



EPHING CIVIC TRUST

PO Box 271 Epping 1710
www.eppingcivictrust.org
eppingcivictrust@gmail.com

Newsletter

November 2020

November Meetings - online or by phone via Zoom

Due to the current COVID-19 restrictions, the Trust feels it is not appropriate to try and hold a meeting in person, especially as public health guidelines may change with short notice. However, we are keen to update members on a range of local issues so we will be holding a virtual meeting on Tuesday 17 November at 7.30pm. This will be held via Zoom. Members can access it by using this link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82885799179?pwd=NDU3Q2pCTy9xdnFNbkp3T1pRWkZyZz09>
with Meeting ID: 828 8579 9179 and Passcode: 646280.

Or you can also choose to phone in via your mobile or landline by calling 02 8015 6011 with the ID/passcode above and listen to the meeting.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING:

Notice is hereby given of a Special General meeting of the Trust on Tuesday 17th November at 7.30pm. It will be followed by the regular General Meeting. A notice with the detailed motions to be presented at the Special General Meeting and the agenda is provided with this newsletter.

GENERAL MEETING:

Guest speakers will represent the Cbus Langston development in Epping. This is one of the largest developments in the town centre and includes retail space and open areas between the three towers. Cbus have been the most responsive developer to date, running a community liaison meeting quarterly which the Trust attends, and responding to issues raised (especially tradies parking their utes in nearby 1-hour spots!). They will give information on the retail and public space.



FROM THE PRESIDENT, JANET MCGARRY ▶▶▶

Epping is being overrun by residential development – from high rise through to dual occupancy. Our population will more than likely double by 2025. Unfortunately the pace of new community infrastructure is woefully slow. The lack of foresight and planning when the town centre was announced nearly 10 years ago, is now matched by the inability for new facilities to be provided.

Some of this sits with the State Government, who at the very least should be providing substantial funding for things like sporting facilities and open space. But Council is also agonisingly slow.

An example of this is the Epping Community Centre. Council purchased the former Boronia Grove Function Centre from the Masons which offered a rapid increase in community space – a purpose-built, well-located building. But it remains unopened and unused, over 22 months since it was purchased. Council has needed to make **modifications to meet modern fire, access and facility requirements.**

We think it should not take so long to make the few modifications required to ensure the building is suitable for its new use. Indeed, most of these changes were completed earlier this year. But the building still sits empty and there is no timeframe for its opening.

Parramatta Council has made an important capital investment, but this asset is now completely unused, generating neither goodwill nor revenue to date. We urge the Council to get on with opening this facility to the Community as soon as possible.

Finally, I encourage members to participate in our Special General Meeting and General Meeting on 17th November. It is disappointing we cannot meet in person, but we are erring on the side of caution. Meanwhile, though, the work of the Trust continues, and we have several important proposed changes to the constitution to put to members at the Special General Meeting. A quorum of 20 ordinary members is needed for this meeting. Please login or simply phone in.

1920 - The First 'Village' Police Station in Epping

Behind the boundary cyclone fences at 36 Bridge Street Epping (on the corner with Wyralla Ave) you can see an empty block of land with some old sandstone foundation blocks ready for the imminent construction of a row of new townhouses.

Go back to 1920, a small brick cottage was built there to house Epping's first and only resident policeman, Constable Dymond. It took a good number of years for police to be appointed to Epping, as the government authorities considered Epping to be too quiet and law-abiding to warrant a 'move-on man'. The local residents' group of the era, the 'Epping Progress Association', had been advocating for its installation for a considerable time. In 1921, a letter from the authorities conveyed the information that 'there was no money at present available to install a phone'. So for the first two years of its establishment, this local 'police station' had no telephone. Members of the local community had to report incidents in person to 36 Bridge Street!



Photo from 'ABC' of Epping - photographer John Eyles 1998

Sources:

1. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/103819787?searchTerm=epping%20police>
2. ABC of Epping - A handbook for Residents by Alex McAndrew (2001)

2-16 Epping Road and 2-4 Forest Grove, Epping (DA/397/2020) – the Austino Site.

