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Port Phillip Woollen Mill: Objectors line up at VCAT to stop demolition & Ashley says Safety is a FURPHY!

Tuesday, 4 December 2012

The Hobsons Bay Weekly
By GOYA DMYTRYSHCHAK
4th December 2012

“SIX objectors will be heard at a tribunal hearing on the proposed demolition of the Port Phillip Woollen Mill site at Williamstown. Two days have been set aside for the hearing, starting today in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, over an application to demolish nearly all buildings between Nelson Place and Aitken, Ann and Kanowna streets. Two exceptions are the Oriental Hotel and Nugget Factory, which are subject to separate demolition permits. Demolition would make way for plans by Nelson Place Village Pty Ltd to build potentially more than 800 dwellings housing 2000 residents on a site about the size of Williamstown foot- ball oval. Save Williamstown spokeswoman Charmian Gaud accused the

developer of abusing the planning process by lodging multiple applications.

"Hobsons Bay Council rejected the demolition, saying it was premature and there should be a master plan which would allow a minimisation of the time between the buildings being demolished and new buildings erected," she said.

"All the time there are no buildings, existing residents are subjected not only to noise from the expanded BAE Systems [shipyard] work but also noise from Mobil's tanks and fuel importation ships, and also the dangers of any explosion on the point."

Developer spokesman, Evolve Development managing director Ashley Williams described **safety concerns as a "furphy"** and accusations that he was abusing the system as "a nonsense"..."

<http://www.hobsonsbayweekly.com.au/story/1163858/port-phillip-woollen-mill-objectors-line-up-at-vcat-to-stop-demolition/?src=rss>

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“It’s a Furphy” says Ashley Williams. History is full of stories about people who turn a blind eye to safety.

Thursday, 6 December 2012

Hobsons Bay Weekly
By GOYA DMYTRYSHCHAK
Oct. 31, 2012, 9:58 a.m.

“AN EXPERT report has warned that people living on the proposed Port Phillip Woollen Mill development site in Williamstown could die in the event of a vapour cloud explosion (VCE) at Mobil's Gellibrand tank farm.

Its authors, explosion and dispersion consultancy GexCon Australia and Williamstown's chemical engineers and expert witnesses IF Thomas & Associates, recommend detailed investigation into development of the mill site after finding that "loss of life and considerable property damage" could result from a VCE caused by fuel leakage.....”

<http://www.hobsonsbayweekly.com.au/story/480899/port-phillip-woollen->

mill-consultants-warn-of-sites-lethal-neighbours/?cs=1455

<http://www.hobsonsbayweekly.com.au/story/1163858/port-phillip-woollen-mill-objectors-line-up-at-vcat-to-stop-demolition/?cs=1455>

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VCAT: no housing near hazard - WIN against developers who such as Evolve's Ashley Williams who says SAFETY's a Furphy

Saturday, 8 December 2012

The Star

By ALESHA CAPONE

9th October 2012 09:10:29 AM

“VCAT has ruled against the construction of three townhouses across from Shell’s Newport Fuel Terminal.

The decision overturned a Hobsons Bay City Council decision to allow the development plus the destruction of an existing weatherboard dwelling on High St, Newport.

The VCAT verdict supported Shell’s submission which said there should be no increase in the number of homes “in such close proximity to a major hazard facility”.

Shell’s Newport Terminal has 40 storage tanks containing fuels, lubricants and solvents.

Risk assessor Brian Cooper told the tribunal a large fire or a vapour

cloud explosion from the terminal could impact on the proposed townhouses although the likelihood of these events was low. VCAT's judgement also said the Newport Terminal was important to Victoria's economic development and "needed to be protected from inappropriate development and adequate buffer distances from sensitive uses maintained".

A Worksafe barrister told VCAT if a major incident happened at the Newport Terminal the proposed development was close enough to risk a fatality among residents.

A representative of Hobsons Bay City Council said the townhouse proposal met all the requirements under its planning scheme and should be approved.

But the VCAT members disagreed and in their ruling said "just because a permit could be granted does not necessarily mean it should be granted".

The document said allowing the townhouses to be built would "set a precedent for similar developments in the area and it would be irresponsible for us in the circumstances to approve the development, albeit with its resulting very small increase in population density"

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/369/story/155012.html>

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Developer's plan to tower over Port Melbourne

Saturday, 8 December 2012

The Age

by Jason Dowling and Miki Perkins - 08/12/12, 3:00 AM

THE OWNER of a landmark site next to Station Pier in Port Melbourne has requested changes to approved plans to allow a large-scale development including a 19-storey tower, residential and serviced apartments, cafe and shops.

