



CITY OF
PORT PHILLIP

**ORDINARY
MEETING OF
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

**FRIDAY
8 MARCH 2002**

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL
HELD ON 8 MARCH 2002, IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ST KILDA TOWN HALL**

The meeting opened at 6.10pm.

PRESENT

Cr Hill (Chairperson), Cr Brand, Cr Gross (from 6.15pm), Cr Hutchens, Cr Johnstone, Cr Lewisohn, Cr Ray, David Spokes Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Oulton Director City Development, Sally Calder Director Social and Cultural Development, David Graham General Manager Corporate, Stephen O'Kane Director Organisation Development David Yeouart Director Physical Services, Distinguished Guests.

The Chairperson (Cr Hill) acknowledged the traditional owners of the land on which the Council meets, the Boonerwung language people and the Wurundjeri people as custodians.

1. APOLOGIES

MOVED Crs Johnstone/Brand

It was noted that Cr Gross will be arriving late to the meeting.

A vote was taken and the MOTION was CARRIED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

Nil.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

MOVED Crs Hutchens/Ray

Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of the Port Phillip City Council held on 25 February 2002 be confirmed.

Minutes of the Statutory Planning Committee of the Port Phillip City Council held on 4 March 2002 be confirmed.

A vote was taken and the MOTION was CARRIED.

4. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4(B) REPORTS OF THE STATUTORY PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD AT THE ST KILDA TOWN HALL ON 4 MARCH 2002

*Cr Gross entered the meeting at 6.14pm.

Note: Business Items B1, B2, B3 and B4 were resolved by the Statutory Planning Committee held on Monday, 4 March 2002, in accordance with Section 86 of the Local Government Act 1989.

The following items were MOVED in block by Crs Ray/Brand;

B2 111 NOTT STREET, PORT MELBOURNE
B5 DELEGATE REPORT

B2 111 NOTT STREET, PORT MELBOURNE

Purpose

Alterations and additions to existing building to accommodate 7 apartments and home offices including associated car parking.

MOVED Crs Ray/Brand

Could the Director City Development provide advice to Council in relation to options to improve the visibility around lane corners.

A vote was taken and the MOTION was CARRIED.

NOTE: PART A OF THE RECOMMENDATION IN RELATION TO THE PLANNING APPLICATION WAS RESOLVED BY THE STATUTORY PLANNING COMMITTEE ON MONDAY, 4 MARCH 2002.

B5 DELEGATE REPORT

Purpose

To present Council with a summary of all Planning Permits issued under Delegation.

MOVED Crs Ray/Brand

That the Council receive and note the report regarding the summary of all Planning Permits issued in accordance with the Schedule of Delegation made under Section 98 of the Local Government Act 1989 and Section 188 of the Planning & Environment Act 1987 adopted by Council on 24 July 1996 for the Port Phillip Planning Scheme.

A vote was taken and the MOTION was CARRIED.

5. ORDERS OF THE DAY

Discussion took place in relation to the following item:

ORDER 1 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PROGRESS INDICATORS

ORDER 1 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PROGRESS INDICATORS

Purpose

Outcomes of community consultation on Sustainable Community Progress Indicators (SCPI) and to determination of strategic directions for SCPI.

MOVED Crs Ray/Johnstone

1. That council adopts the strategic directions outlined in section 3.2 and encourages community engagement in both the determination and measurement of indicators as it undertakes the next phase of the SCPI project.
2. That council acknowledges that a longer time frame is needed to measure progress meaningfully and commits to a 10 year program for the SCPI Project, with a review in 2007. The current 1997 Community Plan will be reassessed during the 2002/2003 financial year.
3. That additional community representatives be invited to join the project steering committee to provide input on education, business and neighbourhoods across the city.
4. That the resource requirements for the project be referred for consideration with the 2002/3 budget.
5. That Council consider, determine and finalise SCPI indicators in June 2002.
6. That Council commend and thank the steering committee, council working party, council staff who facilitated at the community forum, community members and other stakeholders for the excellent progress they have made on this project.

A vote was taken and the MOTION was CARRIED (unanimously).

6. URGENT BUSINESS

Nil.

MOVED Crs Brand/Johnstone

That Council allow Public Question Time to be included in the Agenda.
A vote was taken and the MOTION was CARRIED.

7. COMMENTS BY OUTGOING COUNCILLORS

Cr Ray made the following comments:

“OK I want to start off by thanking a few people behind being a Councillor, its not often that one gets a chance to acknowledge the people who put up with the ups and downs of being a public figure and so I am quickly going to do so.

Living in a diverse community the meaning of family is likewise a diverse definition. So you're not going to get a standard thanks to Mum, Dad and the Lord above from me. I have to firstly thank sincerely my two housemates, Ken, AKA Nanna as most of the Councillors know him who makes great sandwiches on polling day and Lex who have made sacrifices in the call of my duty. Their forbearance has been truly appreciated. I also need to thank Richard James who has been a loyal adviser and volunteer worker. Also to the many friends who have walked the same path that I have over the last three years, thank you.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors who I have enjoyed working with for three years. I think it is a sign of the maturity of this Council that unlike other Councils where egos intrude, where division is obvious and public that as a team we have worked well and in fact we haven't had public spats, we certainly have a lot of disagreement behind closed doors but publicly we are a team and we work well I think for the City.

My personal thanks also have to go to Julian who, as many of you know, was a close friend of mine before we both decided to stand for Council, one of the most interesting joint decisions I think we've taken. Our friendship has endured, its seen its ups and downs but I think its stronger than ever. I am probably going to make you blush by what I am about to say but I don't think tonight can go without me saying the following things – I think you are a truly remarkable young man, you are certainly generous of spirit, you are always willing to solve problems, you are perhaps the most intelligent and resourceful and caring young man that I have ever had the pleasure to be associated with. You have made a difference to so many lives and its so palpable when you meet young people who come up to you and say that their life has been given a bit of extra meaning because of the role of Councillor Hill and some of his advocacy and public statements. I think whatever you take on you'll excel at and I think you have got some major good karma coming and you deserve every ounce of it.

