

Minutes

Suffolk Park Progress Association Public Meeting Tuesday 16th August 2011, 7pm, Suffolk Park Community Hall

“Are we a Suburb or a Community?”

Present:

Suffolk Park Progress Association Committee: Karin Kolbe (President), Greg Duggan (Secretary), Margaret Wiles (Treasurer), Eric Bridgeman, Patsy Brosnan, Prue Regan and Donald Maughan.

Guest Speakers: Tricia Shantz, Gregg Miller, Victoria Handley

Councillor Richard Staples, plus over 60 SPPA members and Suffolk Park residents

1. Welcome

The meeting commenced at 7pm with a welcome from SPPA President Karin Kolbe.

Karin began by explaining that this meeting was going to be different from previous public meetings, in that it would not be about action on one particular issue. It would be about forming a community and the infrastructure and services needed to achieve that.

Karin said that Suffolk Park, including the precincts of Baywood Chase, Byron Hills and Beachside, was the 3rd largest community in the shire but does not receive the recognition it deserves.

By a show of hands of those present there were 7 people from Baywood Chase, 7 from Byron Hills, and the rest were from Beachside

Byron Shire	2006 Population
Byron Bay/Sunrise	4981
Ocean Shores, New Brighton, SGB	3856
Suffolk Park	3291
Mullumbimby	3129
Brunswick Heads	1614
Bangalow	1327
Rural balance	10568
<u>Total</u>	<u>28766</u>

Karin outlined the agenda and then introduced the main guest speaker, Tricia Shantz.

Since 1987 Tricia Shantz, Principal of TS Consultants, has worked in the fields of urban planning, social planning and community development in private practice, Local Government and at tertiary institutions. Her particular expertise is in social planning. Tricia is the author of a 1993 report on *“The Community Needs of Byron Hills / Baywood Chase”*

2. Guest Speaker Tricia Shantz “Connecting Communities”

Tricia spoke about how communities can strengthen themselves by creating a sense of belonging, social inclusion and cohesiveness, and quoted from John Donne’s poem “*no man is an island*”

She referred to a Gold Coast City Council study which showed that a sense of belonging was the most important factor in a community. This can be measured by observing:

- Regular contact among community members
- Membership of groups
- Volunteering
- Exchange of goods and services,
- Things to do

“My Place” and “Belonging” were listed in Hugh MacKay’s book “*The 10 Desires That Drive Us*”

What is a Community?

- Physical Place
- Groups of interest (ethnic, religious)
- Networks of people
- Home-based businesses

Defining a community in purely geographical terms is limited. Social planning looks at social inclusion and social cohesiveness and how they contribute to health and wellbeing. Being socially isolated can be as detrimental as smoking 17 cigarettes a day. Tricia highlighted an American study on this topic called “Bowling Alone”. Younger people are less sociable than their grandparents.

The Suffolk Park community could be described as a closed network, with bridging (overlapping membership of different networks) and linking (interaction with those in authority e.g. council)

The Northern Rivers is a series of villages, where a village includes:

- Walkability
- Self reliance
- Active democracy
- Distinctive image

Tricia’s ideas to encourage a sense of community included

- Lots of benches for people to sit on and watch the passing parade
- Paths of travel
- Maps of businesses and social groups
- Community newspaper
- Child friendly; aged friendly

She concluded by saying we should think of the **community as a garden** which we should all nurture and support.

3. Personal perspectives from residents

Gregg Miller

Gregg Miller is the Captain of the Rural Fire Service, Suffolk Park and Byron Shire's volunteer of the year 2010. The Suffolk RFS is one of the north coast's leading fire services, and is the statutory brigade for the whole south east corner of the shire. It has 28 members, all volunteers. Their annual Australia Day event in Gaggin Park attracted over 300 residents.

In answer to the question "why I like living in this community", Gregg said: "**because people smile!**"

He suggested some more events like the Australia Day one:

- Christmas in July
- A spring event
- A fireman's ball, in support of the kids burns unit

Victoria Handley

Victoria Handley, Director of the Coogera Centre Byron Bay Preschool, talked about the services that the Integrated Child Services Centre offers: a pre-school, early intervention centre and toy library. She cited the centre as an example of people successfully pulling together to create a necessary service.