The Waterfront Place development plans include three buildings of five, 10 and 19 storeys, which would be taller than Beacon Cove's tallest 13-storey tower. The owner of the site is Waterfront Place Pty Ltd and the developer

is Action Group Australia, owned by Kuwaiti company Action Group Holdings.

<http://m.theage.com.au/victoria/developers-plan-to-tower-over-port-melbourne-20121207-2b16i.html>

SW Comment: once high rise high density enters an suburb - there are more and more demands to increase numbers.

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What the Fire Brigade thinks of its fire fighting resources on Port Phillip Bay & it isn't Safety is a Furphy!

Monday, 10 December 2012

Australian Seniors News
10th December 2012

“Melbourne firefighters demand a boat
Melbourne Fire Brigade must end nearly 10 years of delay and purchase a purpose-built fire-fighting boat – say firefighters. The latest call follows a multi-million dollar blaze which destroyed a 27 metre yacht at the Docklands yesterday. United Firefighters Union secretary Peter Marshall said the fire was tackled by MFB firefighters in a tinnie. They were assisted by a tug boat which was unable to pump enough water because of sludge in the river. He said firefighters did everything right: “They just didn't have the equipment for the job. “The only comfort is that no lives were lost, or persons injured. And that the fire did not spread to other vessels.”

“After years of frustration over the stop - start decision - making and abortive tender process of the MFB Board, firefighters went public with their concerns on 2 January this year. Yesterday their warning was proven.

“...If it’s good enough for Sydney, Adelaide and other cities, why not Melbourne? Why wait un- til a tragedy occurs?”

Since 2003, the MFB has had statutory responsibility for 110,000 hectares of Port Philip Bay, in- cluding marinas and docks, and the two main shipping channels, extending three nautical miles outside the Heads.

A team of 60 marine firefighters is scattered across Melbourne. Their main equipment, two tinnies and two inflatable rubber dinghies, is stored at Docklands.

“Each year some \$75 billion of goods pass through the Port of Melbourne, Australia’s largest container port, while waterside living and recreational and business activity on the water con- tinue to increase.”

Mr Marshall said.

“The MFB needs to get serious about its commitment to its marine fire response, with proper staffing, resources and training. The MFB has dithered for years on a decision to buy a dedicat- ed fire - fighting boat.

“This is despite their current business plan recommending the purchase of two boats, and the MFB acknowledging the need for water- based firefighting as well as land - based.”

The MFB’s responsibility extends up to 30 nautical miles from the coast – a responsibility to pro- tect lives and property which it cannot keep with three fires and a tinny.

The other unasked question is, who will the Coroner hold responsible for the next boat fire death? The answer is not something that will give the loved ones of the deceased any solace.

22 March 2012.....”

<http://www.seniorau.com.au/index.php/more-seniorau-news/2090-melbourne-firefighters-demand-a-boat>

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Come to our Rally Mr Guy... What you have to much to do?

Monday, 10 December 2012

Hobsons Bay Leader
10th December 2012

“Protesters hope Minister will front high-rise rally
MORE than 100 Save Williamstown members have emailed Planning Minister Mathew Guy inviting him to a rally on Saturday. The rally is to protest plans for high-rise apartments at Nelson Place. Spokesman Godfrey Moase said Mr Guy would be asked to explain what steps the State Government had put in place to ensure the safety of the community with regards to high-density residential development next to the Mobil fuel tanks. It will be held at 11am outside the Williamstown Mechanics Institute in Electra St. Western Metropolitan state Liberal MP Andrew Elsbury said he would speak at the rally...”

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/protesters-hope-minister-will-front-high-rise-rally/>

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Williamstown's Navy chopper base a giant 'floating city'

Monday, 10 December 2012

Hobsons Bay Weekly
10th December 2012

“THE Royal Australian Navy will soon take ownership of the first of two new giant ‘landing helicopter dock’ (LHD) ships being built at the Williamstown shipyards. The Weekly gained exclusive access to one of the ships, the Canberra, which has a flight deck equal in area to 24 tennis courts. Defence Minister Stephen Smith, who inspected the ship last Monday, said the two LHDs would give Australia an enormous ship-to-shore capacity. The ship can be used for combat, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations and can transport equipment, personnel and medical facilities....

.....BAE Systems, which is building the LHDs, employs 1200 people at the Williamstown shipyards.

Mr Smith said the government would continue to ensure there was a better flow of work for the Australian Defence Industry. "One of the things that we are looking at the moment is whether there is a capacity for more work to be given to this workshop, to this shipyard, in the Air Warfare Destroyer project. It's a commercial decision for the [Air Warfare Destroyer Alliance], but they're considering it.".."

