

Ashfield Business Chamber Ordinary Meeting

20/04/2009
 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM
 Level 3 Civic Centre
 260 Liverpool Road, Ashfield

Meeting called by: Ashfield Business Chamber Inc
 Type of meeting: Ordinary
 Facilitator: Ashfield Council (Duncan Gilchrist, Lauren McIver, Con Colot & Ron Sim)

Attendees: Kerrie Bush, Bruce Carr, Duncan Gilchrist, Tony Andreacchio (Executive meeting only), Thomas Jin (Ordinary meeting only), Gulian Vacari, Susan Griffiths, Colin Filmer, Stephen Moore, Eddie Tezel, Robert Eaves, Eduardo Ermilio, Peak Lu, Bee Koh, Dimitry Kane, John Kassis, John Young – Members

Non-members: Jean Hay, Anatole, Rong Yu Zhou, six other Chinese business people who did not provide their names

Please read: Five questions relating to Ashfield's Biggest Conversation

1. What do you like about your local area?
2. What don't you like about your local area?
3. How do you expect the local area to change over the next 10 years?
4. In 10 years time what would you like this area to be like?
5. How do you think we can achieve a better future for this area? What needs to happen to create the kind of place you want?

Agenda

Welcome & Apologies

**Chair – Kerrie Bush,
 Chamber President**

Apologies: 0

Action items:0

Person responsible:

Deadline:

"Ashfield's Biggest Conversation" (Council representatives) 60 minutes

Q1 What do you like about your local area?

- Business opportunities, now and in the future (regularly repeated)
- Good public transport (regularly repeated)
- Business interrelationships
- The community
- Close to the Sydney CBD, universities, beach and hotels (regularly repeated)
- Multiculturalism (repeated)
- It has everything I need and a great location

- Diversity of the suburbs
- Choice of great food

Theme: General discussion and responses indicated that the main likes were good public transport, proximity to Sydney CBD, the diverse cultural mix and that Ashfield was a place for business opportunities.

Q2 What don't you like about your local area?

- Existing building stock in Ashfield town centre is not capable of renewal and development
- Unlawful changes to properties and lack of supervision/care/awareness of council
- Tougher regulations (repeated), streets not clean enough and dumping of shopping trolleys
- Lack of variety in shops on Liverpool Road
- Ugly streetscapes
- Council workers; run down and dirty (regularly repeated); lack of security; danger of trees
- Lack of pride in local area
- Traffic in Liverpool Road
- Build over the railway and join the North and South of the Ashfield town
- No urban renewal, lack of maintenance, lack of incentives for owners/landowners
- Liverpool Road area too noisy, too dirty (regularly repeated), unsafe (repeated), too much traffic (repeated) too many similar Chinese restaurants, traffic speeds too high, tunnel or bridge to other side of the railway (repeated)
- Too many restaurants and not enough variety stores
- Too much graffiti and dirty (regularly repeated)

Theme: General discussion and responses indicated that the main dislikes were that Ashfield town centre is very dirty and run down, tougher regulations required to address uncleanliness and state of buildings/properties, Liverpool Road through Ashfield town centre needs to change, lack of security (included catching graffiti artists and litterers) and desire to connect the Ashfield shops north of the railway with the main centre.

Q3 How do you expect the local area to change over the next 10 years?

- Parramatta Road to be improved
- More education on cleanliness
- Streetscapes should be improved
- It will get worse; businesses will leave; crime will increase; loss of business trade
- Improvements will only be minor as there is no incentive for change to take place

- It will be worse (repeated)
- Can be cleaned up through tougher regulations

Theme: General discussion and responses indicated that most felt the situation in relation to matters raised in Q2 would become worse, there is a lack of incentives to do anything and maybe something may finally happen with Parramatta Road

Q4 In 10 years time what would you like this area to be like?

- Like Chatswood with some quality development
- More car parking
- Council to produce shop front designs and paint colours for Ashfield town centre
- Ashfield town centre requires a point of difference such as Shanghai food
- Close Hercules Street and put a bridge over the railway to the other side
- Ashfield CBD centre to 'relocate' so that it covers both sides of the railway

Theme: General discussion and responses indicated that some development was needed to upgrade Ashfield CBD, council should be more forceful in leading the way to encourage/compel owners to fix up their buildings, again a concern for businesses on the Northern side of the railway at Ashfield town centre and cleaner

Q5 How do you think we can achieve a better future for this area? What needs to happen to create the kind of place you want?

- More public advertising to let people know what we are doing and build up the profile and image of the community
- Need to communicate more with the building owners
- Restructuring of how council works
- Develop existing shop fronts
- Incentives for developers
- Improve transport connectivity – hard to travel to Haberfield
- Encourage McDonalds to open in Ashfield
- Remove the ward system to ensure the whole of the municipality receives equal representation
- Beautify Ashfield CBD, stop the ward system and have councils work across the whole LGA; over-governed
- Ashfield CBD should be a central metropolis that unites the area
- New concept for Hercules Street, no traffic, markets on Saturdays, need north south public transport link
- More public facilities such as public toilets

- Needs to be commercially viable, safe, with controlled traffic and better pedestrian links
- Council to provide incentives for upgrading buildings and development
- Refresh sites; consolidate sites and use better
- Amalgamate Inner West Councils or remove ward system
- Consistency in rulings

Theme: General discussion and responses indicated that landowners and developers need incentives to do more, clean up and beautify Ashfield generally, look at some radical actions like closure of streets to create more public space in CBD, number not happy with the ward system and council governance and address safety and traffic issues.

Earlier Executive Meeting

Chair: Kerrie Bush

35 minutes

Prior to the ordinary meeting the executive met and resolved the following:

1. Vacancy on the executive committee left by Rob Slater of RAMS to be filled by Vittoria Raciti of Haberfield who owns Dolcissimo Restaurant with her husband Tony
2. Flyer regarding Parking Meters tabled and the contents noted; executive decided that the introduction of parking meters anywhere in Ashfield was so overwhelmingly opposed it was a dead issue – see attachment
3. In keeping with the Chamber's buy local where possible philosophy nilla reception lounge will be the venue for the inaugural Ashfield Business Achiever Awards and Chamber Ball. John and Silvia Kassis who own nilla are members of the Chamber. Wests Leagues Club, Ashfield was also a strong contender for this event. One of the main criteria set by the committee, the ability to seat at least 300 people, greatly restricted choice if the event was to be held within the Ashfield local government area. Date for the event is Wednesday, 18 November 2009.

Action items:

1. Call on Vittoria Raciti, congratulate her and complete paperwork
2. Contact nilla and complete final arrangements and paperwork

Person responsible:

1. DG & KB
2. DG & KB

Deadline:

1. asap
2. 18/5/09

Networking

Members and non-members alike enjoyed networking over a drink before and after the meeting

Action items: 0

Person responsible:

Deadline:

Additional Information

Resource persons: Bill Jezzini (Council Caretaker), Carolyn Walker (Mayor & GMs PA), Lauren McIver (Council's Corporate Relations Officer), Ron Sim (Council's Manager Strategic planner) and Con Colot (Council's Senior Strategic Planner & Projects)

Special notes: Additional "Ashfield's Biggest Conversation" Sessions will be announced in the media should anyone wish to attend