



City of
Whittlesea

MINUTES

OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON

THURSDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2018

AT 7.00PM

**IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, 25 FERRES
BOULEVARD, SOUTH MORANG**

COUNCILLORS

TOM JOSEPH	NORTH WARD
RICKY KIRKHAM	NORTH WARD
EMILIA LISA STERJOVA	NORTH WARD
SAM ALESSI	SOUTH EAST WARD
NORM KELLY	SOUTH EAST WARD
ALAHNA DESIATO	SOUTH EAST WARD
MARY LALIOS	SOUTH EAST WARD
LAWRIE COX	SOUTH WEST WARD
STEVAN KOZMEVSKI	SOUTH WEST WARD
CAZ MONTELEONE	SOUTH WEST WARD
KRIS PAVLIDIS	SOUTH WEST WARD

SENIOR OFFICERS

SIMON OVERLAND

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

RUSSELL HOPKINS

DIRECTOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

NICK MANN

DIRECTOR CITY TRANSPORT & PRESENTATION

HELEN SUI

DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

LIANA THOMPSON

DIRECTOR PARTNERSHIPS, PLANNING &
ENGAGEMENT

MICHAEL TONTA

MANAGER GOVERNANCE

ORDER OF BUSINESS

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Note:

In these Minutes, Resolutions adopted by Council are indicated in bold text.

1. OPENING**1.1 TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON**

In accordance with Council's Procedural Matters Local Law, until the Mayor was elected, the Chief Executive Officer was the temporary Chairperson of the meeting and the Returning Officer for the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

1.2 MEETING OPENING AND PRAYER

The Chief Executive Officer opened the meeting with a prayer at 7:00pm.

1.3 ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS STATEMENT

On behalf of the City of Whittlesea the Chief Executive Officer recognised the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledged the Wurundjeri Willam Clan as the Traditional Owners of this place.

1.4 PRESENT**Members:**

Tom Joseph	(Councillor) North Ward
Emilia Lisa Sterjova	(Councillor) North Ward
Sam Alessi	(Councillor) South East Ward
Lawrie Cox	(Councillor) South West Ward
Stevan Kozmevski	(Councillor) South West Ward
Caz Monteleone	(Councillor) South West Ward
Kris Pavlidis	(Councillor) South West Ward

Officers:

Mr Simon Overland	Chief Executive Officer
Mr Russell Hopkins	Director Community Services
Mr Nick Mann	Director City Transport & Presentation
Ms Helen Sui	Director Corporate Services
Ms Liana Thompson	Director Partnerships, Planning & Engagement
Mr Michael Tonta	Manager Governance

2. APOLOGIES

NIL

3. GENERAL BUSINESS**3.1 ELECTION OF THE MAYOR FOR 2018/2019**

The Chief Executive Officer asked if Council wished to elect a Mayor for a term of 2 years.

No motion was put forward to elect a Mayor for a term of 2 years.

The Chief Executive Officer invited nominations for the Office of Mayor for 2018/2019.

NOMINATION FOR MAYOR

NOMINATOR: *Cr Pavlidis*

THAT Cr Lawrie Cox be nominated for the Office of Mayor for the year 2018/2019.

Cr Kris Pavlidis spoke in support of Cr Lawrie Cox's nomination for Mayor.

DECLARATION OF THE POLL

As there was only one nomination, the Chief Executive Officer declared Cr Lawrie Cox elected Mayor for 2018/2019

3.2 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2018/2019

The Chief Executive Officer invited nominations for the Office of Deputy Mayor for 2018/2019.

NOMINATION FOR DEPUTY MAYOR

NOMINATOR: *Cr Sterjova*

THAT Cr Tom Joseph be nominated for the Office of Deputy Mayor for the year 2018/2019.

Cr Emilia Lisa Sterjova spoke in support of Cr Tom Joseph's nomination for Deputy Mayor.