<http://www.hobsonsbayweekly.com.au/story/1163701/williamstowns-navy-chopper-base-a-giant-floating-city/?cs=1833>

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Nelson Place high-rise rally fills the Mechanics Institute

Monday, 10 December 2012

Hobsons Bay Weekly
10th December 2012

"...Despite emails from more than 100 residents, Planning Minister Mathew Guy did not attend the rally .
However, upper house Liberal MP Andrew Elsbury did attend as did Williamstown Labor MP Wade Noonan.
Save Williamstown spokesman Godfrey Moase said the rally resolved to call on the State Government to address safety concerns regarding high-density residential development next to the Mobil fuel tanks.
He said the most recent independent risk assessment of the Mobil facility took place 10 (*sic ..actually 20 years ago*) years ago and needed to be updated.
Mr Moase said best practice guidelines had changed in that time.
"With the channel deepening, there are much larger container ships," he

said.

"If some sort of incident happens and that ship catches fire, it could melt the tanks and have a flow-on effect."

The rally followed a recent two-day state planning tribunal or VCAT hearing into the demolition of the first of the former Port Phillip Woollen Mills buildings.

Developer Nelson Place Village is appealing Hobsons Bay Council's rejection of its demolition application.

The council and Save Williamstown representatives argued the demolition application was premature in light of the absence of a masterplan for the entire site....."

<http://hobsons-bay-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/nelson-place-high-rise-attracts-200/>

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Elsbury writes to Hobsons Bay Council re their responsibility for Disaster Planning

Tuesday, 11 December 2012

Andrw Elsbury MLC
Letter sent to Council following a promise at the rally.
11th December 2012



ANDREW ELSBURY MLC
MEMBER FOR WESTERN METROPOLITAN REGION

Shop 1/662 Old Calder Hwy, Keilor VIC 3036
Phone (03) 9331 7644 • Fax (03) 9331 7430 • andrew.elsbury@parliament.vic.gov.au

Chris Eddy
Acting CEO
Hobsons Bay City Council
PO Box 21
Altona VIC 3018

COPY

11 December 2012

Dear ~~Mr Eddy~~ *Chris,*

Point Gellibrand Disaster Plan

For some months now I have been making enquiries into how a disaster plan could be developed for the Point Gellibrand, especially in consideration of the hazardous material facility owned by Mobil for the pumping of oil and other fuels between the Altona refinery and dock facilities at Point Gellibrand.

After consultation I have received an indication from the Williamstown Police that such a disaster plan is the responsibility of the local government.

I would like to recommend that a disaster plan be developed in the event of a catastrophic event on the Point Gellibrand peninsula.

I would be happy to facilitate any meetings that need to occur and to encourage interested parties such as the emergency services to be involved.

I eagerly await your response to this request and will be happy to work with you to see it being developed so that safety needs of the people of Williamstown can be given due consideration.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Elsbury MLC

cc:
Godfrey Moase
Save Williamstown spokesperson
PO Box 141 Williamstown 3016

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Rally calls for safety study

Wednesday, 12 December 2012

The Star

By ALESHA CAPONE

11th December 2012 09:38:42 AM

“Save Williamstown members spoke at a rally against the redevelopment of the former Port Phillip Woollen Mill site in Williamstown on Saturday.

HUNDREDS of residents attended a rally calling for an independent safety report into the proposed redevelopment of the former Port Phillip Woollen Mill site in Williamstown on Saturday.

The event was held by the Save Williamstown group, the same week VCAT began hearing the developer’s case to demolish existing buildings on the site along Nelson Place and Ann St including heritage-listed structures.

In March, Hobsons Bay City Council rejected the application after

receiving 30 objections.

Overall, developers of the former PPWM site have lodged 17 individual applications with Hobsons Bay City Council to develop the spot.

The entire proposal could see more than 810 residences, up to six storeys high and housing more than 2000 people, erected on the PPWM site.

At Saturday's Save Williamstown meeting, residents resolved to call on the State Government for a new risk assessment on the potential development, which is located near Mobil's Point Gellibrand's operations.

Residents at the meeting heard the last safety report into the site was a 1993 study which said the PPWM site was only suitable for "car parking or open space".

Also at the meeting, Save Williamstown members Charmian Gaud and Suzanne Orange said a recent expert report into the former PPWM had found residents of the development could possibly die if there was a vapour cloud explosion at Mobil's operations.

Authors including GexCon Australia and IF Thomas and Associates said although the risk of a vapour cloud explosion was small, residents living within 360 to 414 metres of the site would be at risk of "having windows broken, having occupants suffering flying glass injury and having damage sufficient to render premises unoccupiable".

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Residents at the meeting heard the last safety report into the site was a 1993 study which said the PPWM site was only suitable for "car parking or open space".

Also at the meeting, Save Williamstown members Charmian Gaud and Suzanne Orange said a recent expert report into the former PPWM had found residents of the development could possibly die if there was a vapour cloud explosion at Mobil's operations.

