



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday 13 October 2023, 11am – 12pm

DRAFT MINUTES

PRESENT

Members: Philippa Day (Chair), Matt Dravich (apology, Philippa Day as proxy), Simon Eastman, Matthew Gourley, Neryl Jeanneret, Frances Martin, Owen Martin, Cheryl McLachlan, Dung Nguyen (via Zoom), Ilona Nicola, Sharief Ouaida, Shu Sun See, Shannon Wiseman.

Observers: Esin Akbal, Fatima Al-husseini, Alfina Astuto (via Zoom), Cr Sue Bolton, Linda Crook, Hugo Cuchilla, Johnathon Eastman, Antonella Erna, Manori Fonseka, Pauline Galvin, Chiandani Geekiyanage, Mary Grace Giovanakis, Kamyar Kasmaei, Adua Merola, Veronika Pradel (Merri-Bek Council), Cr Adam Pulford (Guest Speaker), Michael Riley, Sam Rosso, Arnaldo Santoro, Sharon Schneider, Robert Seamons, Frank Spagna, Jaime Sung, Les Toth, Giovanna Viccero, Karen Washfold.

Staff present: Craig Burgess, Meri Carnovale, Lucy Eames (House Manager), Barbara Guignard-Drieberg, Nathacha Subero.

APOLOGIES: Matt Dravich (Philippa Day as proxy).

Minutes: Shannon Wiseman

AGM commenced at 11:21 am.

• Opening by Chairperson and Acknowledgment to Country

Philippa Day (Chair) introduced herself and acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the Country on which we were meeting, noting that the land was never ceded, with the Traditional Owners being wonderful custodians for over 60,000 years. Chair welcomed Councillor Adam Pulford, Councillor Sue Bolton, and Veronica Pradel from Merri-bek Council. Chair expressed mixed emotions in stepping down from the Committee of Management (CoM), however was excited to welcome new members.

Chair explained to attendees that, in terms of voting, only current House members can vote on special resolutions. Chair also alerted attendees that there were two members dialling in online (Matthew Dravich and Dung Nguyen).

Chair thanked everyone with whom she had worked over the last four years, including staff, community members, CoM, and the Neighbourhood House Networker. Chair expressed gratitude and joy during her time volunteering as chair, noting that the House holds a special place in her heart.

Chair directed attendees to paper copies of the agenda and noted that there would be a special singing performance by the Singing by Day Choir, and that Councillor Pulford would speak.

• Attendance and apologies

(see above)

• Approval of AGM 2022 minutes

Chair requested a motion be moved that the minutes from 2022 AGM be accepted

Moved: Cheryl McLachlan



Seconded: Shannon Wiseman

• **Financial Report** Owen Martin

Treasurer acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the Country on which we met, noting that sovereignty was never ceded. Treasurer expressed that it was bittersweet stepping down as Treasurer and from the CoM after four years.

Treasurer summarised the Financial Report for the Financial Year 2022/23. Total income was approximately \$389,000, which was a 12.5% increase on previous financial year. Increase in income was due to small increases in Core Funding, additional funding for specific grants, and significant increase in house-generated income which was almost double previous year, which had been impacted by COVID. The ending of COVID support payments also impacted house income.

Expenses increased by 10% to 411k. Salaries and Wages increased, as did administrative and operating expenses by nearly 20%, related to general increases in individual costs and inflation.

The financial year concluded with a \$22,264 deficit. The CoM-approved budget anticipated a \$24k loss. The actual loss was in line with approved budget. This was the second year in a row with a loss, pointing to some structural challenges which the House will need to address. This year the CoM anticipates a budget which is closer to balanced.

For the Balance Sheet: the House has \$463k assets, total liability of \$104k, and equity of \$360k. Financial performance was down from previous year but remains a sound operating balance. The Treasurer commend the financial reports to the AGM.

Moved: Shannon Wiseman

Seconded: Cheryl McLachlan

• **Guest Speaker** Cr Adam Pulford, Merri-bek Council

Cr Pulford thanked the House for having him speak. He stated that he was representing Mayor Anjelica Panopoulos. The Councillor informed the Meeting that he used to live in the area, in a tiny apartment through the COVID years. He saw Robinson Reserve as an oasis along with Merri Creek. The AGM was his first time visiting the house, but he saw that much had changed over the years, which is a testament to the hard work of all involved.