DECLARATION OF THE POLL

As there was only one nomination, the Chief Executive Officer declared Cr Tom Joseph elected Deputy Mayor for 2018/2019

4. SPEECH FROM INCOMING MAYOR

I firstly acknowledge the traditional owners the Wurundjeri Willum, of this place past, present and future elders. I will return to make further comment on this later.

Tonight I am humbled to be elected Mayor of our great City. As a Councillor I and all my colleagues have been entrusted to act in the best interests of our community. Whilst Mayor is considered to be the leader it is important that the role is recognised as the first amongst equals.

It is the second time that I have been elected to this capacity in the Municipality. The first of course was many years ago as Shire President. Tonight I join only two others in that milestone the late Vic Michael and Frank Merlino in being elected as President of the Shire and now Mayor of the City.

My predecessor Cr Pavlidis has had a fairly torrid year in the chair as a result of the view that policy direction changing by the majority of Councillors attending meetings appears to those opposed as being wrong. Her stated aim was to raise the bar at the Council. Some would say it has been successful others not dependent on your views. I fully believe despite this attempted disruption by a few, Cr Pavlidis handled herself well in the role and has raised the bar but we need to do more.

I will state at the outset of the year, every Councillor has a right to be heard, participate and shown respect. I aim to do that and remind my colleagues it is a two way street. If you want respect then show your commitment by giving it as well.

Let me make it clear, though I and others can disagree with your opinion. The majority make the decision and just because they disagree does not make it wrong nor does it make it a bad decision. That's how real democracy works not just because you complain or criticise an outcome louder than others or frustrate processes does this make your position right.

I just make the point for some to reflect upon, I have had occasion to respond to comments inappropriately as viewed by some; but I have also been big enough not only to withdraw but apologise there has not been enough of that in our meetings over the last year. As part of the hurley burley in the lead up to tonight this position is not for sale or as a tradable commodity to protect other roles. I commend my colleagues for refusing to engage in such buy off actions that occurred both last year and as recently as yesterday.

Our staff are there to provide frank and fearless views for our consideration. They deserve respect in the manner that provide a report. We as Councillors have a right to determine a different position and as elected members we can be critical of each other but we do need to be respectful of those who cannot or are unable to respond by virtue of their office.

I look forward to working with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Executive Leadership Team during the year. There are of course many tests in Local Government one of the first as a Councillor is to understand we set the policy. I have a corporate role and understand the position about not interfering in operational matters. In doing so it is often misunderstood that we can direct the staff. The practice by some who try to do so must stop. Further legislation is in place to protect the integrity of all of us Council, Staff and Community. If any Councillor acts inappropriately then it must and should be reported immediately, there are legislative protections in place, this applies to our staff in a different way as it does to inappropriate influence from outside or third parties seeking to benefit from council decisions.

The actions of our CEO during the year have been exemplary to the pressure being applied in his role. Acting ethically and with integrity is a minimum for us not an optional extra. I am sure that this will continue.

During the last year we have made many vital decisions to support our community with the continuing challenge of rapid expansion. We have lobbied hard to get basic infrastructure in place. The completion by the Andrews government of the Mernda railway and associated works ahead of time is to be applauded.

The commencement and announcements of future roads and other major infrastructure by both the Andrews Government and to a lesser extent the (revolving door PM) government is also welcome. That does not mean we rest on our laurels. There is still much more to be done. Completion of major roadworks and continued actions by us to achieve more will be undertaken. The recent survey of all age brackets put traffic management as the first priority.

The challenge ahead in Aged Care services where Local Government is a leader will also continue, we can, will and must support our elderly as far as we can. The fact that local government is being excluded from a lot of the service delivery is disappointing but again it is not yet over.

We have seen rapid industrial land sales occurring in the City which we must turn into employment opportunities so that our community has a quality lifestyle close to home. As an example meeting with local suppliers two weeks ago is part of the communication to build local work for council services. Encouraging new employers into the municipality is also a major focus.

Whilst we have rapid new expansion occurring we cannot lose sight of the Agri business in Whittlesea, the fantastic work by officers but also our residents related to sustainable farming practices is understated in its delivery. Council has provided real support for growth again this will continue.