Victoria said she could have worked anywhere in the world, but chose to live here because of its sense of community.

4. Open forum facilitated by Donald Maughan

Donald opened by saying that Suffolk Park was the "**Soul of Byron Bay**". He invited everyone to put forward suggestions, and that there were "no wrong answers". All suggestions were written up on flip charts by Margaret Wiles and Patsy Brosnan, and have been summarised below grouped into Likes, Dislikes and Ideas.

Barrie Peters from (Baywood Chase) says he likes to escape here from Byron bay, and wants to see the whole of Suffolk Park as one community. He said:

"It's all Suffolk Park from Golf Course to Quarry".

Peter Wegner (Byron Hills) said the Baywood Chase sign should be taken down, (no more "them & us") and also that we should fight for a roundabout at the Clifford St / Broken Hd Rd intersection.

Jason Pudsey suggested starting Suffolk Park Web and Facebook sites.

Mark Dean said all Community Land should be identified as such.

Tony suggested a Farmers Market in Suffolk Park, as well as a community garden.

Victoria said there should be a community newsletter.

Paul Brooks agreed with Gregg's idea for more events, and said that they could be held at the caravan park

In all more than 50 suggestions were received, and are summarised on the next page.

Summary of Suggestions:

Likes

- Escape the madness of Byron Bay, especially in summer
- Lifestyle

Projects (Naming, signage and respecting whole area)

- Rename Suffolk Park to incorporate the Indigenous heritage
- Don't rename Suffolk Park - respect the heritage of the Suffolk family
- Mapping of environmental areas and waterways Tallow Creek
- Gather, acknowledge and record significant Aboriginal historical sites
- Rename SP Progress Association. To S.P. Community Association
- Need to have S.P. seen as a total site
- Remove signs that name different areas within Suffolk Park (e.g. Baywood Chase)
- Better signage showing boundaries (gateway)
- Identify all community owned land with signs e.g. Caravan Park, water tower
- Public Art
- Have competition for signage
- Photographic competition

Projects (To develop Community)

- Community effort to clean up roundabouts along Broken Head Road
- Improve the area around the BP roundabout and small lake
- Community gardens (listing on web site) 8 to 10 people for core group to start/ function
- Improve access to beach for elderly (solid rails, firm level footing)
- Locate seats/ benches in strategic locations
- Community work shed (bonding/support/repair community property)
- Exercise circuit around lake and Gaggin Park ("adult playgrounds") make park more user friendly
- Call a friend when help is needed support
- Welcome to new residents/ giveaways
- Mentoring list to help those in need
- Participate in Council's Sustainable Streets program

Projects (Environmental)

- Remove Umbrella Trees (and other weeds) from S.P. - encourage residents to get rid of them
- Keep Dune Care active and strong
- The wetlands should be community owned and managed

Web Site and /or Newsletter

- Facebook site for people to register interest in projects e.g. Community Garden
- Service Directory for S.P. e.g. plumbers, architects etc
- S.P. site offering skills available
- Finance of site development by advertising from local businesses.
- Community newsletter (Web site and/or hard copy)
- Service Directory for S.P.

OH&S Issues to Community

- Second emergency exit from beachside Suffolk Park
- Pedestrian crossing across from B.P
- Dip site needs better signage and proper fencing to protect children
- Sewage leaks into ponds and creeks

Functions to bring Community together

- Community / family event at Caravan Park
- Trash and treasure S.P. wide garage sale
- Multicultural events to recognise and celebrate difference.
- Community tennis events e.g. mothers groups tennis Wed/ Sat tennis afternoon
- Annual Race Day at Ballina
- More cultural events: dance, art, poetry nights
- Fireman's Ball

Things we don't like

- The great divide between Byron Hills, Baywood Chase and beachside Suffolk Park.
- The new "suburb" next to the BP
- Sewage leak into pond and creek opposite BP garage
- Lack of benches /seating and garbage bins around the skate park
- Fencing around the small lake at the BP roundabout
- Intrusion of noxious trees e.g. Umbrella Trees.
- Holiday letting needs to be monitored
- Only one exit point for beach side residents in emergency

5. Dunecare

Helen Brown gave an update on the activities of the Suffolk Park Dunecare are group.