This DA was on exhibition from 29 July to 19 August 2020 and the Trust made a submission objecting to its interface with the Heritage Item, Forest Park and the proposed tree removal from Forest Park. The submission also raised traffic issues questioning the proposed road access to the site from Blaxland Road, near the junction with Epping Road. This DA does not include development of the former Epping Bowling Club site, although this site is also owned by Austino. No update has yet been received at this stage.

25 Ray Rd, Epping - "Woodlands" (DA/19/2020)

The Local Planning Panel indicated it had no objection to the conversion of the beautiful old "Woodlands" cottage at 25 Ray Rd into a childcare centre, despite the significant changes proposed and the building being a Heritage item. However, the Planning Panel objected to the parking arrangements proposed for the front of the building, which in our view would reduce the beauty of the house and the streetscape. The Panel gave the developer 28 days from the date of the panel meeting, (21st July 2020) to submit a revised and acceptable proposal with less parking on the site. The DA will be considered again by the Planning Panel on 22 October (after this goes to print).

21-23 Norfolk Road (DA/745/2019) - Childcare centre

This proposal was approved by the Land and Environment Court, despite the Local Planning Panel and Council Officers recommending refusal for a range of issues, including the stormwater threat from nearby floodway and the proposed basement level of the new centre. It is disappointing that the Court did not follow Council's detailed reasons for refusal. Norfolk Road has become more congested due to the increased numbers of students at Epping Public School. This centre will only add to the traffic woes, especially for North Epping residents trying to exit the suburb.

43-53 Oxford Street, Epping (DA/646/2019) – Uniting – aged care/senior living

At a meeting of the Sydney Central City Planning Panel on 2 September 2020, this 16 storey 'vertical' village (including a residential aged care, assisted living and independent living units) was approved. The Trust spoke at the meeting and queried whether this sort of development for elderly residents was really appropriate in the light of the experience of COVID-19 and care settings. Issues concerning resident safety during an emergency evacuation were also raised.

Commercial Floor Space in Epping

Council staff have prepared a proposal, which was sent to the Local Planning Panel, seeking the Panel's advice as to whether development controls should be altered to mandate an increase in Commercial space in new developments in the Epping Town Centre. Existing planning controls encourage developers to provide up to four floors of Commercial space but do not mandate it. Since developers regard commercial space as less valuable, there has been a huge loss of commercial space in Epping as old office blocks have given way to residential development, leaving Epping as a 'dormitory' suburb with little life during the day to support retailers.

To compensate developers for mandated commercial space, the Council staff's proposal is to increase the allowable height of buildings by between 6 and 10 storeys to a maximum height of 30 storeys. The allowable Floor Space Ratios will also be increased. The areas mainly affected would be around the Coles carpark in Rawson St, to the east of Oxford St, and the existing Library area.

The Trust has always sought more Commercial space in the town centre, but has opposed this Proposal at the Planning Panel, on the grounds that the increased heights and densities proposed, and the consequent adverse effects on the community, are too high a price to pay for commercial space. We feel that commercial space should be mandated within the existing height and density controls. The matter will revert to the full Council in late October, which will decide then whether to progress the proposal to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment or to change it.



▲ View from Bridge Street to Beecroft Road

Local Environment Plan (LEP) Harmonisation

In August/September, council advertised two rounds of changes to a key planning document – the LEP. This was triggered by the need to 'harmonise' different planning rules for the areas that were merged into the City of Parramatta Council several years ago. For Epping, this is the former Hornsby Council areas.

The first round included specific planning changes for sites at Rockleigh Way and Pembroke Street on the east side of the railway. There are also changes to sites on Rosebank Avenue to rezone the southern end of Rosebank Avenue Heritage Conservation Area because of interface issues with neighbouring 5 storey apartments. The Trust is concerned the changes proposed will just create further interface problems and does not support this further loss of Heritage from Epping.