Further whist housing is expanding we are suppling more infrastructure support in planning developments as they occur it is not always perfect but it is far superior to those in place previously. We must also not lose sight of the urban renewal process in the older established areas of Thomastown, Lalor, Bundoora, Epping and Whittlesea township. Pulling down and back filling small units is not good policy. Often this is out of our control as a Council but sound development complimentary to change is the desired outcome. Again working with community on good outcomes with supporting infrastructure is the desirable outcome. We want to see Whittlesea as the area of choice to live based on what is delivered not just cheap housing. Our parks, kindergartens, support services, community centres are well planned, utilised and enjoyed.

Returning to our first nations.

We make all the respectful remarks and I have had the privilege of sitting on the reconciliation committee this past year. The reference to change the date is controversial and this is not a policy statement. What I do request though is this I am a sixth generation English on one side from a merchant sea captain and a third or fourth German from a blacksmith on the other.

The arrival of Captain Phillip on the 26th Jan to me is not a great cause of celebration as it was a military operation to dump English penal waste as far away from the homeland as you can get. Of course many of the so called crimes were treated in what this day and age would be said to be minor. Hardly what I would call recognition day of a great historical event.

Of course to the first nations peoples it is seen as invasion but also the start of much of the troubles experienced by the clashes over subsequent years. Not just minor crimes either. Serious loss of life amongst other offences need to be recognized.

As part of the white fella tribe we should actually educate ourselves more on what has happened in the history, not just rely upon the newspaper or commentary from the fourth estate. All I would like to see is engaging in conversation to have an appreciation of the deep seated damage and feelings held. This cannot be solved overnight but we must take steps to have meaningful engagement not tokenism.

The majority of the Australian population is imported, no longer is the majority white Anglo Saxon background and many more recent citizens have never understood the clashes, the losses or the stolen generation.

To do this equally applies an obligation that was made to me by an elder where he said our mob need to try and resolve the matter. I could not agree more as history has already shown the damage caused by the white fella decisions in the past have often caused more pain often with good intention. We need to assist and engage to help not direct.

So when we acknowledge the traditional owners I would like to add that I encourage you to engage in a conversation so that we can actually move toward real reconciliation. The current generation cannot change past actions but can create a real community where we are all engaged and celebrating together no matter what your background or where you are from.

Another lost point is that we fight and deliver rights for gender equality. Australia was at the forefront and delivered the right to vote and stand for election for females. Again forgotten that very same act in 1902 entrenched the lack of recognition for our indigenous population until 1967. Despite the fact many fought and died on our behalf through two world wars and other conflicts. Again is it any wonder that anger and resentment exist.

Now finally I would like to acknowledge that I am an endorsed Labor Councillor. I have always been a proud member of a party, in fact I am a life member, that is interested in the local community not just a passing fad that is used when it suits a purpose. I would acknowledge the branch members present tonight and Members of State and federal parliament whom I look forward to working with this year. The return of the Andrews government is the first step on the 24 November followed very shortly thereafter a Shorten Federal government. My family has served in local government as Labor Councillors for many years my father a returned forgotten ANZAC in the Greek campaign in 1941 who then spent the next two and half years as a POW in an Austrian Stalag; was a member of the Coburg Council for 33 years. I in turn had 1979-1986 in the Shire of Whittlesea.

Our party has always been upfront about where we stand. At the end of the day a majority were elected in 2016 but it was not to be because some walked away from their commitment and showed the lack of integrity.

We are a working majority in Whittlesea by working with our new Deputy Mayor Cr Joseph an unaligned Councillor from the North Ward; between us we have and will be delivering good policy, working infrastructure and above all else ethical decision making.

Behind every Councillor is family or partner in my case my wife, children plus in-laws and grandchildren of whom I am always proud. Again thank you for electing me tonight and I look forward to the hard yards ahead.

5. CLOSURE

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7:30PM.

CONFIRMED THIS 13TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2018

**CR LAWRIE COX
MAYOR**