Cr Pulford acknowledged the Traditional Owners, stating that it was a heavy time with upcoming Voice to Parliament referendum, with the cost of living, and with everything else happening around the world. The Councillor stated that we need to go easy on ourselves; for those feeling the heaviness of climate change and war, we carry that with us, but the way through is through action. The antidote to despair is getting involved, and the people at the AGM know this. Cr Pulford stated that this message needs to get to more people. He stated that loneliness is up and volunteering is down since the pandemic. He shared that coming together and realising the collective power of the community and solidarity is important. He thanked all for their work. He also thanked staff and the Committee of management on behalf of Mayor and Council. He thanked those involved for leading by example. He also acknowledged the upgrades to House and Reserve, and the assistance provided by Council, and the Victorian Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry, and Regions.



Cr Pulford explained that he previously worked for Climate and Health Alliance, which had a small annual budget, and did everything by the bootstraps to have an impact. He reflected on the strength of people stepping up when a problem arises, doing what needed to be done.

Cr Pulford discussed that the following day, the Referendum on the Voice to Parliament would be held, and that there were different views among individuals. Cr Pulford's other job is with the First People's Assembly of Victoria, which is leading the journey to Treaty and has for years been putting in place the foundations for Treaty making in Victoria. He stated that Treaty making will put Aboriginal people in the driver's seat. He saw the Voice as connected to that, with the Assembly supporting the Yes campaign. He shared that having a Voice will help progress Treaty and get Truth telling underway. The Assembly supports Yes campaign, as an institution that could fight for more for First Nations people. He stated that regardless of the result of the weekend, Mob in Victoria are leading the way in delivering on Uluru Statement. He concluded by saying that allies need to learn more about the Assembly's work.

The Chair thanked Cr Pulford for his hopeful message leading into the weekend.

• **Manager's Report** Lucy Eames

The House Manager thanked all for joining and thanked Cr Pulford for his speech. The House Manager acknowledged the Traditional Owners, and stated that the House supports Voice, Treaty and Truth.

The House Manager spoke about the Annual Report, and shared that she was proud of the result. She acknowledged the contributions of the designer Philippa and Craig Burgess. The Report captures the passion and the people. Lucy stated that since July 2022, the House has seen remarkable growth, resilience, and community engagement. She highlighted the community hub in the garden and into Robinson Reserve. The upgrades were achieved in partnership with Merri-bek Council and the Victorian Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry, and Regions. Lucy looked forward to seeing the space enjoyed by community. Food bank, open table, and Second Bite were noted as supporting the House through COVID. The community cooking program in partnership with Corrections Victoria was mentioned.

The House Manager made mention of the market umbrella, which was purchased through the Stronger Communities grant. She spoke about the House's volunteer programs which continue to defy trends, with over 40 volunteers engaged regularly.

Lucy mentioned Inclusive Programs which were in their first year of funding for instance the Garden Art Group. She mentioned that cooking, sewing, and art were all popular post-pandemic activities. Most days see most rooms occupied.

The House Manager thanked the core staff of Ruby, Mary, Craig, Nathascha, and Bronwyn. She also expressed gratitude to the House volunteers and the CoM. She gave special thanks to outgoing members especially Philippa Day, the Chair.

The House Manager expressed excitement at continuing to work with Community, especially with the big placemaking festival coming up on November 18th. She hoped that 400 people would attend the event.



Moved: Owen Martin

Seconded: Shannon Wiseman

The Chair thanked the House Manager for her Report, and remarked that it filled her heart with joy.

• **Motion for External Auditor** Philippa Day

The Chair proposed the Motion to appoint Ryk Eksteen as the External Auditor for 2023/24, noting that Ryk has been appointed for the last few years. The proposed approach is to retain the same auditor with new CoM commencing, and then appoint a different auditor from the next year.

Motion was carried by members' vote with majority of members present voting in favour.

• **Motion for membership date and fee** Philippa Day

The Chair proposed the Motion to retain 30th April 2024 as the final date for the membership year, with a gold coin donation being the annual membership fee.