And I want to talk too much about, I'm first and I don't want to look stupid, talk too much about the major policy achievement over the last three years, I do want to note though my involvement in some key issues that I think we, we've handled well and we've achieved some major outcomes especially community housing, prostitution which has been here for 150 years and people said we would never be able to achieve anything, but I think we've been able to bring people to the table and outcomes are about to be delivered hopefully; drugs, complaints handling, advocacy for older residents and I think improved governance.

If there's one thing I'd say that I've been really proud about, it's that when I decided to stand for Council you know you'd get the usual negative reaction in the community and people say why would you want to work with such an unwieldy beast and bureaucracy. I think over the last three years this Council has become a more accessible, more communicative, I knew I'd stumble on that and I think that people now get straight answers to their questions. I think that was the case before and we've always been an accessible Council but I think it's even more so the case after the efforts of this Council.

I do want to talk though about how my community in East St Kilda is now placed after the last three years. Three years ago I decided to stand because I thought genuinely that my area was somewhat neglected both in physical landscape as well as community connectedness. I'm happy to say that I think the number of opponents I have in the upcoming election might reflect also that most of my community seem to be more connected now – certainly it's a happier place to live and the Balkans of Port Phillip I can happily report is a much safer, tidier and united place now than three years ago. We're not quite singing from the hilltops yet or high from a mountain but I can certainly, I'm happy to say we are a more united community in East St Kilda.

Many in the wider community feel that Council is merely a stepping stone to higher office, certainly the media have been putting the boot into our Mayor about that. Well I am glad to say that I don't see it as such, I worked for polities for 10 years and I think I got first hand experience of why you'd never want to go into that job. I have no interest in being a State or Federal Member of Parliament because I see representing local residents as being the pinnacle of personal and political life. So I look forward to working with residents, I say with some optimism, the post 16 March result, to working with residents, staff and Councillors of the City of Port Phillip and I thank you all for your support".

Cr Lewisohn made the following comments:

“Thank you everyone. I was so disappointed by the reaction to Anthony and Cleopatra last year that I’m not going to say anything like that, in fact I was, having heard Councillor Ray say that Councillor Hill was a very bright young man, I was strongly puzzled by his inability to grasp the point. But be that as it may, just excuse me a moment, when I resume my professional career I’m going to put in a claim for loss of eyesight in this Council Chamber.

Anyway I am no longer going to be a representative of this Municipality and it’s a pity I suppose to have only one opportunity to publicly address the community, some would say more than one opportunity is more than enough or at least one but I think I should say something and I want actually be a little bit serious since I won’t be able to harangue and mystify people like my fellow Councillors any more.

And I have a reason I suppose for saying what I want to say. It was not long after I was elected to this Council that I was politely told that I was seen as someone from a different planet. Now people like me who are accustomed to being not complimented are flattered by such remarks because to be a someone has got to mean something and mere ignorance is inoffensive. It so happens that my geographic planet, where I happen to have lived for over 30 years is in this Municipality and in the planet where I work I’ve seen more I think than most people here, the unnecessary hardship, aggravation and indeed the pain that’s inflicted on ordinary individuals by the ordinary people who represent organisations and governments. So that’s why I think its appropriate for something to be said from another planet.

My perspective differs in quite important respects from others although not all others, so I propose to express some purely personal views only to members of the community whose interests I’ve sought to represent. Everyone else in other words can switch off.

At the outset let me assure you of three things.

Firstly, a formidable multiplicity of problems, issues and events, great and small come through this Council and must be addressed from day to day by this organisation. This is not sufficiently recognised. It places great strain on the processes of representative democracy, municipal administration and service delivery to which the public is accustomed.

So I wish to state the obvious. To match the rhetoric and expectations a municipal organisation has to be supremely well organised and efficient and can’t accept second-class standards.

The second thing is that the members of the staff work extremely hard and are most dedicated. As an illustration I’ve been tremendously impressed by the support given to the humblest of groups and the humblest of people by the people who look after the people with what I think we call special needs for want of a more insulting term but that’s the sort of thing that’s impressed me immensely the way we do contribute in those respects.

I think that our staff have got to be recognised and although I remain critical of some of their work in terms of their approach, methodology and indeed outcome, I wish to compliment them and we should all thank them for that.

Now my colleagues, each I think I have to say in accordance with their own peculiar view of the public interest and the importance of advocacy, have actively sought to promote the public interest with considerable dedication and self-sacrifice.

So I wish to recognise their efforts and wish them well.

Although Port Phillip's principle function is to work for the collective community interest, inevitably there is disagreement about what the public interest is. The disagreement is generally the result of perceptions and self-interested agendas and at all levels they in turn are strongly influenced by internal influences which I don't need mention because you know them all and recognise them all in everyone.

Others are going to tell you I have no doubt of this Council's achievements. I personally don't think it has achieved all that much. More to the point there was in the circumstances an unusual opportunity to achieve much more. Except that to varying degrees those inevitable influences were allowed to get in the road, as much I have to say by Management as by Councillors.

My assessment on becoming a Councillor was that there was potential for about a 25% improvement in standards of performance without much difficulty. My assessment on ceasing to be a Councillor is that the potential for ready improvement is about 22.5% so I think we have made an incremental step.

What if I am right, has frustrated the improvement? Well let me refer back to the point I made about matching rhetoric and expectations. We have not in my opinion been able to develop a municipal organisation that is supremely well-organised and efficient and doesn't accept second-class standards.