Authors including GexCon Australia and IF Thomas and Associates said although the risk of a vapour cloud explosion was small, residents living within 360 to 414 metres of the site would be at risk of "having windows broken, having occupants suffering flying glass injury and having damage sufficient to render premises unoccupiable". "Although of low

occupancy, it should not be forgotten that pedestrians in Gellibrand Park within the distances specified would also be affected, with those closest potentially suffering death,” the report said.

“There are so many risks, no new assessment. Why?” Ms Orange said Part of the PPWM location is located less than 300m from Mobil’s operations.

Save Williamstown’s spokesman Godfrey Moase said the developers needed to put safety before profit.

“The safety of the people is the highest law of the land,” he said....”

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/star/williamstown-altona-laverton/378/story/156354.html>

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Williamstown shipyard workers pray to keep out of 'Valley of Death'

Wednesday, 12 December 2012

Hobsons Bay Weekly
By GOYA DMYTRYSHCHAK
12 December 2012

"WILLIAMSTOWN'S naval shipyard was once in a position to knock back non-military work. Staring into the 'Valley of Death', it can no longer afford to.

BAE employee and Australian Manufacturers

Workers Union shop steward Leon White explains

that the 'Valley' expression refers to one shipbuilding project finishing before another one starts, with a resulting loss of jobs and skills.

"Every time they have redundancies they get rid of a heap of people," Mr White said. "Then they rise back up and get another project on, but they can't get the blokes back; they've moved on.

"So you get a lot of new starters who have never worked on ships, and

training issues."

A union meeting was held at BAE Systems last Thursday amid fears for shipbuilding jobs and skills if defence contracts don't flow...

Mr Bastian said there were 48 vessels required for navy and coastal operations and BAE workers wanted to build a fourth Australian warfare destroyer (AWD)....."

<http://www.hobsonsbayweekly.com.au/story/1178699/williamstown-shipyard-workers-pray-to-keep-out-of-valley-of-death/?src=rss>

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Port Phillip Woollen Mill: Save Williamstown members vow
'We won't be worn down'

Wednesday, 12 December 2012

Hobsons Bay Weekly
By GOYA DMYTRYSHCHAK
12 December 2012

“IN the dim lights of Williamstown's Mechanics Institute, hundreds rallied on Saturday against plans to build a 'Beacon Cove' in their suburb. The meeting, organised by Save Williamstown, was a display of defiance against plans for a high-rise high-density development on the Port Phillip Woollen Mill site.

Save Williamstown members last week attended a two-day hearing at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal to fight the proposed demolition of mill buildings.

The demolition would clear the way for plans by Nelson Place Village Pty Ltd to build potentially more than 800 dwellings housing 2000 residents.

Residents say the developer is trying to wear them down by dividing the site into 17 parcels and lodging multiple applications.

Daniel McKinnon told the crowd at Saturday's rally that residents had been fighting for four years and were not about to give up.

He said delays had hurt the developer financially and with another election scheduled for November 2014 the state government could change.

"In the last election, the Liberal Party promised no high-rise in Williamstown — remember that?

"And then when the [Liberal Planning] Minister [Matthew Guy] did the overlay for the site, he removed mandatory height limits. So I'm not sure how those two things reconcile.

"We can cost them money, we can cost them delays and in the end we can win. And that's what we're gonna do, we're gonna win.

"We've had fights like this before. Who can remember Point Gellibrand when Kennett wanted to make it into housing? We fought and fought and now it's a beautiful heritage park."

Residents are establishing a Supreme Court fighting fund in the event of a defeat at VCAT.

Western suburbs upper house MP Andrew Elsbury became the first Liberal politician to address a Save Williamstown public meeting.

He gave an undertaking he would write to Hobsons Bay Council to tell it that it was responsible for an emergency management plan to deal with any "event" at Mobil's Point Gellibrand major hazard plant, which supplies fuel for half of Victoria and is within 300 metres of the development site.

"The construction of the site has been deemed as such that it is able to withstand an initial event from the storage facility," Mr Elsbury said.

"From memory, it's supposed to be able to handle a category-four cyclone, which means that the force from any sort of blast or an incident occurring at the site will allow for people to escape the building and get to safety."

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He said the government did not impose height limits because it wanted the community and the council to decide how high the development should be.

Save Williamstown spokesman Godfrey Moase told residents that safety and human life should come before profit. A resolution calling for an independent risk assessment was approved with a sea of raised hands....."

<http://www.hobsonsbayweekly.com.au/story/1179053/port-phillip-w...ll-save-williamstown-members-vow-we-wont-be-worn-down/?cs=1455>

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SPC grants planning permits to two Port Phillip Woollen Mills applications
Tuesday, 18th December 2012

Hobsons Bay City Council has supported two of the four applications as part of stage 1A for the former Port Phillip Woollen Mills site.

