

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Tuesday 21 August 2007 - The Old Town House

Note of meeting

Present : Graham Abraham, Isobel Aitken, Christine Burgess, Clive Kempe, Graham Mackechnie, Shona and Gordon Mutch, Morag Paterson; PC Steve McKenzie, PC McGratton, Cllr Jim Noble, Cllr Richard Robertson; AU: Angus Donaldson, Fraser Lovie, Shaunagh Kirby, Prof Christopher Gane, Hamish Mackay, Valerie & Dewi Morgan, Morley Hutchinson, David Hutchison, Adrian Marshall, Peter Rushmore
Apologies: Simon Barker

1 Minutes of June meeting were approved (GA and CK)

2 Matters arising

University Road and College Bounds – a meeting had been held. Jim Noble reported: new one-way sign was on order, and traffic lights would be banned for an experimental period 2 week period to avoid distraction; other signage would be lowered so that it would be more visible. Ongoing management discussion with the police for traffic management education programme, and Spital, College Bounds and University Road traffic management being promoted by Police. Campus car parking was also discussed, as well as street lighting and single deck buses, which First Bus said was not an option but would review in one year. A further meeting would be held in 6 months to consider effect of changes in traffic. Over recent monitoring period of 72 hours, 1000 cars had come through the lights. If signage does not work, a bollard would be next step, costed at around £20k. CB reported that Dunbar Hall has agreed to site the OACC community board – good news!

3 Police update

In last period, 6 priority crimes: 2 at Hillhead, 1 theft from a shed, and 2 thefts from cars. Crime Prevention stall will be held during Freshers' Fair with new posters to highlight crime preventative measures for students.
High Street: confirmed 1000 cars had been picked up on monitor. In September, 2 week campaign: 1st week educational (asking drivers why they are choosing that route) and 2nd week enforcement with £30 fine, with 200 police hours and 10 personnel mobilised. Information will be sent to the University and the Press to give details of the initiative, which will be monitored 3 months later. CK suggested that questions should be asked about mode of transport ie encouraging public transport, etc.

4 University update

Library

Chris Gane reported planning permission was applied for on 15 August and decision will be taken towards the end of this year/beginning next year. Will be inviting 'stakeholders' to come to the university to discuss concerns or to input positively within the next 3 weeks (statutory discussion period). Documentation was available for distribution at the meeting. Invitations will be sent out next week.

Plans are for a building much the same as presented last year – although slightly scaled back. Still 9 floors, reduced height and foot print, although rare book and archive storage is no longer below the building, but on a plinth partially below level, as well as a conservation area as the project develops. CG said he is open to questions, or happy to respond to emails. Regarding public access, CG responded that all collections are open to the public, and will be easier to open up the rare book and other collections to the public at the same time as the main library. Building designed to maximize public use – ground floor will be open: cafeteria, exhibition space, with regular events including music (without disturbing the library peace), shared material from other museums.

Dedicated training areas will also be created and will be available for community groups (computer skills for older people, etc). The plan will be to keep it open as much as possible

(during holiday period) to maximize usage of space. Pedestrian access from Bedford Road is still under discussion to improve accessibility. Design is intended to allow flow through the university site: the Elphinstone area is in fact University land which allows pedestrian use. Faced in glass, treated in a process that will look opaque, striated (still being worked on), for right levels of light etc as well as look., including at night. 1/20 scale model will be produced. Application is for whole area ... and will involve discussion around parking and a more sustainable approach to parking/transport. City may grant permission subject to parking etc. CB also reinforced the notion of public access to the library, and traffic flows around the Old Aberdeen area in general, and in particular due to the loss of the existing parking. Measures will be taken over the next 12 months or so to encourage options to reduce University transport footprint. Parking and traffic management continues to be a key factor in OACC discussions.

CPZ (controlled parking zone) in control of Council with regard to resident parking. Preferred route of University is to "look at the whole picture, and see reducing car space as an opportunity to reduce cars on campus". AD added that Green Travel Plan was the way to go and CK stressed the need to consider Public Partnership with for example a station at Kittybrewster to radically change transport usage.

60% of current QML books will be in new library as well as archives, therefore identifying books that need to be to hand, or kept under special conditions – otherwise will be in secure local storage so totality of collection will be better managed than currently. Catering for 14000 students. Adjustment will be made regarding space when it is up and running – balance between book storage and or people spaces. Developing an offsite area to manage archives and book storage. Medical library will be kept separate from the new library, as well as the Law library.

The Library is the Danish architects' first UK project, although well known elsewhere in the world. Min 50 year life span expected. University pursuing "excellent" in terms of building regulatory environmental issues – "like rainwater harvesting etc".

Scale of drawings was also mentioned and double checked. CG confirmed that the drawings and perspectives were to scale.

The AU representatives left, and further discussion ensued. It was agreed by OACC that it is a 'striking building' and an exciting project to have in our midst. A further meeting will be held following the open meeting to discuss representation to Planning Dept. CB will write a letter to ACC for detailed plans.

Other AU update – Angus Donaldson:

Fraser Noble and Zoology continued works; demolition of chimney well under way, conservation of Crown Tower in about a year's time, Powis Gate finished and won an award, and will be nominated for another; MacRobert garden finished, maybe another plaque for MacRobert, Sport Centre should be started end of September; Hillhead progressing for occupation Sept 2008. No movement on Dunbar Hall, now released back to University by Unite – currently under consideration. Trying to make High Street (ex coach building) idea of café/shop units - into a commercial enterprise – disappointing return on an asset value thus far. AU has acquired The Barn, St Machar Drive, although plans for the building were not discussed.

5 Planning update

Orchard Cottage: new house planned for the garden. CKhas submitted a formal letter of complaint.

6 Treasurer's report

£5,497 in the bank – for contribution to Dunbar Hall refurbishment and notice board. It was noted that St Peter's School was a good ongoing cause to support, probably project-by-project basis.). Cllr Robertson offered to keep an eye out for the school in terms of other funding possibilities. (It was decided that coat of arms is prohibitive due to cost and relevance).

7 Correspondence

Pete Leonard – Director of Services Central – the sign at end of Meston Walk now replaced.
Network meetings, Neighbourhood regeneration, gypsy encampment, tenants open days,
taxis, children panel.

8 AOCB

Multiple Occupancy; resident in 2 Douglas Place who has had trouble with multiple occupancy, license coming up again and OACC has been asked to help. CB wrote to Licensing Committee to query the location as regulations seem to apply to landlords and Health & Safety, yet not perhaps to location and proximity. CB to attend a meeting to report back as this is a recurring issue in OA.

The Year Ahead – ideas:

- Creating more activity for our community – building on the ceilidh, the public meeting, events, café space, Using the money creatively?

- Traffic Management as a holistic issue.

- Third Don Crossing.

A Minute Secretary desperately required!

Date of next meeting : 18 September 2007