Now in essence the community simply wants and I owe this to Councillor Gross for his education to me in acronyms, a CQRFAEEE, not a RSRUSIIW type of Council, in other words it wants a Council that is courteous, quick, responsive, frank, accountable, efficient, effective and economical not one that is rude, slow, reactive, unfrank, secretive, inefficient, ineffective and wasteful. I'm happy to say that we are starting to move slowly towards the former from the latter but we could have moved much faster. Such is life.

The essence of the difficulty if I might also say lies with and between Councillors and Senior Management in terms of roles, responsibilities, expectations, methods and interrelationships. On the one hand there has been an extremely promising interrelationship between Councillors and staff.

On the other hand there is a very unpromising bureaucratic culture typified I would say by the precept 'if in doubt default to the line approved by whoever has power over your pay cheque' and by a strong resistance to consideration of meaningful, hard financial and other information whenever it can be labelled an operational subject.

Furthermore the approach to government in Port Phillip is still in substance that management manages the Councillors so that the Councillors manage the pressure groups and the public and the staff can then manage operations as it suits them. There is nothing necessarily wrong with that at least if you are satisfied with the outcomes.

However I want to say just a little bit about the role of the staff managing the Councillors or the Management managing the Councillors.

Councillors are easily managed by management when four things happen; first the majority accept that their functions are in substance confined to policy and goals, community advocacy and evaluation and approval of staff recommendations.

Second the majority accept that they should only be informed of superficial generalities confined to those matters.

Third they accept that their role is to devote all their attention without enough useful support to the minutiae and honorifics of municipal life.

Fourth they refrain from any detached collective review in a business-like manner of fundamental issues.

Now the one thing I do want to say about the staff aspect is this, it is, in my opinion, inconsistent with the concept of accountability and responsibility in a representative democracy that the Managements' methods, standards, financial efficiency and organisational effectiveness are left free from examination, let alone evaluation by the representatives of the community ie. by a Councillor or an independent expert.

Secondly everyone is mouthing now the expression 'best value' which I think we regard as sustainable but this is far from a solution to what I have been trying to get at. Our best value system doesn't meaningfully monitor financial aspects and it doesn't monitor the management above the service units monitored so there are things I think that could be done and need to be done if the potential for ready improvement exists as I believe, then the community is entitled to have it fulfilled.

The problem is how to do it. The people who must be made responsible for getting it done are in this room. One is a potentially excellent CEO who if I may state still has to prove himself.

The others are a bright, and I mean that quite advisedly, Senior Management Team who need to start demonstrating their brightness and the others are the Councillors to be returned.

Its not exactly rocket science, its about leadership that is more than advocacy, consultation, policies and procedures, and how its properly reintegrated with a reorganised management system that can get things translated in a business-like way between top and bottom in the organisation so that at least things happen properly on the ground and between the community and the organisation so that things happen in a way that is useful and meaningful to them. In other words Port Phillip's got to develop a better system of self-management.

I would like to go on and probably at length but I don't think that this is the time to do so nor do I have time nor would you want me to. But if a member of the community were to ask what I suggest I would start with the following.

Firstly, require your Councillors who, if I may say, have the talent to do so, to rethink their roles and responsibilities and if necessary reinvent themselves.

Secondly, require your Councillors to restructure the Mayoralty in a way which will allow for individual talent but does somewhat more and particularly works in an organisational way.

Thirdly, require your CEO to think hard and to get his staff to throw some bureaucratic baggage overboard and overhaul their objectives and systems.

And I will say one more thing, require your Senior Management to find more time to think and advise based on their own experience and expertise rather than views derived second-hand which are dished up from the work of consultants and contractors.

Now I don't want to say any more except finally to say that I've developed a very strong loyalty to this institution and you might find that strange but I can't leave the place after three years without having some attachment and indeed I have a strong attachment.

For those who are curious as to why I don't want to stand again, the explanation is simply this: two relatively recent misfortunes in my immediate family, apart from anything else, have made it impossible for me to contemplate re-election, so goodbye".

Cr Hutchens made the following comments:

“I think I’m a little bit more optimistic than Cr Lewisohn about the City and the people and the work that’s been done in the last three years.

During my first term as Councillor for the Albert Park Ward I’ve gained considerable knowledge and experience in representing people who live and work in this Ward.

Local Government post-amalgamation is highly sophisticated and complex and as a consequence it takes considerable time and effort to understand the legislative framework to enable one to perform the role of Councillor.

Gary and my daughters have been very supportive and I thank them for all their help.

After three years I’ve got a much better understanding of the needs of the community and how local government operates.

A great deal of time, energy and money is spent by many in the community to support candidates to become Councillors. I therefore wish to repay the confidence that people have shown in me by ensuring that the progressive social policies of the community alliance in Port Phillip, and its members, have developed and supported and which I have actively advocated for, remain in place in our city, and that the projects that have begun or are in the planning stage are carried through to action.

I feel that a single term as Councillor is not a good “investment” for the community and that a second term is needed to become even more effective and productive. I’ve also worked with some great people and its been an interesting and enjoyable experience.

My particular areas of responsibility on Council have been in community services and environmental issues and I am strongly committed to the four pillars of sustainable policy, economic, social environmental and cultural. However, a great deal of experience and understanding has been gained in policy development across all areas, in planning, finance and budgets, community consultation and contact with a wide range of community and State organisations. I’ve attended workshops and forums in my professional development to gain ideas and experiences with Councillors from across Victoria.

