

Meeting Date: Tuesday 26 June 2012
Location: Council Chambers, Level 6, Civic Centre, 1 Devlin Street, Ryde
Time: 7.30pm

Note: *This meeting will be recorded on audio tape for minute-taking purposes as authorised by the Local Government Act 1993.*

NOTICE OF BUSINESS

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LATE ITEMS

25 UPDATE ON WOLFE ROAD RESERVE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Report prepared by: Service Unit Manager - Open Space

Report dated: 20/06/2012

File No.: GRP/09/4/6 - BP12/736

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides Council with an update on the outcome of the Wolfe Road Reserve Neighbourhood Forum which was held on 16 June 2012 and indicates Councils intended next steps following the consultation with the community.

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That Council note the information provided in the records from the Wolfe Road Reserve Neighbourhood Forum.
- (b) That Council proceed with the implementation of the actions as identified by the Neighbourhood Forum in the agreed action plan.
- (c) That Council thank the residents who attended the Forum for their participation and keep them informed as the implementation proceeds.
- (d) That Council request a further report be submitted to Councils Works and Community Committee on the outcome of the 7-part test for the changes to the Reserve, the proposed location of the delineation fence and Council's management plan for the Wolfe Road Reserve.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Notes and agreed actions from the Wolfe Road Reserve Neighbourhood Forum held on Saturday, 16 June 2012 at 10.00am

Report Prepared By:

Tatjana Domazet
Service Unit Manager - Open Space

Report Approved By:

Danielle Dickson
Group Manager - Community Life

ITEM 25 (continued)**Discussion**

At its meeting of 22 May 2012, Council considered a Notice of Motion on the Wolfe Road Reserve and resolved the following:

That Council facilitate a Neighbourhood Forum with members of the community residing in Wolfe Road and Blue Gum Drive, East Ryde to discuss the issues relating to the management of the Wolfe Road reserve.

- *That Council facilitate the Neighbourhood Forum within a 3 week time frame*
- *That Council do not proceed with any works relating to the management of the reserve until all concerns of the Neighbourhood Forum are comprised.*
- *That Council prepare a report of the Neighbourhood Forum for consideration at a Works and Community Committee for referral to a Council meeting.*
- *That Council encourage further public comment on it as a basis for an immediate plan of management for the Wolfe Road Reserve.*

In response to the Council resolution, a Neighbourhood Forum was organised for Saturday, 16 June 2012 at 10.00am at Wolfe Road Reserve. In attendance were Councils Group Manager Community Life, Manager Open Space and General Counsel.

Over 20 residents were in attendance at the Forum. The following issues were raised and discussed at the meeting. The actions arising out these discussions were agreed to by the majority of residents and now require Council's consideration. The detailed notes from the Neighbourhood Forum are provided as Attachment A to this report.

In addressing Councils resolution following the community meeting, a verbal update of the matter was provided to the Works and Community Committee.

The issues and agreed actions are summarised below:

Bushfire management

Concerns were expressed regarding potential bushfires risks due to the close proximity of the bush to the property and a need for Council to guarantee fire breaks along the property boundary. In addition confirmation was sought about the status of the current cleared area that forms a track at the base of Kitty's Creek.

Agreed action: Council to confirm the bushfire prone status of the reserve and assess the potential to increase the 'active recreation' component of the reserve to increase the Asset Protection Zone. Confirmation will be sought in relation to the current cleared access way to determine whether it is a formal trail or buffer.

ITEM 25 (continued)

Concerns about debris in the reserve

The issue of the piled debris in the reserve being located in close proximity to the residential property and why this was allowed by Council was raised. It was confirmed that the pile is in fact compost pile however, it was agreed that Council will remove the pile from the reserve.

Agreed action: Council to remove compost pile from the reserve.

Concerns about poison spraying in the reserve

Concerns were expressed regarding illegal poison spraying in the reserve. Council acknowledged that this type of illegal activities has been alleged in the past; however, assured all present that with verifiable evidence Council will take action to stop this type of activity.

Agreed action: Note, include in management statement clear activities that are permissible and those that are prohibited. Include statutory signage in reserve.

