



OLD TOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

c/o Catriona Grant, Chair 259/5 Canongate, Edinburgh, EH8 8BQ
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Committee Meeting

Tuesday 8 May 2007

MINUTES

Present: John Stewart, Julie Logan (Secretary, Planning), Anja Amsel (Vice Chair), Sam Piacentini (Licensing), Bruce Borthwick, John Thompson, Bill Cowan (Planning), Peter Sharma (Treasurer), Catriona Grant (Chair), Ken Smillie, Jane Yeoman.

Plus 2 public visitors – attended through publicity from Grassmarket 'SOOT' shop.

In attendance: Mark Cummings (Associate Director, PPS Scotland), for Mountgrange.

Cat Chaired the meeting. Julie took the Minutes.

- 1 **Apologies:** Sally Richardson, Graeme Fairbrother, Murray Forgie (Licensing)
There were no CEC Councillors in attendance due to the short time passed since the local elections.

- 2 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING** (*Tuesday 13 March 2007*).
John S. ran through minutes of previous meeting in March, which was not in quorum, 4 members did attend.
Minutes from the February meeting were still to be produced and presented.
However it was agreed to pick up and continue any issues raised.

Action
JL

- AGREED
3 **MATTERS FOR DECISION/DISCUSSION:**
Chair announced new Local Councillors elected and suggested sending cards to outgoing councillors Chris Wigglesworth and Bill Cunningham.

CG

- 4 **POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:**
Minutes from the February meeting were still to be produced and presented.

JL

- 5 **SUBGROUPS**

CG

Publicity group

To meet within the next week to pursue applications for erecting OTCC notice boards based on information and advice gathered by Bruce. This will help raise the profile of the OTCC and make us more accessible. Progress to be reported at AGM meeting in June

- 6 **LICENSING**

Murray has passed all licensing responsibility to Sam as he has been unable to attend lately. Sam has agreed to be OTCC nominee for new Licensing Board Partnership. Due to the change over concerns were discussed about information being distributed to appropriate contact.

Cat will liaise with Eileen Hewitt to ensure Sam gets information timeously.

JL

Ongoing issues about licensed premises and anti social behaviour in Grassmarket. OTCC will continue to object to further late licences for food and drink in this area.

Concerns about increasing complaints from residents in Cowgate regarding extending late licences needs to be considered.

Sam to find out about future applications for temporary licensed entertainment in 'tented village' at the Fire Site in Cowgate during the festival. Whilst it was agreed that some relaxation of acceptable standards has traditionally been allowed during the festival for

temporary structures and outdoor late night uses this is best located in areas NOT adjoining permanent residential premises (eg Bristo Square/George Square/Hole in the ground)

7 PLANNING

Grassmarket public realm improvements.

CEC planning sub committee considered this application on 18th April and determined they were 'minded to approve' despite OTCC submitting formal request for the application to be considered at a hearing. The application is to be referred to the CEC streetscape group and to Scottish Ministers.

Whilst some of the concerns raised during consultation had been addressed strong objections remain regarding the increased event space creating an environment where anti-social behaviour and disturbance to residents will escalate, lack of commitment to the protection of existing trees, lack of co-ordinated approach to include improvements to adjoining streets and gateways to the Grassmarket (particularly the Vennel, Victoria Street and Cowgate head), use and design of bollards and signage.

Bill and Julie to draft a letter to Scottish Executive highlighting the disregard of requests for a hearing and requesting further consideration of these objections and the imposition robust conditions.

JL

Jane to find out at what stage the application is at and who is the contact for the streetscape team/ what further amendments are to be included (bollards/signs/connecting streets etc).

JY

Cat to contact new Neighbourhood Manager with regard to involvement of local community in the management of the construction works and future use of event space.

General

Bill gave update of new applications and decisions. Ongoing concerns regarding recent approval for loss of shop unit to Juice bar on West Bow and demolitions and development at Greyfriars churchyard despite significant objections and conflict with Development plan policies. OTCC will consider further submissions to Scottish Executive where applications require referral and objections have been disregarded.