Our City is busy and vibrant but many of our issues are shared by other cities, and we can learn much from the progress and solutions of other Councils as well. And I welcome here tonight Councillors from other cities who have come to see us tonight. Particularly areas of commitment and local work at my local level have been to the South Melbourne Market, Gasworks Arts Park, the libraries, Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centres, Aquatic Advisory Committee, the South Melbourne Town Hall, the strengthening of our residential aged care at Southport and Napier Street and a particular area of triumph the retention of Centrelink in South Melbourne.

Motor racing in the form of the Grand Prix, in Albert Park and the lack of access by our residents to much of Albert Park during the lengthy setting up and removal and repair time, increased traffic congestion on our roads for weeks and the general noise and disruption, particularly the air force jet flyovers continue to be major problems in our community.

This event continues to be unsupported by this city and advocacy continues to the State Government in the form of submissions and representations on Committees, and some improvements have been gained particularly in works proposed to reduce the high accident rate now occurring there. The City has continued to advocate that a permanent circuit in a zoned motor racing area would be a much cheaper, safer and more sensible solution for the State Government.

I believe the Councillors have been a good representation of our City. We have been a fairly disparate group of people, of different ages, genders, skills and interests who have worked harmoniously together but have all been able to advocate vigorously for issues of importance in our particular neighbourhood.

Rarely have I felt that this has been a “St Kilda- centric” Council and if it is it is part of my job to ensure that it does not become so. If I am re-elected for a second term I will continue to work collaboratively with my colleagues, officers and the community for the good of the people who live and work in this city and in particular in the Albert Park Ward.

And finally I want to thank the staff of Port Phillip, many of whom also live in our City. They have responded often with dynamic, imaginative improvements and solutions to problems, big and small in our City and they continue to put forward ideas for advancement and betterment of our community.

As a former Local Government employee, I know that many in the City of Port Phillip work way above the normal call of duty but then as Councillors, so do we. So I think its been a good and productive working relationship.

Our two CEO’s since amalgamation have been chosen carefully and well thank you Lianna for the first selection. There has been a strong request from Councillors that staff are assisted to develop a strong service culture in response to residents and I think there has been a marked improvement in this area.

I wish to particularly thank David Spokes for his leadership, and the support to the Councillors that he has given us to enable us to do our job effectively on behalf of our constituents. Thanks”.

Cr Johnstone made the following comments:

"I haven't prepared a formal speech. I knew there'd be a lot of them tonight and I thought it would probably be more important to tell you what's going through my mind tonight when I line up for yet another term.

So, what I did was went and pulled out my first ever Council flyer in which I only ever had two children. I could tell you more about my achievements and more about the City or that I haven't had a decent new idea for 10 years or quite what it was but I actually thought that it was quite reassuring and a good thing to do.

In those times when I first came onto the St Kilda Council for not quite two years it was a time of economic hardship not economic boom, it was a time where you talked about the word 'catchment' and people didn't quite know what it meant or identify with it, you talked about urban conservation rather than height controls and resisting development and you also talked about an organisation that had good financial management and was sustainable and could deliver services and not at the expense of asset sales.

Since that time we have seen three organisations come into one and that's thrown up a whole range of challenges that no one could ever have foreseen and I think really it'll taken another 10 years until Port Phillip has become that strong vigorous, vibrant organisation that can meet the expectations of its diverse community and I think that's fine because I think its well on the way.

Its got money in the bank, its doubled its expenditure on infrastructure those basic not-negotiables that we can't ignore the roads, the rubbish, the drains, the decade of the drains happened and I think that's incredibly important and we now have had time to be able to stop and say what sort of place do we want to be and for a Local Government area that's a luxury and if we can really engage the community in that discussion then I think it's a privilege and something that our community should grasp with both hands and participate in.

Part of my looking back made me think well why do it, and it's a positive privilege, it's a wonderful opportunity and its been a wonderful thing to make a difference, and to actually be able to chip away, my mother talks about woodpeckers that chip away and after a while they do make a dint and I think I am a bit of a woodpecker and I think I can go around the City and see that I have in fact made a dint and I hope a positive difference and contribution.

I think that that's only possible because as a group of seven we've decided that we will work together and that might be a more difficult process at times or take a bit longer at times but we're a diverse group and the community has a diverse range of interests and if we can come to a collective position then its probable a better representation of the views of the community.

So its been a genuine effort to work together and I think we have done that well. We also couldn't have done a damn thing without the staff and I hope from the comments you've heard tonight you realise that each of us appreciate your efforts hugely.

Not one of us would ever ever contemplate saying they don't work hard enough and their heart's not in it and we think you are all committed. Well I am speaking for myself, but I think you are all incredibly committed, very motivated and have rotten hard jobs that you do exceptionally well so I would like to thank you all for your efforts there.

And I would also like to thank the people that actually allow me to do this who are of course the community living in Elwood and Ripponlea who have supported me for some time now ,which shows a lot of faith and at the same time a lot of responsibility. But also those people who I can ring up at 10 minutes to 6 and say the baby sitter has cancelled can you get here now and they say sure and they bring meals and they do all those things that help. One of my kids is at cricket tonight, another one's heard more speeches than anyone should have to in their life and is watching telly, another one is at home doing his homework but I know they are here in spirit and I'd like to thank them too. So thank you all".

Cr Brand made the following comments:

“At the expense of about three hours of valuable doorknocking I’ve sort of managed to put together about half a formal speech and the other half is blank pages so we’ll see how we go.

Mayor and Councillors and Distinguished Guests and we’re all Distinguished Guests, you all are. Its hard to believe that its three years almost ago that we were here in this Chamber making our acceptance speeches. Most of us spoke about our hopes and aspirations for the coming term and again this evening I want to talk about the future. But since my future can’t be foretold more than a week ahead now I guess I’ll have to say a few words about the past instead.