Why the part of the reserve must be maintained as bushland and why the whole area is not being cleared for recreation

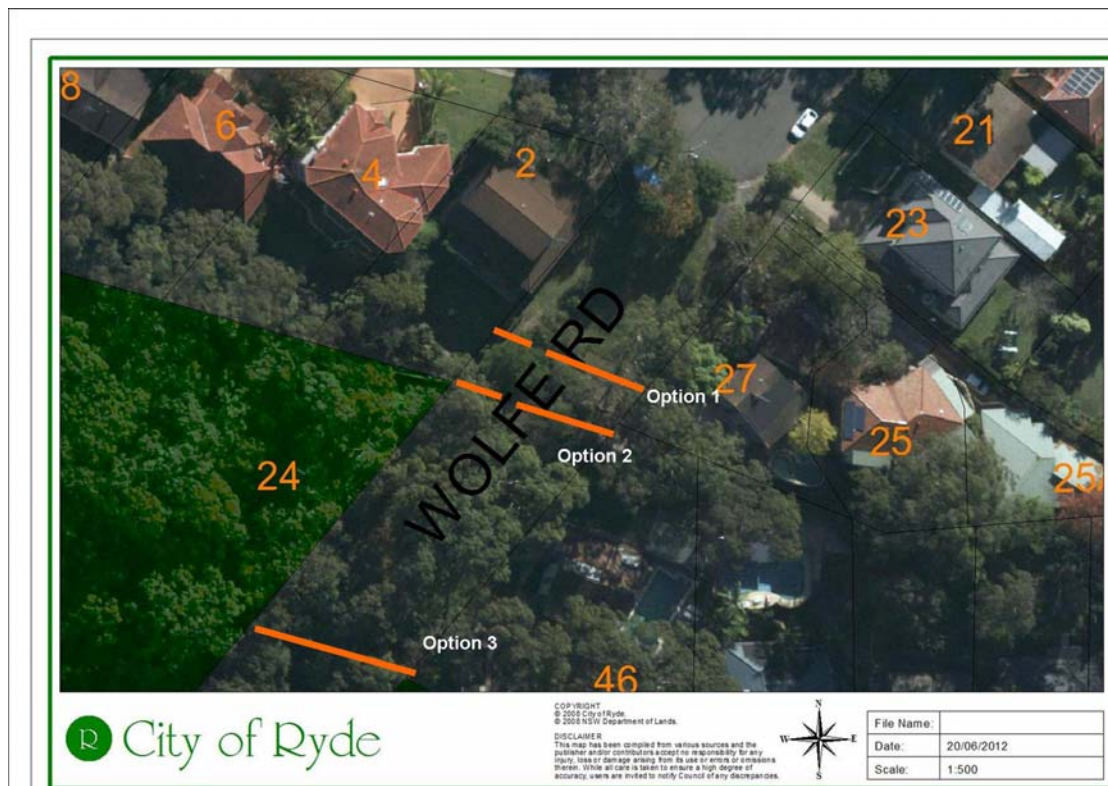
Whilst some residents questioned why the part of the reserve needs to be maintained as the bushland and sought that the whole reserve be cleared of any vegetation other than grass, the majority of the residents did not support this suggestion and agreed that they wanted for Council to consider expanding the passive recreation area without endangering the bushland.

Agreed action: Note, the suggested amendment to the plan provides a reasonable balance between the competing demands of the reserve and meeting Councils environmental obligations. Council has also accepted the regular maintenance of the active area.

Location and type of the proposed delineation fence

Three **fence location** options were proposed, discussed and debated at the meeting. All three options are marked on the site plan below.

ITEM 25 (continued)



Option 1 is the fence location originally proposed by Council. Options 1 and 2 were supported by 8 and 11 residents respectively (1 and 2 children). Council expressed to the residents concerns regarding Option 3, given that this option suggested clearing of the whole site which is unlikely not be allowed under the State legislation given the vegetations status as an ecological community.

Agreed action: Council to conduct an environmental assessment of the reserve (known as 7 part test) that will consider options 1 and 2. Should the environmental assessment conclude that the impact of Option 2 is not significant, Council would then agree to move the fence to the location defined by Option 2.

The type of fence was also discussed, with proposals ranging from log barrier, construction fence to row of trees. It was explained that the log type fence is used in many bushland reserves as a common method of delineating bushland to other areas of the park. Whilst the matter was discussed at some length, no firm consensus was reached. Therefore it is recommended that the Environmental consultant undertaking the assessment above be asked to recommend appropriate, best practice options for Councils consideration.

Agreed action: Once location is determine, Council to install the independently recommended barrier along the delineation line.

ITEM 25 (continued)**Bushland will increase presence of snakes, spiders etc and make it dangerous for children to play in the reserve**

Concerns were expressed regarding the close proximity of the bushland to the children play area and that this could increase the presence of snakes, spiders etc thus not providing safe environment for the children to play in.

Agreed action: Note, it is not considered that the proposed works will impact on this risk.

Financial Implications

If Council is to proceed with the actions as agreed by the majority of the residents at the Wolfe Road Reserve Neighbourhood Forum, Council will need to engage a consultant to conduct a 7 part test for the reserve. The cost of this test could be funded out of the Natural Areas budget.

All other actions outlined in the plan can be funded out of the operational budget for 2012/13.

Conclusion

The Wolfe Road Reserve Neighbourhood Forum was organised as per Council resolution and lead to clarification of issues raised by the local residents. The Forum provided Council with a clear understanding of the priorities for the Reserve as expressed by the majority of the residents that were in attendance. The above implementation actions are considered appropriate in responding to the consultation.

