

YARRA GLEN & DISTRICT TOWNSHIP GROUP

Newsletter No 2

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all of those who emailed us as a result of our first newsletter last week. It's nice to know that these emails are read and appreciated by a number of you. I have always said that one of the big advantages and disadvantages of emails is that you can press the delete button at anytime and therefore I sometimes wonder if this newsletter will pass the initial scrutiny we all give incoming emails and so any feedback is appreciated.

INCREASED CIRCULATION

The emails received covered a number of subjects: quite a few were just updating email addresses or contact details, others were welcoming the initiative of the Township Group and some were asking questions. Still others were (as requested) providing us with email addresses of others in the district so I am pleased to say that this newsletter will be distributed more widely than the first edition. That was one of our aims: to make communication as inclusive of all stakeholders as possible so come on, if you intended to nominate someone to receive a copy but just didn't get around to it, do it now! (One of the other advantages of emails is the ability to answer it at anytime and it only takes a minute or two). It would be nice if we could report in every newsletter that the circulation list increased again.

THE SUPERMARKET PROPOSAL

The Supermarket Proposal went before Council last week and the council decided to support the proposal but to refer it to a panel which will accept submissions and make recommendations about the number of concerns that the objectors expressed. There was a lot of interest in what official position the Yarra Glen and District Township Group adopted in relation to the supermarket and unfortunately a lot of misinformation about it.

THE TOWNSHIP GROUP'S POSITION

The Township Group believes very strongly that the most definitive source of information on the collective visions of the stakeholders in our district is the "Values and Visions Survey" which was painstakingly conducted and put together by the interim township group that was a fore runner to the present group and covered a wide range of topics with specific questions that addressed the issue of the proposed new supermarket. The responses to these questions were inconclusive with the community being divided almost equally on the general proposition of whether they wanted a new supermarket or not. Amongst those who wanted a new supermarket a significant majority wanted a somewhat smaller supermarket than that proposed but the Township Group believed that no mandate had been established in the survey which would allow the Group to adopt a position on the matter. This decision was conveyed to the council and every member of the Group was encouraged to make a submission expressing their own personal view.

OFFICE BEARERS

One of the emails received requested details of the office bearers of the Group.

Due to the lack of knowledge of most other members of the group and a recognition of the importance of appointing the best executive possible, the decision was made to appoint a correspondence secretary (**Melinda Koth**) but to share the duties of minute secretary and chairman until all members were able to vote with a degree of knowledge of their fellow committee members. This decision – which has drawn some criticism – has proved to be correct. One of our members spent significant time overseas and two others have left the group thus making the task of choosing our leaders even more difficult. To overcome their lack of knowledge of each other, the committee resolved to meet on a fortnightly basis until the dynamics of the group were established and then to revert to monthly meetings. We are now at the stage of deciding our leadership group and are confident that we now have the knowledge to make informed decisions on these important roles.

One of the very important “spin offs” of conducting our meetings in this manner has been the personal development of committee members when it has been their turn to be in the spotlight. Not many groups start from scratch with a blank sheet as most groups come to a meeting with some history, but we have found it a good approach to increase the involvement of all members in a very democratic way.

OTHER NEWS FROM COMMITTEE..

Unfortunately the Township Group recently received a third resignation from the group. **Yve Hart**, who was able to represent not only the perspective of a newer member of the township but also the perspective of the arts community, has decided to limit her role to an involvement in the sub committees that the Yarra Glen and District Township Group either has already established or intends to establish in the near future.

The executive of the Yarra Glen Chamber of Commerce has been invited to attend the Group’s next committee meeting to discuss a number of issues.

Officers from the Shire of Yarra Ranges have also been invited to discuss current projects that will impact on Yarra Glen and District.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

As this will be the final edition of the newsletter before the festive season, on behalf of all members of the Yarra Glen and District Township Group, I wish all stakeholders in the Yarra Glen District a safe and happy Christmas and a successful and happy new year.

Stephen Shortis, editor

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