And I’ll speak personally even though Cr Johnstone said look everyone is here to hear about the Council and not about us personally but so I feel like my whole speech might be irrelevant but in a sense I think Councillorship in particular is something which is not a functionary position, it is about bringing a personal life out of the community into the running of this Local Government system and so this is the end of three years of each of our lives in that role and I think that the personal lives and the personal input that we’ve brought to Council is in part what the community has voted for and has wanted in this system so maybe its relevant.

I’ve been in public life for only about four and a half years which makes me a much less experienced operator than some youngsters like the Mayor who’ve been in the political realm since pre-pubescence just those few years ago.

I started with the Espy Campaign to halt the big skyscraper in the front yard and suddenly I was on Council and its been a short but for me a huge journey which is of course rapidly approaching a cross-roads next week and maybe it’s a level crossing with a huge train approaching I’m not sure. Anyway whether I end up squished or not, being on Council has been definitely the best thing that I’ve ever done with my life. So its worth explaining here why.

The first best thing about being on Council is a sense of regaining community. When I first moved into St Kilda in the early eighties I felt like I knew everybody there and everybody I knew was there and I had a strong sense of community that I lived amongst. And as the years went on into the nineties people moved on and went to other places and I felt that my St Kilda, my golden age of St Kilda had sort of passed. And I got regretful about it and I joined things like the Esplanade Alliance to try and keep bits of it together.

Joining a community group suddenly opened up a new community that was there right next to me, my neighbours who socially I mightn’t have chosen to socialise with but because there was a common purpose you suddenly meet a whole lot of people who are right there next to you with common interests. Fantastic people, it’s a fantastic community and I suddenly realised that after a year or so of doing that that I had made a whole new community.

Moving into Council, becoming part of Council, becoming the Ward Councillor for a constituency of 10,000 people in my neighbourhood has brought to me the most incredible sense of community. You meet so many more people than you could possibly imagine. So it's a community that I feel that I have now of all of the little things that are happening, places like Veg Out, an incredible sense of community and on the other side the St Kilda West RSL a tiny community which is really fantastic.

There are residents, there are traders, all of these people have gone together to make a much broader and deeper sense of community for me, the great privilege is to be somehow representing that as well.

Also the community that I have gained is the community of Council itself, both the Councillors who I spend much more time with than just about anybody else and the Staff who have provided a huge community of interest and intellectual interest and passion and what have you that I feel my life is mixed up with and that's a wonderful, wonderful thing to have gained through coming to Council.

The second best point has been finding a team and a media where I have been able to do my very best and most efficient work.

This Council, especially the 7 Councillors, has provided a fantastic team based on a sense of harmony of consensus based on a positive attitude, constructive work, respectful discussions and that has been a wonderful group to work in. There is none of the back-stabbing and the terrible politicking that you hear about in other Councils that I could have wasted so much time and been so absolutely hopeless at anyway.

That's despite Cr Lewisohn's speech before. I think that it demonstrates that all of us at different times, no matter how harmoniously we have worked together, we have all played the devil's advocate very very hard and strong on different issues according to our different perspectives and our different abilities and its been a really fantastic Council to work with in that way.

The other reason that its been so fantastic for me personally to work in this milieu is that as a Councillor you have all the staff to do the basic work for you and they do all the writing and the organising and all the support work and which I'm just notoriously inefficient at doing myself, so it is just a fantastic privilege to come in, to be able express the things I want to express, put forward the views that need to be put forward and have them taken away and worked on by everybody else. You know that is an amazing feeling I've got to tell you.

The third thing that makes being on Council so amazing is the absolute privilege of working on the issues that you actually really care about most. Things like protecting the icons of our City, the Espy, the Towers and the sea baths and countless other things that we all love, conserving what's best and most beautiful and most intimate and evocative in our City, the foreshore, the future of St Kilda Junction, heritage housing stock, our street furniture, our heritage plaques, whatever it is, it's the urban character of our City both St Kilda and the whole of the City of Port Phillip that its just so fantastic to be working with the subject matter that I work with, improving the architecture, dealing with individual sites in detail, whether big or small, constantly focussing on the things you really love in the City, the things that you have your deepest allegiance and emotional roots in, this is just an extraordinary privilege that I felt that I have gained by being on Council, to actually work on these things and that's just the heritage and architectural design part of it, there's the whole question of the future of our City as an inner urban sort of living organism at the core of the worlds most livable city; and as a community with an extraordinary history and cultural breadth.

Its about shaping our future as an inner urban community, what qualities of life make living here so livable but different from our very livable suburbs further out, what gives depth to this community?

Does it have the heart to remain the home and the haven for so many of our marginalised and outcasts and alternative groups and people as it always has in the past? What is intrinsic and indispensable about our past and our present character as a City? What is exciting and sustainable about our City as a future City? What's necessary to make it happen what's necessary to stop happening right now. Often I can't believe that I'm actually working on all of these things.

Its immensely inspiring and energising and I don't know of any other way into the heart of these issues except through Local Government and community participation. I would never have had the chance to work on so many of these issues and so much of what really means the most to me. It's the whole reason to be on Local Government in our local area.

The fourth great thing about being on Council is of course the excellent pay conditions and the opportunity Council gives you to retire from all other professional career activities.

It's a refreshing change it affords to leave behind all those tired but staid old friendships and loved ones and life interests and just the chance to simply lose the life you were so pointlessly living beforehand.

It does feel good to play the martyr on occasion but actually really there are no complaints from this complaint magnate being apart the key thing really is, as I said it's the most wonderful thing I've ever done in my life and the key to it is being a sort of a central part in bringing a community together with these fantastic and important and exciting issues that we're facing.

