

**Minutes of Special Housing meeting of Committee for Lorne.
26 September 2024 at Stribling Reserve at 10am**

Present: John Higgins, Peter Spring, Penny Hawe, Gary Allen, Sandy Chamberlin, Leon Walker, Mike Bodsworth, Kate Gazzard, Libby Stapleton

Apologies: Ian Stewart, Clive Goldsworthy, David Worth, Peter Lavis

1 Welcome and introductions. JH welcomed the four candidates for the Otway Ward in the local SCSC elections. He expressed appreciation in their taking time to find out more about Lorne's needs and share solutions from their experience.

JH explained that this was our first special meeting on housing, prompted by the fact that a lot of work had been taking place during the year which was too much to process in a regular CfL meeting. A progress report had been compiled by Friends of Lorne in July and circulated to CfL. It formed the basis of today's agenda. CG was unable to attend the meeting. But PS noted that CG had emailed detailed notes on his "homework" item (the Lions Village) prior to the meeting.

JH explained that the purpose of the meeting was to

- Review actions and investigations undertaken so far
- Understand how the SCSC will assist us further
- Set up a structure for an ongoing community consultative committee
- To map out next steps

2. SCSC briefing on SCSC support for Lorne housing solutions

PH had received advice only the day prior to the meeting that the Kate Sullivan, the planning officer who would have attended the meeting unfortunately could not due to it being a caretaking period, during Council elections. With candidates present the presence of a Council officer could be seen to be interfering with due process.

ACTION 1 We resolved to have the SCSC present to us at the next meeting. However, KS had briefed PH on a few key points by prior email. The amount allocated to assist Lorne's work is \$50,000 (not \$40K as previously reported). KS's other comments were on Regional Worker Accommodation Grants (see below)

3. Regional Worker Accommodation Grants (RWG)

Results have not been publicly announced. Two applications were put forward from Lorne. One was not invited for the second round (further work up). But the other was, Simon Sutterby's proposal for GOR Cottages. PS reported that SS had submitted a detailed proposal, and that PS had offered to accompany SS to meet with the grant authority. But SS was not successful. He may submit for the next grant round if there is one.

PH is concerned that the grant provides a short term 5-year fix only. Until recently she was not aware of the grant conditions. She was concerned that other CfL members may also not be aware. KS' advice confirmed that applications must 'Provide affordable housing or accommodation for key workers and their families for a minimum of 5 years following completion'. Thereafter it is correct that the accommodation could revert to holiday accommodation. That is, unless SS takes out a section 173 agreement to make the properties perpetually available to workers.

A further question is, if successful in future would SS's planning approval be fast tracked? By-passing usual public consultation? KS replied that "applicants need to be able to demonstrate: 'the required approvals are identified and are either in place or have an appropriate pathway to be achieved'. State Government can assist in fast tracking applications, under changes last year this applies to large scale housing developments, for regional areas this relates to projects of \$15 million plus and at least 10% of affordable housing. The fund outlines a requirement to complete development by 30 June 2026 and they want information that outlines 'that there are no significant barriers preventing the commencement of the project and completion for occupation by 30 June 2026'. KS is not aware of Council seeing the proposed application. She says that they would need to see this before determining what approvals may be required. At this point they have planning approval for caravan and camping uses subject to the access into the site being resolved."

ACTION 2 PS/IS to contact SS to determine if SS intends to proceed with his plans. If so, to invite SS to discuss his ideas with SCSC and to present his proposal to the next meeting

ACTION 3 Invite GORCAPA to brief us on their seasonal worker accommodation plans

4. Short term holiday rentals

PH had spoken to an item in her report, based on Rod Duncan (a planner's) article, pointing out that technically, most short-term holiday rentals require planning approval (unless they are true bed-and-breakfast establishments). Approving (or not approving) a short-term rental property could be a means to coax more properties into the long-term rental market. However, while local councils wait for the state to release their plan in regard to short-term rental controls, we agreed that it would use up too much of the planners' time to review each application. It is better to wait until there are clear criteria against which to assess applications.