ITEM 25 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

Record of the Wolfe Road Reserve Neighbourhood Forum held on Saturday, 16 June at 10.00 am

PRESENT

Clr Roy Maggio (CoR), David Saba, Sylvia Saba, Jane Meggitt, Michelle Saba, Chad Quinn, Leo Golubovic, Tony Saba, Sabrina Mooney, Chris Mooney, Stephen Sim, Jill Hardely, Jieming Maxwell, Stewart Maxwell, Noel Plumb, Jennine Minifie, Hadley Feliciano, Libby Lawson, Julie Vie, Leonie Deen

Note: other residents may have been in attendance but did not sign the attendance list

Council staff

Danielle Dickson, Group Manager – Community Life, City of Ryde
Bruce McCann, Legal Counsel, City of Ryde
Tatjana Domazet, Manager of Open Space, City of Ryde

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Group Manager – Community Life, Danielle Dickson (DD) welcomed everyone to the Forum and provided brief background to the reasons behind the Neighbourhood Forum (Notice of Motion by Clr Maggio).

DD introduced Council staff and explained that in order for the Forum to work, all present need to agree to some basic rules, including allowing everyone to have a say and showing respect to all present.

DD then provided brief background to the issues experienced with the management of the reserve, including residents being allowed to mow, spray the area and store personal items. DD acknowledged that there is a neighbourhood dispute between 2 residents but the meeting will not be dealing with those issues and will only discuss the proposal and future management of the reserve. DD also explained that once the plan for the Wolfe Road Reserve has been agreed to, Council staff will commence the proposed work in the reserve.

Manager – Open Space, Tatjana Domazet (TD) explained that the Reserve is part of Kitty's Creek Reserve and as such, contains ecological community that need to be protected. Council contractor is currently working in the reserve 1 day per week. TD then moved to the proposed delineation line in the reserve and explained that Council was proposing to place a log barrier along that line. It was explained that the log barrier will be stop the weeds and grass clippings/seeds spreading into the natural area. The delineation line will clearly identify for Council staff, contractors and residents area that needs to be mowed and is for active recreation and area that needs to be conserved and should be protected.

Following this brief introduction, DD invited all present to bring up issues associated with the management of the reserve.

ITEM 25 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

The following is the summary of the issue brought up by the residents and the agreed course of action, if applicable and agreed to at the meeting.

ISSUES RAISED

Bushfire management

Concerns were expressed regarding potential bushfires risks due to the close proximity of the bush to the property and a need for Council to guarantee fire breaks along the property boundary. In addition, confirmation was sought about the status of the current cleared area that forms a track at the base of Kitty's Creek.

Following some discussion, including comments regarding living in the area for 40 years and never having a bushfire in the area, the Forum agreed that Council needs to ensure sufficient fire breaks are provided, if the reserve is in the bushfire prone area.

Agreed action: Council to confirm the bushfire prone status of the Reserve and assess the potential to increase the 'active recreation' component of the Reserve and to increase the Asset Protection Zone. Confirmation will be sought in relation to the current cleared access way to determine whether it is a formal trail or buffer.

Concerns about debris in the Reserve

The issue of the piled debris in the Reserve being located in close proximity to the residential property and why this was allowed by Council was raised.

It was confirmed that the pile is, in fact, compost pile however, it was agreed that Council will remove the pile from the reserve.

Agreed action: Council to remove compost pile from the reserve.

Concerns about poison spraying in the reserve

Concerns were expressed regarding illegal poison spraying in the reserve. Council acknowledged that this type of unauthorised activities has been alleged in the past, however, assured all present that with verifiable evidence Council will take action to stop this type of activity.

Agreed action: Note, include in management statement clear activities that are permissible and those that are prohibited. Include statutory signage in Reserve.