The second round was much more sweeping – essentially a draft new LEP for the whole local government area that encompassed a range of planning matters. For Epping, the most significant is a proposal to prohibit dual occupancy in a wider area than at present. The rationale is that the area has more than met its housing targets and is under strain due to the rapid increase in population, and that dual occupancy is changing the fundamental character of the suburban streets. The Trust has supported the principle behind this proposed change.

Epping to Carlingford Cycleway

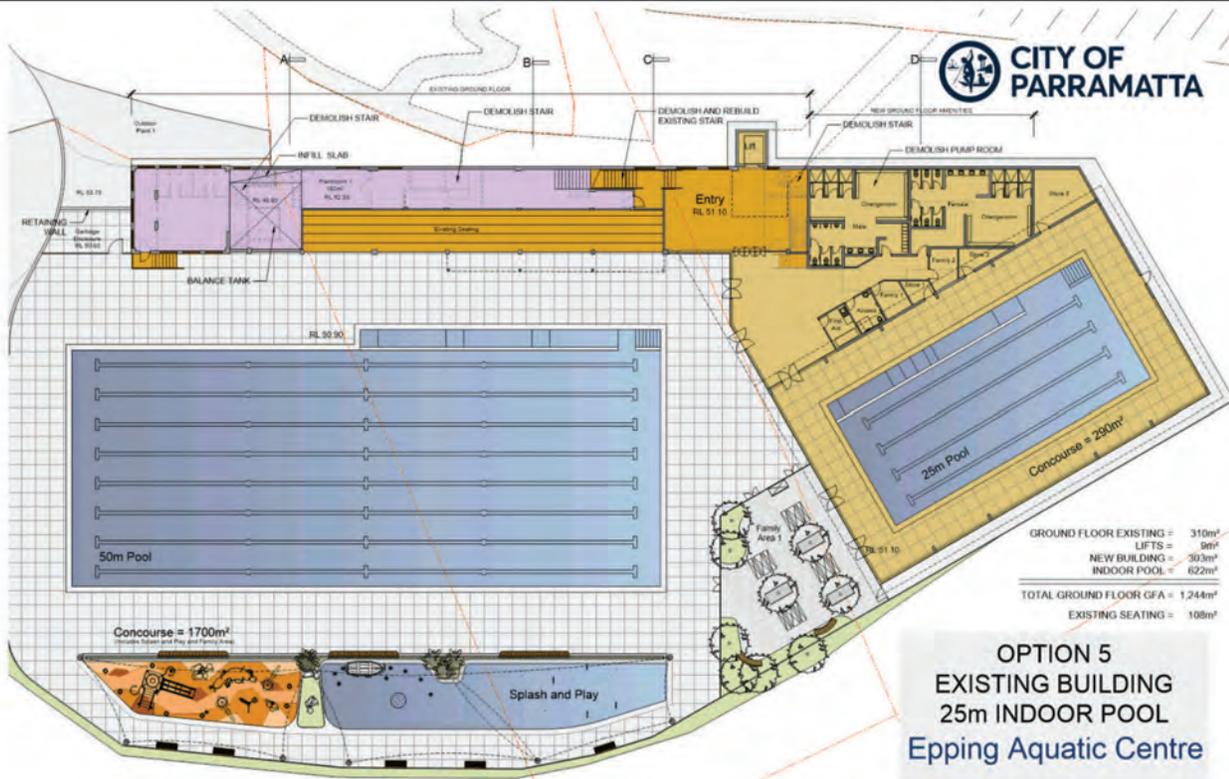
Council is working on a major cycleway project in Epping. This is mostly funded by the State Government's Building Stronger Communities funding. You can read about the full project here: <https://participate.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/eppingtocarlingfordcycleway>

Stage 1 from Bridge Street (near the railway bridge) through to Carlingford has been approved. The council began some of the works and has a DA for a refuge island near the Midson Road intersection with Wyralla Avenue. Council staff are currently developing plans for an additional section of cycleway along the southern side of Epping Road from the Epping Bridge to join with the existing Ryde Council cycleway at Terry's Creek. This includes a 3m shared bike/pedestrian pathway. The Trust has made submissions on these proposals.