Mayor of Hobsons Bay Councillor Angela Altair said the Council is legally obligated to consider every application on its merits.

*The Council's Special Planning Committee last night supported an application to construct seven three-storey townhouses with a minor reduction in the statutory car parking rate in Ann Street, Williamstown, near the corner

Special Planning Committee fails to support the community with Councillors congratulating developer

Monday, 17 December 2012

Hobsons Bay Council Special Planning Committee

17th December 2012

Council Chamber

Agenda and Officers' Report.pdf

The meeting considered 3 planning applications involving a small percentage of the Former Port Phillip Woollen Mill Site in the absence of a Masterplan. A Masterplan, which the developer had been asked to prepare in December 2011, would actually enable the proper consideration of the impact on the community and the Pt Gellibrand peninsula.

Application Numbers

PA 1225057 - 7 Townhouses on Ann St

PA 1225059 / ..060 - 12 Townhouses or alternately 51 apartments on the equivalent of a quarter acre block on Nelson Place.

Council's explanation of the outcome is notified in the attached media release, where they say that Council is legally obliged to consider every application. Sorry Councillors you know the feeling and the evidence in the community and you let us down.

It is the responsibility of Councillors, as elected representatives of the whole community to represent the interests of the majority of their constituents with out fear or favour and not the interests of land speculators and developers who's interests are not the interests of the rate payers who live in the municipality!

Individual councillors do not have to decide to accept plans, councillors are not part of the administration, but are local politicians. Your community voted you in to look after the community interest not to rubber stamp administrative work. There is such a thing as rejecting or abstaining!!

It is abundantly clear that safety is a huge issue in the Gellibrand Peninsula and council have procrastinated for a long time. Hobsons Bay Council minutes show we raised the issue on 16 November 2010 and there was firstly a pathetic answer by officers

11 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

J Power Williamstown 3016

Q. Could the Council commission a risk assessment on the Point Gellibrand precinct and submit a report on that assessment to the Planning Advisory Committee on the future of the former Port Phillip Woollen Mills site?

A. The issue of undertaking a risk assessment was raised at the Directions Hearing of the Advisory Committee. The Committee indicated it would hear evidence from Mobil on this matter but has not directed that a full risk assessment be carried out at this point. Undertaking a full risk assessment would require access to business operations of Mobil and others. The Council would not be able to gain access to confidential information from these industries to enable a full risk assessment to be carried out. This may be an issue the Advisory Committee will provide further advice/direction on as the Hearing proceeds. The Committee has the authority through the Terms of Reference from the Minister for Planning Terms of Reference to request this level of detail/evidence.

S Orange and C Gaud Williamstown 3016

Q: Further to the letter to the Council from Save Williamstown requesting the Council's assistance and direction in facilitating an urgent risk assessment of the major hazard facility at Point Gellibrand, a proper risk assessment is requested to ensure any development is appropriate from an OH & S perspective and that a comprehensive community action plan be established in preparation

for any major incident occurring at the heritage peninsula of Williamstown.

A: The Advisory Committee through its Terms of Reference is better placed and has the authority to call the nominated parties together to deal with the issue of a risk assessment. The Committee can also gain access to information that would be needed from respective industries and authorities. The Council would not have the authority to request this level of information to complete a risk assessment as requested by the Group.

S Orange Williamstown 3016

Q. Further to comments made at the Council meeting by the Director Planning and Environment in response to Cr Altair's question, i.e. the risk assessment for the Point Gellibrand site. The issue raised tonight and at the Port Phillip Woollen Mills Advisory Committee Directions hearing and letter to the Council is in fact a new issue relating to the issue of fuel importation safety and risk assessment.

Will the Council please review this issue and not just the issue of buffer zones for the tank farm (which is also important)? Fuel importation should require greater scrutiny.

A. Council officers will consider this new matter and provide a further detailed response to Ms Orange.

A PUBLIC QUESTION REQUIRING A PUBLIC ANSWER

The answer appeared in the council minutes 14th December 2010 and it was full of excuses and no action

HB Council's letter to questioner re Risk Assessment.pdf

Two years on, we have every right to ask the question are our officers serving us well or avoiding doing things that are in the communities interests. How dare they recommend permits which will lead to a 20% increase in the population of Williamstown without doing a risk assessment of the peninsula. The old City of Williamstown Council looked after their rate payers much better with risk assessments done in 1987 and 1992/3 - only pity was that the Kennett Government didn't like the assessment and removed it from all Victorian records. Surely with ships now 3 times as large and carrying up to 150 million litres of petrol - the community needs to know that their council is behaving responsibly.