ACTION 4 Ask SCSC for an update at the next meeting

5. Co equity home purchase schemes (Hope Housing)

PH reported that, unexpectedly, neither DW or PL were able to attend the meeting to speak to their scoping of Hope Housing. There were briefing materials in PH's report and a link to a video and webinar in the agenda sent out for the meeting. PH had notes that DW and PL had compiled in earlier in the year. JH reported that prior to the meeting, DW had stated that Hope Housing was not a good option for Lorne.

PS asked that DW's and PL's notes be circulated (ACTION 5).

PH owned that the logic of the model and key aspects may not be well understood. If an approved worker buys a house in Lorne under the scheme, they can sell the house to anyone when they are ready to leave Lorne and leave the scheme. But any other approved worker then gets to buy their own house of their own choosing under the scheme. In that sense the scheme is about making *financing* perpetually available to approved workers (as opposed to the usual housing models which are about *particular homes* perpetually affordable to approved workers).

PH explained that *if* the money invested by Lorne investors is *only* spent on Lorne houses, then there would be insufficient return for investors to make the scheme viable. This is because a return is only

made when houses are sold. But the whole purpose of the scheme is to help people stay. So, to be viable, the local investment must be across the wider Hope portfolio. We need clarity on that.

MB asked how is this model different to a Community Lands Trust (CLT)? With a CLT the trust builds or acquires the houses (raises funds first) and then rents them out (or co-purchases for a while). But the houses remain in the Trust and perpetually affordable to approved workers. DW and PH had attended a webinar on that the day before. That option is still on the table in Lorne.

JH also noted that DW had done some financial modelling on the Hope Housing scheme

ACTION 6 JH to follow up with DW about the financial modelling

ACTION 7 PH to compile a list of further questions for Hope Housing that could inform a further briefing.

6. The Village and how it works

CG had been asked to report on the Village, recognising that our interest is not just in key and essential workers. As outlined in *Accommodating Lorne's Future*, CfL are keen to ensure all groups in Lorne are catered for and our role is to keep up to speed with that.

Before PS read the notes to the meeting, LS announced a potential conflict of interest as she is joining the Board of the organisation about to take carriage of the Village

CG had noted:

1. The Lorne Village is over 40 years old and constructed on land donated from the Winchelsea Shire, and local purchases.
2. The land has a covenant which locks the land in for an Independent Retirement Village use. The building can be replaced with a larger Village but it must remain as an IRV.
3. The land and buildings are regarded as being community assets and are owned by The Lorne Village Inc. A local board.
4. Under the RVA residents are granted tenancy for life.
5. 16 one-bedroom units
6. Renovations and upgrades are undertaken when a resident leaves
7. A full review of the constitution revealed that the Village was not compliant with RVA or Charitable tax status. This has now been reviewed and updated by our solicitors and the board of directors.
8. The board is currently working with a Non-for-Profit Independent Retirement Village manager who will run the day-to-day management, and capital works program.
9. As an Independent Retirement Village resident must be over 67 years and receiving some Centrelink payment.
10. The Village cannot be utilised for Affordable housing or accommodation

When it comes to retirement options, MB prompted us to look up Winanglo (Winchelsea, Anglesea, Lorne). This is a new social enterprise (backed by the Bendigo Bank). The foundation in Winchelsea was the transfer of vacant land for \$1 by the Surf Coast Shire. The logic is that instead of having to leave town (Winchelsea) 10 older persons move into newly built smaller independent living units in their own town, putting their 10 larger homes on the market (suited for families to buy).

7. A community consultative committee on housing

Friends of Lorne (PH) are keen to continue a regular housing forum (like today's CfL working group) to review and compare options, keep abreast of information, and involve interested community members.

ACTION 6 Agreed in principle. Structure and format to be discussed at our next meeting.

9. Next steps

Find a suitable meeting date in November. We also need to collate and distribute information on the granny flat/minimum lot size changes that have been implemented.

DRAFT