however these notes would not constitute a seed catalogue. Woollahra staff generally use all of the seed that they collect for the in-house programs mentioned above and the amount of excess seed we would have on hand at any time would be extremely small to non-existent.

If Council decided to produce a seed catalogue suitable for publication, in the short term this catalogue would be primarily for academic interest and/or for information sharing. Even at this basic level to keep an accurate inventory would mean constantly updating the catalogue.

Our LGA contains several rare and threatened species so in addition to the resources needed for a catalogue if Council wished to share or disseminate any seeds we may have to abide by the conditions set out in the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) and if seed were to be sold (or possibly on-sold) we would need to abide by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Seed storage (or seed banking) is generally done by specialist organisations. In Australia the organisations linked to the world wide (Millennium) seed bank project are:

- New South Wales: Mount Annan Botanic Garden Seed Quest (Royal Botanic Gardens Trust Sydney)
- Western Australia: Threatened Flora Seed Centre (Department of Environment and Conservation) and Seed Technology Centre (Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority)
- South Australia: Seed Conservation Centre (Botanic Gardens of Adelaide)
- Victoria: Victorian Conservation Seedbank (Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne)
- Tasmania: Tasmanian Seed Conservation Centre (Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens)
- Northern Territory: Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts
- Queensland: Seeds for Life project, Q-Seed Partnership (consortium of Australian Centre for Minerals Extension and Research; Brisbane Botanic Gardens; Environmental Protection Agency; Greening Australia Queensland; Griffith University; and University of Queensland)

These agencies are partnered with Kew Botanic Gardens in London and meet all the national and international agreements on seed (especially endangered seed) management.

Initial research does not reveal any councils undertaking seed banking or cataloguing, however several councils do collect more seed than they need for in-house purposes, and they use this seed for either commercial propagation or for annual rates notice giveaways.

Conclusions

Council has in place basic but effective seed and cutting propagation programs which meet most of our needs for our natural area parks.

Currently Council does not have a seed catalogue however a spread-sheet of seed on hand could be produced if required. This list would probably reveal that we do not have spare or excess seed.

Should Council wish to produce a serious seed catalogue further analysis (and potentially resources) would be needed for its preparation, maintenance and management. Assistance for a best practice seed catalogue could be sought from an expert agency such as Kew or Mount Annan Botanic Gardens.

Tom O'Hanlon
Director Technical Services

Bruce Rann
Manager Open Space and Trees

Item No: D3 Delegated to Committee
Subject: **Removing Residential Subdivisions that Apply to Cooper park**
Author: Bruce Rann – Manager Open Space and Trees
File No: 178.G
Reason for Report: Responding to a Resolution of Council

Recommendations:

- A. Council notes that Cooper Park is protected due to its Open Space zoning in *Woollahra's Local Environmental Plan 1995* and its categorisation as 'community land' under the *Local Government Act 1993*
- B. Council retains the current subdivision patterns within Woollahra's parks, reserves and sports fields.

Resolution

On Tuesday 12 June 2012 Council resolved:

'That staff provide a prompt report on removing the existing residential subdivisions that apply to Cooper Park and consolidate this important regional park into a single, or minimum number of lots (allowing for the different use in the valley floor with the tennis courts and kiosk) to protect its environmental values and keep it in public ownership.'

'That the report also consider any other parks with similar issues concerning residential lots.'

Background

During the on-going management of the property at 9A Cooper Park, Bellevue Hill, Councillors expressed their concerns about potential sales of open space and in response sought the above mentioned resolution as a way to protect council land.

Analysis and advice

Cooper Park in Bellevue Hill/Woollahra is comprised of a number of separate registered lots. A map showing the subdivision pattern has been attached at **Annexure 1**. The park was originally named in 1917, and land acquisitions made by Council over subsequent years has increased the size of the park from 8 hectares to 17.1 hectares today. The subdivision pattern reflects the history of the park.

Each of the lots in Cooper Park are owned by Council and zoned 6 Open Space in *Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 1995* (Woollahra LEP). Land uses permitted in the open space zone are limited to recreational or community purposes only. Residential uses are prohibited.

Council has prepared a draft LEP 2013 which we anticipate will be put on public exhibition in July and August 2013. The existing Zone 6 - Open Space will be translated into Zone RE 1 - Public Recreation in the new LEP however the permissible uses will be the same for all practical purposes. Each of the lots in Cooper Park are classified as 'community land' under the *Local Government Act 1993* (LGAct). Classification as 'community land' prevents Council from selling or disposing the land.

Cooper Park is not unusual in its complex subdivision pattern. There are a number of open spaces within Woollahra that are made up of a series of registered lots. Examples include:

- Trumper Park in Paddington
- Lough Playing Field in Double Bay
- Lyne Park in Rose Bay.

Open Space and Trees staff have sought advice on the feasibility of consolidating the separate lots in Woollahra's open spaces. The advice we have received indicates that this project would be a very time consuming and expensive exercise in terms of both consultant and staff time and resources. Consolidation would also provide no benefit, as the land is already protected via the Woollahra Local Environment Plan (LEP) and the Local Government Act.

Should Council seek to reclassify or permit additional uses on any of the existing open spaces in the future, there would be an extensive and transparent process that Council must follow. This process would include obtaining strategic studies, a public exhibition period and a public hearing. Consolidation would not prevent this process from taking place.

Conclusion

Due to the existing protection of Woollahra's open spaces, there will be no benefit in consolidating the existing registered parcels. It is our recommendation that this process would not be the best use of valuable Council resources.

The ongoing community use of Woollahra's parks, reserves and sports fields is ensured via the Open Space zoning in Woollahra LEP, and categorisation as community land under the LGAct.

Bruce Rann
Manager – Open Space and Trees

Tom O'Hanlon
Director Technical Services

Annexure 1: Map showing the lot subdivision pattern of Cooper Park

Political Donations – matters to be considered by Councillors at Meetings