The future of these issues I mean that's exactly why I'm standing for Council again because I can't, there are things that just need to be done, we're halfway through, I can't let go of them, I'm totally excited about them and you can read about them in my campaign literature but I do want to say thank you to everybody that's been a part of that process, in particular the community for voting me in but I hope that my personal fulfilment and personal enjoyment and commitment to it has actually represented what the community wanted out of a Councillor and I'm sorry for all the mistakes I've made and there have been heaps but I hope that I guess the personal approach to being a Councillor is something which has contributed something to the City.

So to all my other Councillors and to everyone in the community, thank you very much".

Cr Gross made the following comments:

“Mr Mayor, Mr Deputy Premier, fellow Councillors, fellow Councillors from other areas, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls.

I want to talk tonight about tonight’s ceremony of closure and conclusion and completeness.

It is a very funny thing this ceremony, because it is an ambiguous moment for us all. We have spent three years locked in this Chamber, wrestling with matters that to us seem at times weighty and often trivial. It has been an emotional rollercoaster and has been very important to the seven individuals here.

So, tonight we come to the end of that three year time and we celebrate it. It is ambiguous for a number of reasons. The ambiguity comes from the fact that we will be losing at least one of our members and perhaps more and that is the meat grinder that is the electoral process. We also have some ambiguity because of the fear and uncertainty that at least six of us are facing given that we face this electoral meat grinder. So we come here, we have probably spent at least part of the day trying to plan for our hopeful return, begging for votes, writing propaganda, distributing said propaganda and fixing a smile on our dial as we do it.

So, we come here with a degree of uncertainty, but we also come with a ready made review, we always have these door stop interviews on people’s doors as we try to summarise what we have done and how fabulous we have been, not withstanding the perceptions.

In this ceremony of closure, I call it a rite of passage. Rites of passage celebrate change, and tonight we are celebrating a major change the end of a Council in a small municipality in the State of Victoria. For the people outside our world it is completely irrelevant rite of passage, but for the people involved it is at times a gut wrenching importance. I think it is a important rite of passage, I have never been able to celebrate it at all appropriately because I have always felt tormented by the fear, for either myself or for my brother and sister Councillors and because it is an ending and all endings are sad.

Part of it must be to work through and create a different ceremony of closure and completion.

I think Father Jim Minchin would tell us that we actually break some of the many rules about doing an appropriate ritual, rituals are all about non-verbal communication and here we are drowning in a welter of words. We should be like our forebears use to be, bells and smells dressed in colours and metal of the City, that would be a more involving ritual. At least it gives us a chance to vent our emotion in ways that may be less involving than a non-verbal ritual, but at least it gives us an opportunity to unburden to you.

At the end of this, we will have created our own history. You create your own history by your final testament, final statement of how you did as a Council both individually and collectively. I am actually going to leave that to my fellow Councillors who have done a pretty good job of it and of course the traditional role of the Mayor to wallow in an orgy of self justification and self glorification. I hope that has been well prepared.

Can I just finish these statements about tonight's ceremony by saying this, personally being a Councillor is something that is important to my very core. It is something that gives me meaning and is something that I find deeply involving. I look forward, I have to say with unapologetic ambition to serving a third term and perhaps I might not. That is the tinge of uncertainty and sadness for six out of the seven of us face.

I leave you tonight with these ambiguous feelings and I just want to say something just unambiguous to finalise, I want to thank unreservedly all of the Officers and I want to thank unreservedly my family.

Thank you".

8. COMMENTS BY OUTGOING MAYOR

Cr Hill made the following comments:

“David Spokes Chief Executive Officer, fellow Councillors, to the General Management Team and Staff, I also want to acknowledge and point out an embarrassed slightly Liana Thompson who was the first Mayor of the City of Port Phillip and has returned to us.

Lianna had to run away to England for a year, a couple of years to recover from her Council term on first Port Phillip Council and she came back only a month or two ago, just for the party, no that's not true,

I would also like to acknowledge there's a number of Senior Police with us tonight and I thank you for coming and I think that is a testament to the improved relationship in the last few years between the Council and the police force, you are not in uniform so Hello I know who you are, Candidates, we did invite every candidate who has nominated for Council, it's a pity that most of them haven't turned up but there you go, they're out doorknocking.

Welcome to those who are here, important people, self-important people, staff, Deputy Premier, Minister Thwaites thank you for coming, staff, friends of the City, ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys, and anyone else who wants to be acknowledged. Thank you very much for being here this year, for this rite of passage as Cr Gross so aptly said.

I will also acknowledge as I didn't do so at the start of the meeting the traditional owners, the Boonerwung language people, as we do at all ordinary Council meetings in the spirit of reconciliation.

This is the last meeting of the Council and in my last minute fashion I fiddle fuddle for about an hour and a half this afternoon trying to work out what I was going to say. Unlike last year's Annual General Meeting, this does feel more like a full stop than a comma and as its my first term on Council I haven't really sat on this side of the fence for one of these before.

It's certainly been three exciting, challenging and I think productive years for the Councillors and the Council as a whole. And I went around in circles for my hour and a half this afternoon like those seagulls on the foreshore that a couple of residents always complain about, I don't know how we are supposed to get rid of them, thinking of millions, millions of things that I could say.

Final speeches are a bit like election leaflets where there's just so much that you want to tell them and you think, why can't you have a nineteen page election leaflet and why can't you have a three hour speech because there's so much to impart but at the end of the day it can be distilled back down to some thank you's and some values. I'm hopeful and confident that the work of this Council and I don't discount Cr Lewisohn's comments and I think its probable a little complex to respond to them here because I actually agree with a number of them but I'm hopeful and confident that the work of this Council will stand the test of time. I mean words, minutes and practical actions, so I don't intend, turn your phone off, so I don't intend to go through the achievements and topics. I will structure this speech around thank you's.

