

ITEM MAYORAL MINUTE - CONCORD RSL

Department Executive Services

Author Initials: AT

REPORT

In May 2019 I raised with Council the issue of the closure of Concord RSL Club, the impact that the closure would have on our community, and the importance of the land being kept in our community's hands as a space for public recreation.

Since that time, Council representatives and I have met with the State Government on the issue as well as with RSL NSW and other stakeholders to ensure that this land remained in public hands.

The land on which the RSL Club stood was transferred by Concord Golf Club to Concord Council in 1955 under a covenant that stated the land was only to be used for "public recreation generally". In 1963 the land was then transferred on to the Concord District RSL Sub Branch under a covenant that stated the land was to only be used for a registered club and other associated recreational uses.

This land was always intended to be a place for locals to come together as a community. Unfortunately, rather than bequeath the site to Council, RSL NSW has made it clear that they intend to sell the land to the highest bidder — with the proceeds going to their head office in the city and our community potentially losing out.

To ensure the site remains in our community's hands, the City of Canada Bay has met with the NSW State Government to attain grant funding for a possible purchase.

We have worked with an independent valuer to put together a fair offer for this land and now it is up to RSL NSW to make the right decision and accept Council's offer, and we will commit this land to be public space forever.

The importance of the Concord RSL site

The Concord RSL site provides a unique opportunity for new open space.

The site is surrounded by existing public open space and allows for the possibility to bring together existing recreation areas as a major district facility.

The land also has significant potential for new linkages to our foreshore open space corridor along the Parramatta River and has been identified as an important location for local biodiversity and habitat connectivity.

Support from our community

I am now calling on residents to make their voices heard by RSL NSW.

I have directed Council staff to set up a page on our Collaborate Canada Bay platform where residents can sign up to a petition to save the Concord RSL site and to contribute messages that we will pass on to RSL NSW to ensure they are aware of the universal local desire to keep this land in public hands.

Residents can go to collaborate.canadabay.nsw.gov.au/concordrsl to join the campaign for this land.

If there is not going to be an RSL Club on this site anymore, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to secure open space for our growing community forever.

I thank residents for their enthusiastic support of Council on this matter so far and I hope together we can achieve a great result for our community and secure the future of the Concord RSL site.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council write to the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes, Member for Reid Dr Fiona Martin, Member for Drummoyne John Sidoti and RSL NSW CEO Jon Black outlining the strategic importance of this site and highlighting our local community's support on this issue.

THAT Council promote the online Collaborate Canada Bay petition and continue to advocate for the campaign to secure this land as public space.