ITEM 25 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

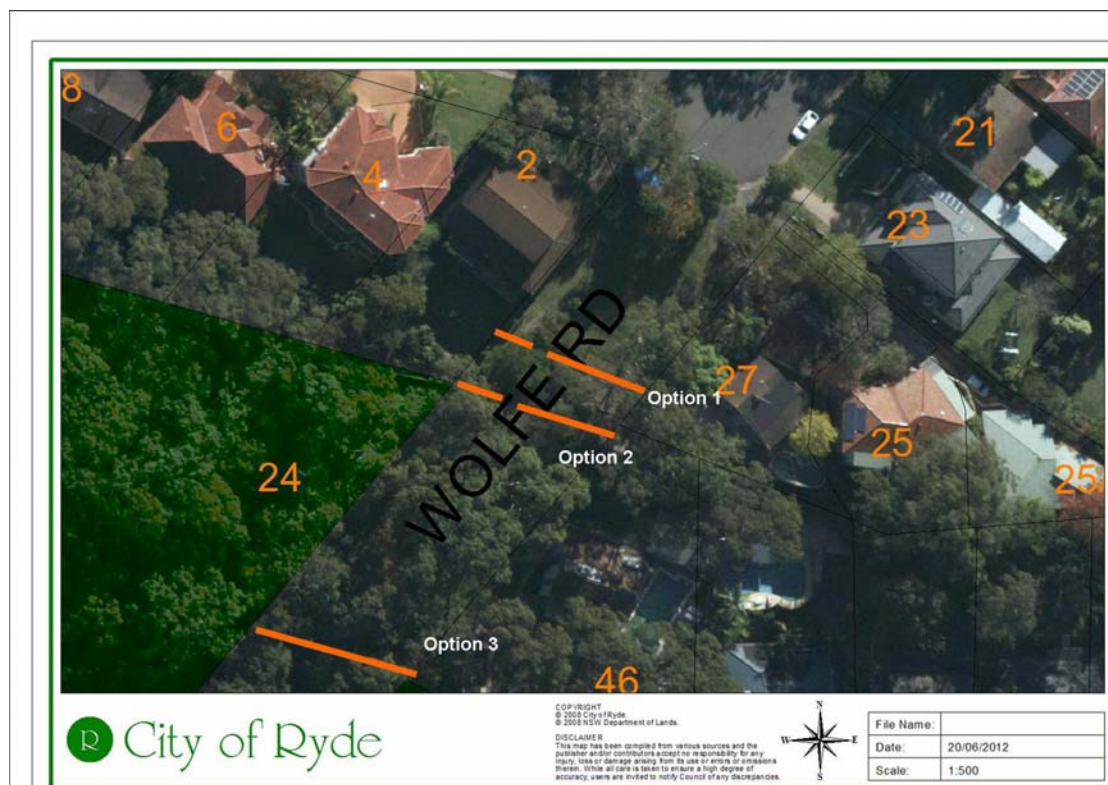
Why the part of the reserve must be maintained as bushland and why the whole area is not being cleared for recreation

Whilst some residents questioned why the part of the reserve needs to be maintained as the bushland and sought that the whole reserve be cleared of any vegetation other than grass, the majority of the residents did not support this suggestion and agreed that they wanted for Council to consider expanding the passive recreation area without endangering the bushland.

Agreed action: Note, the suggested amendment to the plan provides a reasonable balance between the competing demands of the reserve and meeting Council's environmental obligations. Council has also accepted the regular maintenance of the active area.

Location and type of the proposed delineation fence

Three **fence location** options were proposed, discussed and debated at the meeting. All three options are marked on the site plan below.



Option 1 is the fence location originally proposed by Council. Options 1 and 2 were supported by 8 and 11 residents respectively (1 and 2 children). Council expressed to the residents concerns regarding Option 3, given that this option suggested clearing of the whole site which is unlikely to be allowed under the State legislation given the vegetations status as an ecological community.

ITEM 25 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

Agreed action: Council to conduct an environmental assessment of the reserve (known as a 7- part test) that will consider options 1 and 2. Should the environmental assessment conclude that the area does not contain ecological communities, Council would then agree to move the fence to the location defined by Option 2.

The type of fence was also discussed, with proposals ranging from log barrier, construction fence to row of trees. It was explained that the log type fence is used in many bushland reserves as a common method of delineating bushland to other areas of the park. Whilst the matter was discussed at some length, no firm consensus was reached. Therefore it is recommended that the Environmental consultant undertaking the assessment above be asked to recommend appropriate, best practice options for Councils consideration.

Agreed action: Once location is determined, Council to install the independently recommended barrier along the delineation line.

Bushland will increase presence of snakes, spiders etc and make it dangerous for children to play in the reserve

Concerns were expressed regarding the close proximity of the bushland to the children play area and that this could increase the presence of snakes, spiders etc thus not providing safe environment for the children to play in.

Other residents stated that living so close to bushland brings all types of animals to the area and that should be accepted. It was also noted that some highly urbanised areas (e.g. Five Dock) have high presence of snakes etc. The residents also mentioned resurgence of wild life in the area and sighting of bush turkey, black cockatoos etc.

Agreed action: Note, it is not considered that the proposed works will impact on this risk.

SUMMARY

Council advised the Forum that whilst Council is currently taking a gentle approach, once the management plan has been finalised and agreed to, Council will manage the reserve as per plan and not tolerate any illegal activities.

Council then advised the Forum that the records of the meeting will be submitted to Council for consideration and that no further action will be taken by Council until such time the Forum agrees to the management plan for the reserve, unless Council resolves otherwise.

Council thanked everyone involved and advised that the future update will be provide to all residents in attendance.

Meeting closed at 11.10 am.