- Suffolk Park Dunecare has been going for more than 20 years.
- All are volunteers, and more are needed.
- Work is usually on the first Saturday of the month – see local papers or Bryon Shire Council website for details
- Two grants of \$20,000 have been received to work on the dunes
- Currently clearing the walking track, from the end of Alcorn St to the Tallow Creek bridge, of feral Bitou bush and replanting with native trees & bushes.

6. Summary

Karin Kolbe summarised the meeting and thanked all the speakers. She advised that SPPA would collate and analyse all information and welcomes more suggestions. The meeting outcome and next steps will be posted on the website www.suffolkparkprogressassociation.org

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9.15, and everyone gathered for refreshments. (With thanks to Helen Revis)

7. New Members

Fourteen (14) new members' joined the Association on the night, which is great.

The committee would like to welcome Paul Brooks, Barbara Ellen, Mark Langan, Greg Lyon, Ray & Lee Myers, Anna & Andrew Parker, Barrie & Marleen Peters, Jason & Jacky Pudsey, Diane Roberts, and Francoise Teclmaraiam.

Greg Duggan

Secretary

9th September 2011

Suffolk residents share their ideas

MORE than 50 issues and suggestions for Suffolk Park were presented at a public meeting recently.

About 70 residents attended the meeting to talk about community – what it means and what residents would like to see in Suffolk Park.

“It was very encouraging to see so many residents come and contribute their ideas,” president of the Suffolk Park Progress Association Karin Kolbe said.

Invited speaker Tricia Shantz, social planner from TS Consultants, spoke about how communities can strengthen themselves by creating a sense of belonging, social inclusion and cohesiveness.

“This can be fostered by a community being self-reliant, and having an active democracy and a distinctive image,” she said.

Director of the Coogera Centre, Byron Bay Preschool, Victoria Handley, spoke about the services that the Integrated Child Services Centre offers, including a

pre-school, early intervention centre and toy library.

She cited the centre as an example of people successfully pulling together to create a necessary service

Captain of the Rural Fire Service, Suffolk Park, and Byron Shire’s Volunteer of the Year 2010, Gregg Miller, told the audience how RFS’s activities were growing.

He said this year the Australia Day picnic in Gaggin Park attracted more than 300 residents.

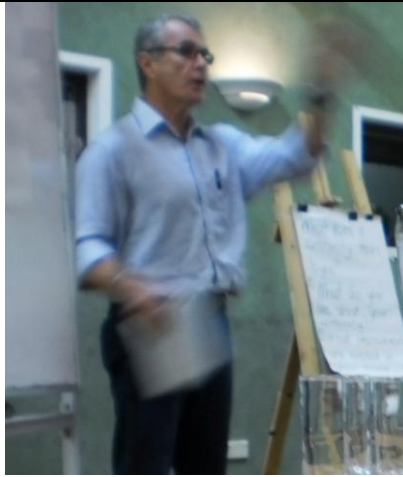
Ms Kolbe said some of the suggestions presented at the meeting included how to broaden the greater Suffolk Park identity; how to expand on community spirit; issues relating to safety; events that can bring the community together; and an online or paper newsletter/bulletin board for sharing information.

The progress association is now collating and analysing all information and welcomes more suggestions. Email sppasecretary@iprimus.com.au

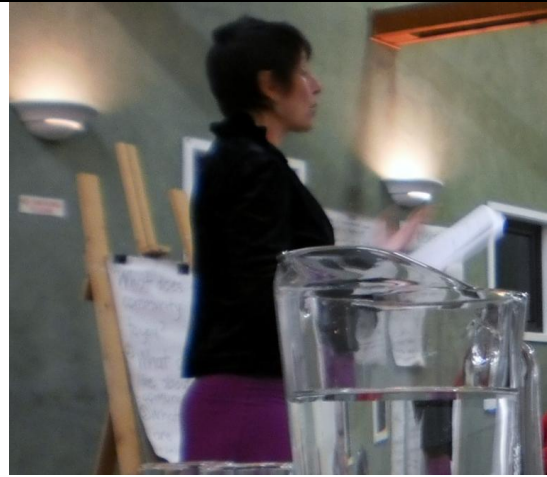
Photo Gallery



Tricia



Donald



Karin