Firstly, thank you to my Colleagues. If there's one thing I've learned in the last three years and this was alluded to, I had worked in a two party political environment for a few years before this and its been a wonderful change going into Local Government because you regain the shades of grey in the world and you realise why you were attracted to public policy or politics or community governance in the first place, its because of the issues and one thing that this has reminded me of is that the only way to really get anything done is to work with people.

Carmel, my sort of or Councils Media Officer who does prepare speeches from time to time for us, she didn't write me a speech this time, she flew off to Sydney for a Conference for two days and left me with three quotes and said these might help you, so I used one of them and if every good speech has a quote here's my quote. Mark Twain once said that, "In the first place God made idiots. This was for practice. Then he made committees". This of course was said a long time before the current Port Phillip Council was elected!

A lot changes in 3 years. When the seven of the Councillors first got together three long years ago, none of us really knew each other very well or even knew how we'd function together. Five of the seven of us were new kids on the block so to speak and had no real Local Government experience except perhaps for Carolyn who had at least worked in local government previously.

Just a brief sketch of the political and social environment only three years ago but when I was looking back over those priorities and flicked over the newspapers it really was a different world out there.

Port Phillip was under siege from the then State Government which wanted to plonk huge high rise building on the foreshores of Port Melbourne and St Kilda and the community was quite rightly up in arms over this. The Council was being threatened every other week by Minister McClellan to be sacked if they uttered words that he didn't like and that does create a real mental pressure in the way that you operate when you are under that sort of threat.

The death rate from drug overdoses was soaring and Local Government was being dragged into that debate or jumping into the debate in our case. We were struggling to maintain services under rate capping and or compulsive competitive tendering as many called it.

The budget was only just balanced after the Commissioner period. Parking was a growing problem as development pressure continued. The scars of amalgamation were still festering more than they are today in some areas.

With the support of the former CEO, Anne Dunn, we spent six months learning the ropes together. We also learned to get along and to trust each other, and that I think was Anne's greatest gift to us before she left, was building that sense of trust between the staff and the Councillors and each other, the den mother, I can now look back and go yes we were led horses by the nose for the first year, now Councillors we will drink from the Budget trough, now we are going to the Statutory Planning trough and we will teach you this, nevertheless Anne was very successful in teaching us those skills in the first few years which were more necessary than I think any other time because of the number of new Councillors. I have some comments on that near the end.

The community of course was lucky that the last election did elect no nutters or single issue candidates to the Council, I had experience in other Councils and I'm not going to make personal comments about some of the Candidates that have nominated but I think it is fair to say that any Council that does end up with a nutter in a group of seven or does end up with a single issue Councillor is severely hamstrung by that presence and I thank all of you for taking a broad policy interest in whatever has come before despite having your own policy barrows to push.

In a group of seven there is nowhere to hide, you do have to get along and you have to all put in and there's no passengers in any in this Council. We have had a few interesting arguments along the way. Carolyn and I had some notable spats in the first year, I think you walked out first and then I walked out, but as in our broader community our strength has lain in our diversity and that is something which I can truly say I appreciate, the fact that we are all different and have all different life experiences, ages stages, looks, gender, interests and so on has strengthened us. We've both used those experiences to strengthen the Council but we have learnt a lot from the Council along the way and I thank you for the experience.

As well of course as representing the most socio-economically diverse, so the most recent stats say and the fastest changing Ward in the City and the most disadvantaged, I will slip that one in again, I have also been the Mayor. The huge degree of support I've had from other Councillors have been crucial in my ability to even make a semblance of doing this almost impossible job. I just want to embarrass each of you make a few personal comments about you, this is the sort of Mayoral waffle that Dick alluded to, this is the proper thing to do:

- *Cr Dick Gross is a great Councillor. He's clever, fun, experienced and strategic. Of course his attention span is notoriously short (which is something we share), he has terrible dress sense (which is something we occasionally share), he has excess body hair (which is something we do not share) the reason that I think it is fair to mention that is because of his dress sense because he changes it all the time, he loves food more than pretty much anything. I am privileged to have worked with him and to have enjoyed his support throughout my two years as Mayor. He did not get the ex-Mayors syndrome he did not behave badly, he moved on and I thank you for your support.*
- *Cr Liz Johnstone – I was a little bit wary of Liz when I was first elected because she is not from the Community Alliance and I'd heard quite a bit of untrue scuttlebutt about her, about how she was anti-this and anti-that or whatever. But over time I have come to know her better, like and respect her. I think it true to say she is a true independent and I trust her views when they are put that they are honestly held and not influenced. She is very in touch with her community, and I now take great note of what I call the Liz 'whinge barometer'. That's a nice way of saying if Liz doesn't get her way on something, like most of us, usually she moves on like we all do, but occasionally she starts whingeing and she whinges louder and louder and louder and more forcefully but then its usually a sign that its worth listening again as I have come to realise that she's usually right. You are right on the knocker. Thank you Lizzie.*

