



Requested General Meeting

17 April 2016

Weetangera Primary School

Minutes

This meeting was [requested by nine members](#) under Rule 20 of [fotpin's Management Rules](#).
It opened at 2.05 pm.

Present:

Rosemary Blemings, Warren Bond, John Brannan, Vaughn Cox (Pax), Nathanael Coyne, Anu Datta, John Fitz Gerald, Denise Hall, Mike Hall, Bob Hodgson, Graeme Muller, Katy Skinner, Elizabeth Smith, Len Taylor, Scott Wilkinson

Apologies:

Barbara Allan, Lesley Harland, Gilbert Hughes, Alison Milton, James Newman, Keith Thomas, Wendy Whitham.

1. Welcome by the Acting Convenor

John Brannan welcomed the members present and called for any apologies other than those already submitted to the Acting Secretary. Nil forthcoming.

2. Reasons for requested meeting

The Acting Convenor offered Pax, or another representative of the members requesting the meeting, to speak to the reasons for their request.

Pax stated that he believed that the Coordinating Committee had information about the offset site that is to become the [Pinnacle Extension](#) that should be shared with the group because it had the potential to affect the size of the extension, and this was a significant issue for fotpin.

He explained the origin of the offset and said that he believed that the size of the offset site [approved by the Australian Government Department of Environment \(DoE\) on 17 October 2014](#) was too small to provide an adequate offset to compensate for the impact of development on the site it was being offset against (the site for the new sub-acute hospital at the University of Canberra). He said that he had requested a copy of the completed Offsets Assessment Guide (a spreadsheet calculator provided by the DoE to determine offset requirements), reviewed the inputs and assumptions used in the Guide and believed that they were inappropriate. He believed that the mapping of vegetation areas and their quality on the offset site was wrong, particularly the inclusion as offset of 2.5 ha of land that he and two other fotpin members had assessed as not meeting box gum woodland criteria. He further contested the assumption in the Assessment that the condition of the offset site, if left in its current state ("a grazing property"), would deteriorate, stating that the site was not actually a grazing property in the usual sense, and that there was no evidence to suggest that this was a reasonable prediction. Using inputs and assumptions that he believed better represented the state of the offset site, after the informal survey with two other members, he calculated that the area of the site was inadequate.

He said that he believed that fotpin should request a review of the Offsets Assessment, including a re-mapping of the vegetation in the offset site, and that this was an opportunity to request that a larger area be included in the Pinnacle Extension.

3. Response from Coordinating Committee

John Brannan responded on behalf of the Committee. He said that he did not propose to enter into an argument about the inputs used in the Offsets Assessment Guide, which were somewhat subjective and required assessment by people with appropriate expertise. The contracted surveyors (Umwelt) were world renowned experts and in fact the benefit of any interpretation had gone to making the offset area larger. He said that he disagreed with Pax's conclusions that fotpin should challenge the

Assessment because he believed that the outcome was actually a good one for the Reserve. The development site at the University of Canberra had a low intrinsic value and no strategic value whereas the offset site was a larger area, had high intrinsic value with a lot of remnant box gums, and provided a strategic link, or wildlife corridor, between the Pinnacle Nature Reserve, the Kama Nature Reserve and the Molonglo Nature Reserve beyond that. He also said that he understood that the Conservation Planning and Research Directorate of the ACT Government had reviewed the Offset Assessment and found it appropriate.

Warren Bond agreed with John's statement.

4. Guidance on Preferred Outcomes

The Coordinating Committee was asked what action it had taken so far. John Brannan replied that it had not taken any action on the matters raised by Pax, for the reasons outlined in 3 above. The Committee, had, however, earlier arranged a meeting with representatives of both the Offsets Planning Group and Offsets Management Group within the Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) for the coming Tuesday 19th April, the earliest convenient time, but it should be noted that the primary purpose of this meeting was to discuss the latest version of the draft Offset Management Plan, exchange information and discuss how we can best interact with PCS on matters concerning the Pinnacle Extension in the future. This follows a meeting held in February with the ranger in charge of managing the offset to discuss immediate issues of cooperation and collaboration on the management of the offset.

Some members expressed the view that they thought it was more productive to work on developing the relationship with PCS than to challenge the offset size, and that the latter could take a lot of time and not achieve anything, given the substantial hurdles, including territory and federal regulators, that needed to be crossed to modify the offset approval.

Other members expressed the view that the Committee should make PCS aware that concerns have been raised among the fotpin membership about the calculation of the offset area.

The view was also expressed that the Committee should request enhanced management (particularly weed control) in areas adjacent to the offset be included explicitly in the management plan as a buffer area and as a de-facto increase in the size of the offset. It was also suggested that fotpin should request the inclusion, if possible, for provision of an underpass or pipe tunnels across William Hovell Drive to make it easier for ground-based wildlife to take advantage of the corridor that the Extension creates between The Pinnacle and Kama Nature Reserves.

There was a brief discussion about whether lobbying on the issues raised above was fotpin's role or whether it was more appropriately left to bodies such as the ACT Conservation Council. It was suggested that the Committee approach the Conservation Council to see if they would take up the issue of improved transparency in the offsets process.

It was requested that more information be provided to members, for example in the regular fotpin "Updates", about the Pinnacle Extension, about the draft management plan and fotpin's input to it and, ideally, about how fotpin thought the area should be managed in order to achieve the offset requirements. It was expressed that given the unusual and significant nature of an addition to the Reserve that the committee may have invited input to the draft management plan from interested members.

Meeting closed at 3.45pm.

Katy Skinner, Mike Hall and Scott Wilkinson agreed to review the draft minutes to be prepared by Acting Secretary Warren Bond before they are posted on the fotpin website for confirmation at the next AGM.