

## **VCAT Hearing Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2006 Sunshine Swim & Leisure Centre**

- Objection to planning permit supported by the Sunshine Residents & Ratepayers Association Inc.
- Evidence and statements presented by Darlene Reilly - Treasurer, Sunshine Residents & Ratepayers Association

I'm hear to speak of the lack of consultation with community regarding final plans, lack of planning process information and planning outcomes and information given to the community to enable appropriate community approval and validation.

- I attended the "meet the architect's day" held Saturday December 4<sup>th</sup> 2004, with less than adequate notice given by Brimbank council. I managed to rearrange my schedule to attend cancelling a trip to Brisbane that week end. I felt the rest of my neighbors hadn't been notified adequately as the local papers are not delivered until Thursday of each week. I understand Brimbank council placed ads in all three local papers only, issue Tuesday 30/11/04 which was delivered to residents in my area by the evening of Thursday 2/12/04.
- To compensate for councils lack of notification flyers were prepared and the three group's letter boxed their surrounding areas. I know this was successful because I personally met 4 of my neighbors who told me that they only knew about the meeting from the flyer in their letter box as they don't read the local paper.
- Not everyone, and in fact a lot of people, don't read or even open the local paper. This was the only

public meeting called on this redevelopment in over 10 years and I would have thought Council would have delivered flyers to every household. The Sunshine Swim & Leisure Centre redevelopment has been a very controversial subject and council has been taking heat regarding the redevelopment for some time. To then not notify residents of an opportunity to have their say seems a strange thing to do given the history of the struggle over this site.

- The flyer that was prepared by Brimbank Council was only available from the Sunshine Swim & Leisure Centre – so if you don't attend regularly or can't get in at all – you would have to rely on the local papers only with 2 days notice.
- At the meet the architect's day there were plans that had very little detail. The plans had car parking covering 1/3 of the site and an outdoor play spray option for toddlers. The gym building extended to the western fence thereby splitting the site completely. We were told the shallow pool would only be waist deep because of the beached entry for wheel chairs this would mean the angle of depth in a small space could only accommodate this type of shallow pool.
- I asked how my 16 and 13 year old would be able to access this pool given the learn to swim lessons and special needs usage this pool was designed for. I was told this pool was not designed for their usage and they would have to use the 25m indoor pool if that is freed up in the future.
- From the date of meet the architects on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2004 – there has been no other opportunity for further consultation or feed back to the community. The final plan was released and the launch was by invitation only – the community was not invited.
- At the time of the launch the community and certainly I was not aware that Peddle Thorp the architects appointed had prepared 4 other options

for the redevelopment of the site. It was only when savesunshinepool.com told me about these plans and their intention to FOI these documents, as council had denied them access to these.

- When savesunshinepool.com received the plans, 40 odd days after the FOI request, I attended a meeting of the groups in which we viewed the 4 other options and sadly for us realized we would have happily agreed to at least 2 of these but with one being the favorite. The community still has not had the opportunity to see these plans that have been paid for from ratepayer's contributions to council. The 4 other options are community owned but community denied.

**Questions that have still not been answered for me are;**

- 1. How did council arrived at the final plan selected?**
- 2. Have the other 4 optional plans been costed?**
- 3. How would a 2nd stage planned redevelopment affect the plan council is proposing?**
- 4. Would a planned 2<sup>nd</sup> stage change these plans if that was part of the brief?**
- 5. Were the councillors shown the 4 other optional plans?**
- 6. If not who and how was the decision made to select this one plan?**
- 7. Why wasn't the community shown and asked about the final plans including the 4 other options?**
- 8. Why wasn't the community shown and asked for feed back on the final plan when it is**

**completely different from the concept plans we viewed in December 2004?**

- I am very concerned regarding the plan on display and what the community knows about this plan.
  1. The plans don't show outdoor lighting and it is concerning if there is not enough lighting or it could be disturbing for neighbors if there is too much lighting or too bright depending on what type of lighting is to be used (high wattage).
  2. Fencing is an issue as it is unclear what type of fencing will be used. Where the fencing will be placed and what will be fenced. I have heard that the spare land designated as lawn on the plan is to be fenced off. I don't know if this is true or not but the concern is that it will be neglected and become a dust bowl.
  3. There are no trees on the spare land designated lawn. I would have thought with the heat and sun and skin cancer council would have researched putting up more trees or shade sails.
  4. It is unclear how the south west corner is to be fenced. This corner becomes a dark tunnel of trees and cannot be observed from the main building. This could accommodate any number of illegal or dangerous incidents happening in this area.
  5. The crèche on the south west corner says it is secured but doesn't say what type of fencing will be used. This is also very close to the dark passage of trees which is not viewable from the main building and there is some concern for the approachability of the children playing in this area from strangers.
  6. The staff entrance is off service street and here too appears to be very secluded and dangerous

as staff must walk along a path secluded by trees on both sides.

7. The community and residents don't know if there will be more buses and or vehicles for the disabled. Generally these vehicles are larger and require larger car parking spaces. Given the pool usage is structure for learn to swim, the elderly and the disabled this could result in higher traffic of vehicles, buses and special transport for the elderly and disabled. How will this impact on the local residents?
8. Councilor Natalie Suleyman has stated *"Relocating the car parking spaces to the drainage easement next to the Sunshine Swim and Leisure Centre frees up a significant amount of space on site for outdoor leisure space. This could be used for outdoor play equipment, seating or parklands – which is what residents said they wanted to see."* (taken from the BCC website)

But the plans don't show this intended use. Which is it? Play equipment and aimed at what age group? How will this affect the amenity of the surrounding area?

9. The community has been told time and time again that the spare land has been left aside for a future pool. Yet Councilor Natalie Suleyman and Councilor Troy Atanasovski have stated *"The final plans also allow for expansion. If, in the future, there is a demonstrated demand and need for more water space or for extensions to the gymnasium, this growth could be accommodated."*

Now the spare land might be used for extensions to gym or a pool or a play ground. Well which is it? All the different options impact the community and surrounding residents. These are only some of the unknowns.

- Evidence Submitted.
  1. Local papers dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 2004 – showing BCC ad for meet the architect’s day to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2004.
  2. Local paper The Advocate dated 7<sup>th</sup> December 2004 – displaying plan obtained by pool groups that was displayed at meet the architect’s day. Brimbank Council would not release this plan to the media.
  3. Flyer created Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2004 and distributed by SunRRA and pool groups to neighbors to notify residents of meet the architect’s day.
  4. Emails sent to BCC CEO Marilyn Duncan and Mayor Natalie Suleyman by members of SunRRA, complaining about the lack of notice for the meet the architect’s day and consultation on this project.
  5. Emails sent to Justin Madden MP, Mr. Mildenhall MP and Mr. Hulls MP complaining about the lack of consultation on this project and asking for intervention.
  6. Newspaper article from the Herald Sun dated 14<sup>th</sup> October 2004 “A dip in local politics” showing the quote “ Mayor Sam David denied the spare land was intended for development and said it would be the eventual site for an outdoor pool.”
  7. Newspaper article from The Age – Letters to the editor – date 7<sup>th</sup> January 2005 quoting from a letter from Cr Troy Atanasovski saying the spare land was to be used for gym extensions.