Epping Pool - Dence Park

In October, council passed an important motion on the redevelopment of the pool at Dence Park. This followed the Masterplan council adopted late last year. That plan included a new 8 lane outdoor pool, and an indoor 25 metre pool as well as new lift access and other facilities. However, the motion adopted has a very different version of the works to proceed. After the Masterplan council learned that the design proposed was neither physically feasible nor affordable. One has to ask how the Masterplan (which cost \$500k) was allowed to get it so wrong. But, further work has resulted in a new concept plan that

includes key elements: the outdoor pool, a full 25 metre indoor pool, lift access from the car park, refurbished grandstand, and new bathroom facilities. It also included a lovely waterplay area for kids, but council needs to find additional funds to complete this area. Let's hope our local MP can use his State Government role to assist with the funds as this will be the most substantial community infrastructure project for Epping, and will give a facility for the next 50 years. However, key elements of the masterplan (including a cafe and gym facility) have been dropped. The Trust finds this very disappointing and feels the area is being shortchanged. We expect new concept designs and plans to be on public exhibition soon.



Open Space Review

As outlined by our local councillors at the Trust meeting in August, the council is undertaking an Open Space review, particularly concerning the lack of open areas east of the railway line where a lot of residential development has occurred. The councillors have had a briefing but no information has yet been made public. The Trust is frustrated that no further open space has been identified for Epping considering the findings from the Epping Planning Review and the Trust's open space survey earlier this year. We will continue to lobby for the council to listen to the community on these matters.

Councillor Lorraine Wearne - 25 Years



Epping's longest serving local councillor, Lorraine Wearne, has just clocked up 25 years' service on the City of Parramatta Council. This is exceptional service to her local community. She is known as a fearless advocate for Epping, and has been a long-time supporter of Epping Civic Trust.

Draft Greener Places Design Guide

The NSW Government Draft Greener Places Design Guide was on exhibition 25 June to 28 August 2020. This Guide is to provide information on how to design, plan and implement green infrastructure in urban areas throughout NSW. It will have a similar status to the Apartment Design Guide, in providing a statutory planning framework. It considers open space and recreation, urban tree canopy, bushland and waterways and providing design and place State Environmental Planning Policies.

If the Draft Guide is approved the traditional measure of 2.8ha per 1000 people defining the community's open space needs will no longer apply. This will be replaced with a performance-based quality approach rather than using a quantifiable

measure. The Draft Guide states, 'setting aside a quantum of land as part of every development is no longer effective'. We hope this Guide will not be used in future to justify not providing sufficient open space to meet the population's needs. We note this opens the way for more roof-top open spaces, in lieu of ground-level open spaces.

The Guide supports the Greater Sydney Region to have a 40% urban tree canopy by 2056. However, it is disturbing that this lists the CBD Areas only having more than 15% tree canopy, Medium-High Density Residential and light Commercial Areas more than 25% tree canopy and Low-Density Suburban Areas more than 40% tree canopy. This opens the way for minimal tree canopy in CBD and Medium-High Density areas and emphasises the importance of retaining trees in our Low-Density areas.

TREE SUB-COMMITTEE ▶▶▶▶▶

New street tree planting continues, aiming to beautify and cool many streets including Epping Road. The City of Parramatta Council reports that 925 new trees were subject to consultation at 592 sites (multiple trees were proposed on larger nature strips). Some sites were not subject to consultation (in front of Council properties, parks, and some large developments). 328 trees were declined by residents and are being planted in alternative locations.

The Trust has observed many mature indigenous trees are growing on the former TAFE site in Chelmsford Avenue, where it is proposed to build a new school. We are advocating for as many of these trees to be retained as possible, given the history of the site as a horticultural college.