The fire brigade, the police and the emergency authorities were NOT included in the terms of reference of the Port Phillip Woollen Mill Advisory Committee hearings but they are the bodies which Council has to liaise with in it statutory responsibilities for community safety under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations. Community safety is NOT a responsibility of Worksafe - "workers" safety is a responsibility of

Worksafe.

After the pathetic answers in the council chamber on 16 November, Councillor Briffa was proactive in asking the officers to investigate more. the letter above shows what they actually reported to council.

So Council and its SPC cannot say they were without notice on the matter of Risk Assessment and Community Safety - it is all very well to mention it in the Council's media release 18 December 2012

“Having homes too close to major hazard facilities was another concern raised last night. The Council continues to be concerned about major hazard facility planning and we hope to table a report on this issue in the New Year.”

Raised,,, yes repeatedly raised... The media release makes out this is the first time when it is clearly NOT the first time.

SO this is 2 years since Save Williamstown raised the matter with Council at a Council Meeting. The mayor was there then. Councillors would have done the right thing by the community by saying they too IMMEDIATELY demand officer progress a proper Risk Assessment for the Pt Gellibrand peninsula before any more development permit approvals are made.

Let the developer take their applications to VCAT but how unwise the councillors' were in soiling their own hands.

C86 gazetted documents include the Explanatory Note which refers to the relevant authorities having provided evidence. Worksafe and EPA did provide advice and it is documented in the report not the DDO11 but the report which is in the Australian Legal Database. This is a reference document - the Port Phillip Woollen Mill Advisory Committee Report . WHY DID WE SPEND 3 WEEKS GIVING EVIDENCE TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE IF WHEN PLANNING APPLICATION DECISIONS ARE MADE - OFFICERS AND COUNCILLORS RESOLUTELY REFUSED TO READ AND BE INFORMED BY THE REPORT. Surely someone at council heard their own barrister Mr Appuduari speak at the advisory committee and express huge concerns about process so eloquently. A disappointed community will now argue our case at VCAT where at least we may be able to respect the professionalism of a judicial process.

Media Release



SPC grants planning permits to two Port Phillip Woollen Mills applications Tuesday, 18th December 2012

Hobsons Bay City Council has supported two of the four applications as part of stage 1A for the former Port Phillip Woollen Mills site.

Mayor of Hobsons Bay Councillor Angela Altair said the Council is legally obligated to consider every application on its merits.

"The Council's Special Planning Committee last night supported an application to construct seven three-storey townhouses with a minor reduction in the statutory car parking rate in Ann Street, Williamstown, near the corner of Nelson Place," said Cr Altair.

"An application to construct 12 townhouses ranging in height from three to four storeys and a minor reduction in the statutory car parking rate at a site in Nelson Place, Williamstown near the corner of Ann Street was also approved. Both developments are situated outside the advisory buffer zone of the major hazard facilities in the area and are subject to a \$900 community infrastructure levy per dwelling and a 10 per cent affordable housing quota.

"The two approved applications will result in a total of 19 townhouses, similar in height and density to the medium density homes in nearby Heriot Place and not high rise in nature.

"The Committee deferred a decision on an alternative proposal for the Nelson Place site pending more information and a decision on the fourth application for the 'Oriental Hotel' site, which is currently under review."

The Mayor said the Council had received a total of 347 objections to the three planning permit applications. The main concerns were to do with high density housing close to BAE and Mobil, overdevelopment, whether the design is in keeping with the historic neighbourhood character and that there was no master plan for the former Port Phillip Woollen Mills development. Cr Altair said the Council took careful note of all these concerns and the range of presentations at the meeting before reaching its decision.

"In the end we have to balance these views with the planning controls and provisions of the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme covering the site," she said.

"The planning controls for the site ask for a staging plan to be submitted. This suggests that a separate application may be lodged for each of the stages, as was the case last night. At the same time we understand local concerns about a perceived 'piecemeal' approach by the developers. That's why the Committee held off on deciding the more intensive alternative development for Nelson Place before we have completed assessing the submission for its neighbouring lot, which includes the Oriental Hotel, and why we have urged the developer to submit stage 2 plans as soon as possible so we understand the full nature of the proposal and ensure the best development for the site.

"Considering proposals in isolation without understanding future stages makes it difficult to judge the full implications of car parking, traffic and social infrastructure for this important site.

"Having homes too close to major hazard facilities was another concern raised last night. The Council continues to be concerned about major hazard facility planning and we hope to table a report on this issue in the New Year."