Caltongate

Mark Cummings (Mountgrange team) gave OTCC an update from Mountgrange He highlighted the podium application had been approved by CEC but this would require to be referred to Scottish Ministers. Mountgrange had hoped to get the affordable housing through too but they hoped this will now be considered in June. He announced that all seven planning applications are now available to view at CEC's Waverley Court and Mountgrange's visitor centre on St Mary's Street. It was highlighted that the plans include provision for a ground source heating system which will be the first of its size in Scotland. Mountgrange have applied for a substantial sum of money from the Energy Saving Trust (part of DTI) to fund this part of the development which would result in a significant reduction to the carbon footprint of the development.

Mark also gave his feedback on the Caltongate Liaison Group but stated it had been agreed to set up a sub group to consider what community benefits are to be included in the development. Three members of the OTCC who had also attended disputed this had been agreed. Mark then clarified that the Chair of the CLG had agreed this and would send out invitations to all CLG members to join the sub group. No minutes of the CLG meeting are available yet and it is hoped the next meeting will take place in mid - late June when issues of public realm and safety, and the transport strategy will be presented. It is hoped a version of the 3D computer graphic and the revised architectural model will be available at the visitor centre within the next month. Mark also indicated Mountgrange are willing to extend the statutory consultation period and will be producing a simplified version of the plans as requested by Barbara Cummings (CEC Development Services).

Mark was thanked for his presentation and left.

Julie gave update on Caltongate applications. Five new planning applications have been submitted as well as a further 6 applications for Listed Building Consents and demolitions in a conservation area. OTCC have requested formal consultation on all. All the information for the Listed Building and conservation area applications is not yet available but will be forwarded as soon as it is submitted. The officers dealing with these applications have allowed OTCC an extension until 8th June for their formal response due to awaiting necessary information and the size and complexity of the applications. A summary of the applications and some of the plans were circulated however the amount of information cannot be considered at a regular meeting. It was agreed that a public meeting is necessary in order to present the plans, collect views

from the community and include this in our response. The meeting will take place Thursday 24th 6pm - 9pm (plans exhibited from 6pm and meeting to start at 7.15pm).
The preferred venue is Royal Mile Primary School (but if unavailable Old St Paul's Church hall on Jeffrey St would be suitable)
Julie to confirm venue and advise OTCC members and to contact Development Services to request a CEC planning officer attends.
Catriona will invite newly elected local representatives from Council and Parliament.
All members of OTCC agreed to help distribute publicity/flyers once details are confirmed.

8 AGM

AGM to be held on 12th June venue to be confirmed, Catriona to contact Eileen Hewitt to confirm what publicity etc is required. **CG**
It was agreed other local organisations should be advised and invited (eg. Local schools and churches, CYP, residents groups).

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Work Plan for OTCC

It was agreed to look at this in more detail after the AGM and taking account of the new roles and responsibilities coming through the Neighbourhood Partnerships. Notice boards will help make OTCC more accessible and new issues may arise from this.
Julie to be nominee for Neighbourhood Partnership.

Training

Catriona to contact Eileen Hewitt again regarding training opportunities for Community Council as none have been provided yet in central locations. It is hoped some local training will be available soon. **CG**

A-boards

John T. has received numerous complaints about A-boards cluttering the pavements around the High Street and Canongate areas. Photographs illustrating this were circulated. Bill advised this has been an ongoing problem across the Old Town and the previous council had taken the view of regulating A-boards and limiting their numbers for businesses. This issue has also been raised in Tollcross and Southside areas previously. **CG**
It was agreed the existing controls do not work, particularly in the Old Town where pavements are generally more restricted. The level of visual clutter from road signs is already significant and it is thought that the removal of A-boards would improve the appearance of the World Heritage Site as well as pedestrian safety.
Catriona will contact the head of Development Services and EWHT to see if the council will review the existing policy.

Membership

It was noted that Graham Fairbrother has only attended one community council meeting since election last year and is therefore subject to losing his membership. For the OTCC to be effective it is important that members are committed and whilst some members have missed a number of meetings through health or work circumstances generally all have made a contribution to the work of the OTCC over the last year. **CG**
It was agreed that Catriona will write to Graham regarding this.

Catriona is also going to contact the Community Police Team and Licensing Service to see if representatives can attend July's meeting.

NEXT MEETING

**JL &
CG**

Tuesday 12 June 2007 – AGM – election of Office Bearers – VENUE to be confirmed.

There will be NO MEETING IN AUGUST.