The Council's recent proposal for changes to the DA notification process threatens to remove the notification for the removal of trees from Heritage Conservation Areas and Heritage Items. The Trust advocates to retain the current requirement to have a 14-day notification period.

Report from Emma Heyde - Hornsby Shire Councillor

What's top of the priority list for me as your local councillor? I've been working on a better way of getting new footpaths for North Epping, improvements to the Norfolk/Devlin intersection, new planting and stormwater management at Nimba Park, and playgrounds! Hornsby Council will release a Play Plan this month. It assesses the 131 current playgrounds with recommendations for the future. The Plan finds that the standard of playgrounds in the area is very high, but there is some duplication of types of equipment, a need to plan for a hotter climate, a need for a big regional playground, an opportunity for a water-play park and a suggested upgrade in the 'play hierarchy' for the Epping oval playground. We want to avoid unfriendly places with overly-familiar equipment. Instead we need adventure playgrounds, areas for older kids, and the ability to close streets to allow kids to play. Find the Play Plan with the business papers <http://businesspapers.hornsby.nsw.gov.au> or contact me eheyde@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Committee Thank You - Graeme Wyber

The Trust would like to acknowledge the substantial contribution of Graeme Wyber, who has recently resigned from the Committee. He is passionate in his support of important local spaces such as Loftus Park, and consistently lobbies for West Epping issues such as errant shopping trolleys. The Epping Civic Trust Committee and all Trust members thank Graeme for his long commitment and wish Graeme and his wife Bev safe travels and all the best for the future. Thank you, Graeme.

WEST EPPING SUB-COMMITTEE ▶

The West Epping Subcommittee thanks Graeme Wyber for his 30 years of service to the Trust: his extensive local knowledge of the West Epping precinct will be sadly missed.

The Subcommittee has reported to City of Parramatta Councillors and staff on traffic management recommendations to control the high level of through-traffic in the West Epping precinct.

Subcommittee representatives and local residents met with Councillors and staff to discuss the congestion and safety issues surrounding Epping West Public School's "drop off" zones in Ryde and George Streets, Epping. Council has contacted local residents with a proposal to address the issues raised.

Membership and Committee ▶▶▶▶▶

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on many aspects of life this year. One aspect is local community activity as residents have been focussed on other things. The Trust is not immune, and after a number of years of stable membership, it has seen a drop in renewals. If you know friends, relatives or neighbours interested in local issues, please tell them about the Trust and encourage them to join. You can find out all the necessary information at <https://eppingcivictrust.org/membership>

All Councillors were invited to make a report for the Trust Newsletter but no others were received.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Members who have concerns about issues in Epping are always free to contact the Trust through our email or website. However, if you have issues that you would prefer to discuss with our elected representatives, here are their contact details:

City of Parramatta Council,
PO Box 32, Parramatta NSW 2124

Councillor Lorraine Wearne
Phone: 0416 035 817
lwearne@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Donna Davis
Phone: 0447 745 402
ddavis@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Bill Tyrrell
Phone: 0488 666 335
bttyrrell@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au

Hornsby Shire Council,
PO Box 37 Hornsby NSW 1630

Councillor Emma Heyde
Phone: 0403 589 722
eheyde@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Vince del Gallego
Phone: 9847 6666
vdelgallego@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Michael Hutchence
Phone: 0466 008 375
mhutchence@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

PARLIAMENT OF
NEW SOUTH WALES

Member for Epping, Dominic Perrottet
Suite 303, level 3, 51 Rawson Street, Epping
Phone: 9877 0266 **Email:** epping@parliament.nsw.gov.au



EPPING CIVIC TRUST www.eppingcivictrust.org

PRESIDENT: Janet McGarry (0408 071 707)
VICE PRESIDENT: Mike Moffatt (0421 859 070)
TREASURER: Leo Hart (0417 424 580)
P.O. BOX 271, Epping 1710

Annual General Meeting & Ordinary General Meeting 2021 - Tuesday 16 February
Ordinary General Meetings 2021
Tuesday 18 May, 17 August & 16 November