Motion was carried by members' vote with majority of members present voting in favour.

• **Motion for number of places on Committee of Management** Philippa Day

The Chair proposed the Motion to retain a maximum of ten (10) positions on the Committee of Management, inclusive of office bearer roles.

Motion was carried by members' vote with majority of members present voting in favour.

• **Special Resolutions to amend the Rules of Association** Philippa Day

The Chair proposed the Special Resolution, which she read in its entirety:

Amendment one: Purposes

Current:

Reynard Street Neighbourhood House is a welcoming and inclusive place where everyone in our community can learn, connect and play. We aim to promote community wellbeing, reduce social isolation and foster an inclusive, empowered and resilient local neighbourhood.

Proposed:



The purposes of the association:

Reynard Street Neighbourhood House Inc. (RSNH) is a public institution which has the charitable purposes of advancing social and public welfare by;

Advancing mental health and preventing social isolation;

Providing a physical location where it supports individuals to undertake activities, or work on projects, in the company of others.

Special Resolution for amendment one was carried by members' vote with more than 75% of members present voting in favour.

Amendment two: Rule 10. Consideration of application (for membership)

Current:

10.4 No reason need be given for the rejection of an application.

Proposed:

10.4 If refused membership, the Committee must be able to demonstrate that the rejection of any membership application was for reasons other than the personal characteristics of the applicant, including, without limitation, their age, race or background.

Special Resolution for amendment two was carried by members' vote with more than 75% of members present voting in favour.

Amendment three: Rule 36. Quorum at general meetings

Current

36.2 The quorum for a general meeting is the presence (physically, by proxy or as allowed under rule 35) of 10% of the members entitled to vote.

Proposed

36.2 The quorum for a general meeting is the presence (physically, by proxy or as allowed under rule 35) of at least 10 of the members entitled to vote.

Special Resolution for amendment three was carried by members' vote with more than 75% of members present voting in favour.



Amendment four: Rule 76. Winding up and cancellation

Current:

- (1) The Association may be wound up voluntarily by special resolution.
- (2) In the event of the winding up or the cancellation of the incorporation of the Association, the surplus assets of the Association must not be distributed to any members or former members of the Association.
- (3) Subject to the Act and any court order made under section 133 of the Act, the surplus assets must be given to a body that has similar purposes to the Association and which is not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members.
- (4) The body to which the surplus assets are to be given must be decided by special resolution.

Proposed:

76.3 Subject to the Act and any court order made under section 133 of the Act, all surplus assets of the Association, after satisfaction of all debts and liabilities of the Association, must be paid, distributed or transferred to a registered charity with similar charitable purposes.

76.4 The registered charity (or charities) to which the surplus assets are to be given must be decided by special resolution. Motion was carried by members' vote.

Special Resolution for amendment four was carried by members' vote with more than 75% of members present voting in favour.

• Thanks to the outgoing Committee of Management Shannon Wiseman (Secretary)

The Secretary thanked Celia Torres-Villanueva and Erin Dale, who could not be present, for their work on the CoM. The Secretary also thanked Owen Martin and Philippa Day for all their work and effort over their periods of volunteering on the CoM.

The Chair also thanked Neryl Jeanneret, a previous holder of the office of Secretary, who was present at the AGM.

• Election of new Committee of Management for 2023/24 Chair

All positions on the Committee were declared vacant.

Each named position was elected to unopposed.

- Dung Nguyen (Chairperson, Public Officer)



- Frances Martin (Deputy Chair)
- Shannon Wiseman (Secretary/Office Bearer)
- Matt Dravich (Treasurer)

The number of nominations received for ordinary Committee members was fewer than 10, resulting in each position being elected to unopposed. Ordinary members elected were:

Matthew Gourley
Cheryl McLachlan
Ilona Nicola

- **Entertainment** Lucy Eames (House Manager)

The House Manager introduced the Singing by Day Choir who performed a song.

- **Other Business** Shannon Wiseman (Secretary)

The House Manager introduced the Singing by Day Choir who performed a song.

- **Meeting closure** Philippa Day (former Chair)

The former Chair shared that she was looking forward to staying connected and seeing what terrific work the house continues to do.

The meeting was closed at 12:04 pm.