Media enquiries:

Senior Communications Officer Brooke Valente 9932 1144 | 0407 324 951

www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au

At the actual SPC meeting, Save Williamstown supporters filled the Council Chamber. It was the last meeting in the chamber for 2012. Despite putting forward rational and well researched information and expecting Councillors to listen and to at least be *au fait* with the findings of the Port Phillip Woollen Mill Advisory Committee Report, the community were angry to learn that councillors were told that they did not need to refer to the committee's report and that all they needed to know was the wording of the DDO and the officers' report for each application. The ultimate insult to the community was when the chairman of the committee congratulated the

developer on working well with council officers. In the officers report every objection was marked down to lead the way clear for a recommendation to allow each application.

Just to show the scale the 51 dwellings application on the equivalence of one quarter acre block is about 90,000 persons per sq km. Anything above 6,000 per sq km is generally considered dense development - this is obscenely dense. The buildings will tower over the old corner heritage pubs and be out of scale for the whole of the old street scape of teh peninsula. Open balconies and bedroom windows will lead to nighttime complaints about industry noise being over 45 decibels. The minute amount of open space allocated to dwellings will soon be overshadowed by the mooted 50m plus future high rise planned at the centre of the site. Reduced parking & increased traffic will impose on already crowded streets. Even a small number of new students from these houses will force the boundaries of the Williamstown primary schools to close in and push children in the existing boundaries into schools in Newport and Spotswood if they have any spaces. But most of all we should not have any increase in population until that proper up-to-date risk assessment has been conducted for the peninsula.

Worksafe told the PPWMAC the appropriate tool to consider safety of residents (as opposed to workers which Worksafe does cover) is the UK HSE PADHI report and guess what it also says you need to start with a risk assessment to determine the consultation distance and then the levels of sensitivity - not too difficult unless you are a developer trying to rush things through and make your fast buck. Ashley Williams for Evolve/Nelson Place Village Pty Ltd was at the SPC hearing and we were gobsmacked to hear this gem from a civil engineer who has worked on major projects - the tanks are mostly empty and therefore do not present any risk. Evolves/Nelson Place Village's position on the MHF tanks was consistent with the closing statement of their planning lawyer Mark Naughton at the Ports and Environs Committee Hearings in 2010 but no consideration was outlined of the safety of the petrochemical ships berthed on the Pt Gellibrand Pier. Anyone who has exhibited a car in a inside show would know that the instruction of the organisers is always to have a FULL tank because empty tanks can have a gas build up and be explosive. Likewise petrochemical tanks and ships need all airspace filled with inert gases to prevent explosion. We were reminded of Ashley Williams telling journalist Goya Dmytryshchak of the Hobsons Bay Weekly that safety was a furphy.

Those who did attend and speak were allowed just 5 minutes to present their objections. Council officers had not talked with objectors about their issues to try to understand from people who had attended the advisory committee and knew a lot more about the issues and would have balanced the developers information with some less biased facts.

Those objectors who could not attend a Monday evening just before Christmas and asked others to represent them were not allowed to have their points raised in the meeting. But 347 objectors had their written views briefly summarised by the officers into a couple of pages. That is all the councillors saw! This is not democracy - it is a farce.

So now the community has to pay its own way and to hope that the judicial and professional approach of VCAT will at least listen to our issues and make some rational decisions for a highly sensitive peninsula. 21 days to object meant that objections had to be written and signed and sent to VCAT by 10th January with Christmas and New Year only allowing 2 extra days. Those Original Objectors who have taken holidays will have to seek permission to join the case at VCAT.

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Places Victoria in turmoil (**SW comment - Black Marks for the Baillieu Government on Urban Development**)

Friday, 28 December 2012

The Age

by MARIKA DOBBIN - 28/12/12, 3:00 AM

“PLACES Victoria, the Baillieu government's urban development authority, is in turmoil after just 18 months of operation following the resignation of its deputy chairwoman amid reports of tears and swearing in the boardroom. Jan West, a member of the Order of Australia and a Centenary Medal recipient, was reportedly humiliated in a meeting with consultants and acting chairman Ken Fehily several weeks ago over a difference of opinion. A former national president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, she resigned last week as a director of Places Victoria and chairwoman of its finance committee after just a year in the positions. Another board member, Judith Nicholson, a town planner with 25 years' experience, reportedly cried in a board meeting last month after her level of contribution to meetings was criticised. The Baillieu government created

the statutory authority 18 months ago to take over the work of Victoria's former urban renewal authority VicUrban.

It recorded an \$18 million loss in its first year because of write-downs on its property portfolio and is now going through a brutal restructure.

Almost a third of its employees, or 53 full-time public servants, were sacked before Christmas and its chief executive officer, Sam Sangster, resigned under pressure.

Mr Sangster resigned one year into a five-year contract after falling out with Mr Fehily.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy said he had confidence in Mr Fehily, an accountant and art collector who has "Mr GST" and "Mr Art" tattooed on his biceps....."

