

New Town and Broughton Community Council

Minutes of the meeting held

at Drummond Community High School

Monday 7th March 2011

Community Council members present: Ian Mowat, Chair; Anne Casson; Judy Conn; Bill Dunlop, Treasurer; Jonathan Finn; John Knight; Jo Simpson; Henry Sutherland; Alan Welsh

Ex-officio members present: Councillor Joanna Mowat

Members of the public present: Richard Carroll; John Ross Maclean; Alan McIntosh

Apologies: Audrey Cavaye; Gaby Holden; Patrick Hutton; Iain McGill; Di Willis; Cllrs Lesley Hinds; Stuart McIver

1. **Minutes of the meeting on 20th December 2010 and minutes of the meeting on 7th February 2011:** Both sets of minutes were accepted as a true record, with John Knight as proposer and Bill Dunlop as seconder.

2. **Planning;** There was a discussion of the NTBCC's response to the application by Forth Energy to construct a large scale biomass plant at Leith Docks. John Knight, Planning Convener, led the discussion, basing it on a letter he had drafted in the wake of a meeting of the planning sub-committee on 28th February. With the exception of his contention that the construction of the plant would undermine totally the Local Development Plan for Leith, he had limited the scope of his letter to material planning issues which were likely to affect directly the New Town and Broughton – adverse effect on tourism, impact of increased HGV movements in Leith Walk and/or Broughton Road and a rise in air pollution with three schools in the area within a two mile radius of the Docks. He believed that the 25 year life span projected for the plant was not sufficiently long to justify its construction. With a few minor changes of wording members endorsed the response.

Members discussed a proposal by the Coop to open a supermarket in McDonald Road. The majority of members agreed that they did not welcome the proposal and agreed that the only valid material objection lay in the contention that it conflicted with CEC policy on retail since Leith Walk is regarded by the CEC as a Town Centre and the introduction of a new supermarket to the neighbourhood would constitute an attack on “its vitality and viability.”

The Logie Green Road student housing developers Watkin Jones had now submitted an application for the amendments discussed at the last meeting and dismissed as minimal and non-controversial.

Since the last meeting JK had examined 15 Edinburgh World Heritage Site cases and 4 non-EWHS cases. Letters of objection had been submitted on the burger stand at the St James Centre and Vodafone antennae on Centrum House 114 Dundas Street.

.JK had attended a conference on the Leadership Role in Planning organised by Planning Aid on 25th February. At this he had commented on the pre-application consultation procedure and the general lack of developer feedback and also on the Scottish Government's recent proposal that community councils should decide local planning applications leaving council planners to decide only major applications. On 3rd March he had attended a Planning Aid seminar on Youth Engagement in Planning. He had submitted two consultation responses, one on a Review of Decision-making Procedures and the other on Community Engagement in the Pre-application Process. The next consultation to require attention addressed City Centre Retail Strategy.

In answer to a question JK said he no knowledge of any meaningful delay likely to affect the demolition of the St James Centre. Nor did he know anything of a possible 52 bed hotel in York Place unless it was the application for three town houses on the north side which had already been examined and commented on.

3. Environment: Judy Conn, Environment Convener, reported that in response to the last meeting's delegation of parents and teachers she had visited Broughton Primary School. The school community hoped to build on their existing green credentials by being given access for use as a school garden to at least a section of a piece of land adjacent to the school playground, which the CEC had put up for sale. The NTBCC had agreed that their ambition was commendable and should be supported and a letter to this effect had been written to the Director of City Development. However, a number of parents and teachers had expressed an interest in a possible Plan B, should the sale of the land go ahead. It might be feasible for the school community to apply successfully for some grant money (Leith Neighbourhood Partnership Community Fund, perhaps) to pay for breaking up a section of the very extensive currently hard surfaced rear playground, supplementing this with some parental elbow power and engaging in small scale fund raising to purchase topsoil and plants, thereby converting this section of the playground into a garden.

The question of whether it would be appropriate for the NTBCC to involve itself in the ongoing campaign to stop the the proposed sale for housing of ground adjacent to Inverleith Park, currently occupied by a CEC Parks and Greenspaces depot, was shelved until the April meeting.

4. Transport: Jo Simpson reported that the working party formed by the Lord Moray Feuars and the West End Traders had agreed to set up three workshops - 1) to address the issue of the return of private traffic to Shandwick Place 2) to consider ways of mitigating the problems of traffic circulation at the West End and 3) to take an overview of the case for trams. Ian Mowat, Chair, said that he and Patrick Hutton, Transport Convener, would participate in workshops 1) and 2) representing the NTBCC.

IM reported that PH had written to TIE saying that the NTBCC was not averse to trams running in York Place if they were then going further, but believed that otherwise they should stop in St Andrew Square.

5. Licensing: Jonathan Finn, Deputy Chair, offered to distribute a letter to residents in Rose Street, providing contact details for the NTBCC and saying that the CC would be interested in hearing from residents who were experiencing disturbance on account of unacceptable levels of night-time noise. It was agreed that the letter should be couched in general terms and that no establishment should be singled out by name, since the NTBCC had received no recent complaints about a specific source of noise. JF to draft a letter for IM's comments/approval.

There was agreement that an application for extension of hours to 4 am at 43 Hanover Street was excessive and should be subject to objection.

6. Chair's report: IM said that both Di Willis, Secretary and Bill Dunlop, Treasurer wished to stand down at the AGM in May. He spelled out the dual role of the secretary a) minute taker and b) conduit for receipt of correspondence and communications from outside bodies, suggesting that if necessary the roles could be separated. From the floor Alan McIntosh and John Ross Maclean agreed to flag up the vacancy in the next edition of the Spurtle. A suggestion that a secretary might be remunerated did not find favour with members, the view being that community councils were essentially voluntary bodies. However, it was agreed that consideration could possibly be given to remunerating someone prepared to manage the website.

IM looked for interest in a forthcoming workshop on Common Ground organised for 26th March in Glasgow by the Association of Scottish Community Councils. He mentioned that the City Centre Neighbourhood Partnership was looking for interested participants in a workshop (date still to be decided) on How to Apply for a Grant. JC had attended a similar workshop a year ago and had found it worthwhile, as it addressed grant making funds in general, not merely Council sources.

7. Treasurer's report: BD said that there was effectively £1200 in the NTBCC's account and that the NTBCC had spent only about £500 of its grant in the current financial year. The Annual Accounts would shortly be ready for auditing.

8. AOCB: The meeting noted the hustings organised by the Spurtle for 23rd March in Broughton St Mary's at 7.30 pm.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 4th April at 7.30 pm in the library of Drummond Community High School