

Minutes from LIRA Informal General Meeting
23 November 2017
LI Bowling Club, 6pm

After an opening greeting, and scenario-setting the agenda – gum tree risks and pruning, sea walls collapse, Festive Season security – Keith Hollis, Chairman, opened the floor to questions, to begin the discussion on the gum trees issue.

GUM TREES:

Jenny Shields: Voiced strongly that KM does very little for the island or residents, despite our high rates. We should not let it off the hook in this regard; why must LIRA fund KM's work?

AN Other: Said she had heard the 'Forestry Dept' will trim trees; should we not contact them? No other details offered.

John Koch: Voiced there is much to debate, risk is notable, these trees are iconic, but need trimming.

He suggested we give KM a set period to trim, if they don't, LIRA then undertakes the immediate work required on high/med risk trees, and sues for the money afterwards. If KM doesn't oblige, we take it to court.

Colin Carter: Agreed that KM should refund us after the pruning.

Ian Dicey: Stated gums are 'widow makers', branches can break at any time. He's ID'd two very risky trees on Links Dr, in particular.

Suggested we put in writing to KM, that it is liable should any damage occur.

Jonty Edwards: Stated this job must be done soonest, it's a huge risk not to, a tinder box.

John Knowles: Disagreed on the issue of trees being very high risk, and asked for balance in the debate and action LIRA takes.

Jenny Shields: Stressed that her earlier comments were in no way a criticism of LIRA; that few people recognise the efforts LIRA goes to. As a community, we all need to be 'pulling together'.

Dave Stromberg: Expanded on LIRA's plans for trimming and cutting down the cypress trees at the bus stop, and upgrading the area.

Suggested that LIRA drafts an action plan for the gum trees, as put forward by Charles Reitz in his expert report, and execute before the Season; taking out any dangerous branches. Standing back and doing nothing is not a good idea.

Keith Hollis: Suggested that as an attorney, John Koch should draft a letter to KM on his suggestion prior. John agreed to do this.

Joan Spencer: Asked that a tree in Kensington Gardens be added to the trimming list as it's a danger to children.

Bob Hunt: Suggested that this pruning work is done before 15 December, but questioned if this was in fact feasible, too short a time frame?

Brian Smith: Expressed he would be happy for the trees to go, that they would always be an issue and need constant maintenance. But that KM must acknowledge that this is its problem and address it.

Conclusion: This discussion ended with general agreement that John Koch's letter to KM etc is the immediate way forward on the gum trees. JK undertook to action, and present to LIRA Committee.

SEA WALL DAMAGE AND OTHER ISSUES:

Keith Hollis: Expressed how unhappy everyone is with the state of the sea wall, unsightly taped-off areas, but there is nothing we can do until the court case on Feb 27, 2018.

Ricky Maskew: Spoke on Festive Season security; the inefficacy of KM, every year much is promised in terms of increased and better policing of visitors' behaviour and traffic, but nothing much happens.

Ian Dicey: Suggested that LIRA investigates a rates boycott of a kind, pay proportion or all of rates into a trust fund for a certain period to force KM's hand to offer LI rate payers better value.

Andrew King: Advised not to dismiss the whole of KM as incompetent; that many departments in KM are functional and helpful.

Glynis Vogel: Asked if senior KM representatives could be brought to LI community meeting, to hear our complaints and offer its remedy.

Mark Sofianos: Queried the situation at southern end of Bollard Bay, where people are effectively now parking on the beach. Would this be legal, monitored?

James Botha: Recalled a time when boats were launched off Bollard Bay. Suggested that we talk to SANParks on the parking at Bollard issue; the beach and dunes its responsibility.

Dave Stromberg: Noted that use of LI will increase in the future, that to avoid potential unregulated chaos that we discuss and devise long-term plans for the island; for a fresh approach to parking, landscaping, aesthetics etc.

AN Other: Suggested we implement a parking limitation in the Season? KH responded that this is again an issue of KM law enforcement, out of LIRA hands.

John Koch: Suggested that the sea wall issue be given greater exposure in the local press; publicising that LIRA is being forced to take KM to court; highlight KM's apparent disregard for one of the region's and town's key tourist/visitor points.

Jenny Shields: Suggested she could contact Carte Blanche magazine TV programme to do a feature on this.

The meeting ended at 7.20pm.