<http://m.theage.com.au/victoria/places-victoria-in-turmoil-20121227-2by78.html>

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Staffers vet FOI requests:report

Friday, 28 December 2012

The Age
FARRAH TOMAZIN

“ALMOST half of Premier Ted Baillieu's cabinet ministers are using private staff to decide whether government documents should be released under freedom-of-information laws - and most of the time they refuse full access. In a move that has undermined the Coalition's pledge for greater transparency, new figures show that over the past financial year, nine cabinet MPs - including the Premier - authorised their chief of staff or senior adviser to decide if information should be released publicly. Ideally, decisions would be made by independent department officers rather than private staffers to avoid perceptions of political interference. But according to the latest Freedom of Information annual report, Mr Baillieu continues to use his senior adviser, Don Coulson, as the gatekeeper of FOI requests relating to his private office. Attorney-General

Robert Clark, Treasurer Kim Wells, Tourism Minister Louise Asher and Deputy Premier Peter Ryan all delegated decision making to chiefs of staff, as did ministers Martin Dixon, Mary Wooldridge, Michael O'Brien and Ryan Smith.

In opposition, Mr Baillieu repeatedly called the FOI system deficient, largely because ministers and senior department officers had "inappropriate influence" on FOI decisions.

Overall, there were 114 FOI requests received by ministers' offices in the past financial year, but only six were granted in full by June 30. About 39 were wholly or partly rejected...."

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/-2bghs.html>

(picture: Minister Matthew Guy with Suzanne Northey PR for Evolve and VicUrban staff member until about 2007 - VicUrban was a department of DPCD)

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It's all about the sub-\$500,000 sales: Evolve and Ron Walker's off-the- plan development strategy

Friday, 28 December 2012

Property Observer

“It’s hard to separate Ron Walker from Melbourne, politics, big business and money. Walker was lord mayor of Melbourne (1974-1976), federal Liberal Party Treasurer (1988-2003), Fairfax Media chairman (2005-2009), and he’s still a successful company executive.

Since starting his business career as a backyard chemical maker more than 50 years ago, Walker has amassed a personal fortune of \$800 million, according to BRW magazine’s Rich List.

“Are you worth \$800 million?” I ask in this interview.

Walker: “I’m not prepared to discuss my own personal finances with anybody. Why should I? It’s my private business.”

Does he dispute the BRW Rich List figure?...

...Along with partner Ashley Williams (no relation to Lloyd Williams),

Walker owns Evolve Development, a Melbourne-based company with about 8000 blocks of land and a \$1 billion book of apartment construction. Walker says a secret to his business success has been forming good partnerships. He describes Lloyd Williams as a brilliant strategist, who brought built-in experience and “rat cunning” to a partnership that lasted more than two decades until 1999.

Today’s partner Ashley Williams, a civil engineer prior to founding Evolve in 2003, had been involved in a string of major projects, including Melbourne City Link and the \$1 billion New Quay precinct at Melbourne Docklands.

“Ashley came to me about 10 years ago with a vision to become a dominant builder and landowner and I backed him all the way,” Walker says. “Ashley has 14 young men and women upstairs (at the Albert Road offices) that are all trained and qualified.

“The secret of our business is to keep our young people invigorated. All their views are taken into consideration – it’s just not lip service. We actually listen to what people have to say. I think it’s terribly important to promote the young person of the future.”

Walker says Evolve focuses on building apartments for a sale price of between \$300,000 and \$500,000. An apartment block includes community gymnasiums and other recreational facilities.

“We don’t want to be in the \$1 million-to-\$3 million price bracket – that’s a different market,” he says. “We want to cater for the young, transient population.

“We do a lot of research as to what people want and it’s one, two and three bedroom apartments that have all the electronic gadgetry, a kitchen, a laundry and a lift to bring up the bike. They also want car parking.

“I think when people are maturing and finding their way in life, they want to be near the action. So we make sure our developments are close to public transport and recreational facilities that people can walk to, such as the MCG.

“I don’t think young people want to spend time mowing lawns, and a lot don’t want backyards. They will eventually get married and move to a property with a backyard.”

Walker says Evolve sells about 80% of apartments off the plan – “before the first brick goes into the ground”.

“We are terribly risk averse and we don’t want the market to dictate the fortunes of our company,” he says. “I’ve been around for decades and I understand the frailty of the property market and how quickly it can turn.”

[http://www.propertyobserver.com.au/appointments/it-s-all-about-the-sub-\\$500000-sales-ron-walker-s-off-the-plan-development-strategy](http://www.propertyobserver.com.au/appointments/it-s-all-about-the-sub-$500000-sales-ron-walker-s-off-the-plan-development-strategy)

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