- *Cr David Brand – if they had to make a Councillor for St Kilda in a lab they'd make David. He is creative, engaging, a tad irreverent, dedicated, fun, mostly organised and gets the job done just before the deadline. He doesn't like getting up or going out before midday, he needs a few coffees to get anywhere, is always about 10 minutes late, a bit messy, is passionate about whatever he's doing, sends very very very very long e-mails and what else can I say, he usually has about 1200 left unread but he somehow manages by osmosis to read the important ones and he can get on with anyone. I think he is the real epitome of St Kilda and I hope he gets returned to the Council.*
- *Cr Carolyn Hutchens – Perhaps it's a girl thing but like Liz, Carolyn is also a wonderful barometer of ordinary community opinion. She is a great Ward Councillor, she is very in touch with her Ward and community. She loves talking with and helping people and has really deep and strong connection to her community which is something that I think she has taught all of us in her own way. We've had some fiery and robust exchanges along the way but I think each of us has actually learnt and realised that the other was right whatever the issue and compromised and learnt a lot about each other. I'm very proud to have worked with her and call her a colleague and friend.*
- *Cr John Lewisohn – Now one thing I've learned from John is that you don't respond in kind, barristers have a very very good touch of making complex things sound simple and it's both a comment on John, and a sign of the time of the cycle we're in, that I think John is the smartest of us all as he's not standing for re-election. He adds a vital element to our team's diversity, his life and work experience comes from fields generally different to the rest of us as we've learnt to listen and respect John's views when he speaks. Partly as he can castigate us with his tongue if we don't. Probably because his trade is the law, John at times conceals well the compassion he actually feels for the community, and particularly in planning he has taught us all 1,000,000 different ways to say no firmly but politely.*
- *Cr Darren Ray – Darren is both a conscientious and talented Councillor, and I think it is fair to say one of my dearest friends. As a Councillor he is annoying. I think he comes second only to me in the 'whinge about how much money your neighbourhood needs' stakes. His achievements for East St Kilda and Balaclava are tangible and expensive. I cannot believe that he snuck those round of footpaths as a separate items through the Capital Works Budget but we learnt. The system is fixed, it doesn't happen any more. As well, Darren's intellect and policy brain have made real contributions to policy areas including human services and housing.*

And as a friend I cannot praise him highly enough. He sees and puts up with my tiredness, my stress, tantrums and other bad behaviour more than just about anyone else, and in doing so has kept me sane, healthy, positive and on track. And I thank you for that.

**Collectively the Mayor asked the gallery to acknowledge and thank the Councillors for their work.*

There is a triangle of relationships which I have referred to before that I think binds Local Governments and community together. That triangle is the Councillors on the Council, the staff and the community. Now let me say a few words about the community. We have immense natural and physical assets in Port Phillip that most of Melbourne would be jealous of. We have a unique combination of bay, beach and beautiful buildings. But the real strength is certainly our people, in all their astonishing diversity. What were once largely separate tribes from Port Melbourne, South Melbourne and St Kilda since amalgamations have been slowly but surely developing more common linkages and concerns.

Whilst we are now one City, the real focus for most residents and traders continues understandably to be our neighbourhoods when you tell someone you live in Port Phillip from whootpitydo when they ask where you live, you say you live in Port Melbourne or St Kilda or you live in South Melbourne. Yes that's true, Cr Gross has an oft repeated point that there's a generational issue going on and perhaps your children are strange that they have got a Councillor for a Dad, but perhaps some younger people do increasingly relate to Port Phillip but semantics aside we still live in our neighbourhoods. I must note for the record and I don't think it is just because the elections are in the offing, I sincerely regret that there are some pretty sad and woeful types in our community who still use the Council amalgamations to drum up division and distrust.

That is in no way to say that it is wrong to acknowledge the history and heritage which we have and the wonderful work of the former Councils but we have the system we have, there are strengths to it, there are weaknesses to it, certainly but I passionately believe the work and rhetoric of Local Government should be positive, not negative. I also believe that despite the loss of these former identities, that we are not really that different when you live 5 kilometres down the road in the scheme of things and that we are not so narrow minded in our totality that we cannot get on and help each other. So I hope that in the coming years this amalgamation divide does dissipate and disappear without losing the heritage that we have.

It is of course no easy task to strike the right balance as Councillors between the citywide strategic issues and the old-fashioned municipal concerns, the clean streets the knocking on the doors and the worrying about why the rubbish bins hasn't been put back properly. If you do this job properly you have almost got to be schizophrenic and both handle those strategic wide issues and think City wide and you have also got to be a little bit like the old parish priest wandering around and being available for any sort of odd complaint at any time of the day at home or anywhere else.

This tension between the old and new style of Councillor lives on and will certainly always played out in the elections and will hopefully be explored more openly with the community in the upcoming governance review, and it needs to be if this job is to be sustainable.

Each of us in our different ways has tried to balance those broader demands with the needs of our own neighbourhoods, whilst understanding each others. I won't harp on about all the things I would want to say about Port Melbourne, my neighbourhood here. It's a challenging, exciting, diverse neighbourhood and I think Liana when she tapped me on the shoulder and said you should run for Council was looking for someone who was connected through to those old networks which are still very alive and vibrant and alive there particularly the ALP down there but also someone who was relatively new to Port Melbourne and wasn't perhaps carrying as much baggage as some may given the newness of the population.

I think I am largely typical of that down there, I'm a newish resident, and I've been there five or six years, I can relate to the half of the suburb now that's only been there a few years but I've been very respectful and I've learnt a lot from the old comrades from Port Melbourne and I'll name a few of them but not all of them in a moment. Port Melbourne like a lot of other neighbourhoods does feel neglected from time to time, that stuff comes out in elections but I can testify without getting out budget figures that the other Councillors believe Port Melbourne is a blackhole, we come with our cap out year after year and I'm glad to say I've continued our legacy for us, Lianne and got more money for us last year.

But across Port Phillip, we have every kind of person and skill that a community could ever need. You here tonight are representative of that, of course being a long week-end we have had a lot of apologies due to people being elsewhere. So my heartfelt thanks go out to all of you who have worked with us both corporately and individually, for your contribution to this Council and this community. I don't there is anywhere else in Melbourne where Local Government is both so challenging and so vibrant and so rewarding if stressful.

The other part of that triangle, I've done the Councillors and I've done the community, the staff and the organisation. A lot has been said by other Councillors and I'll try and keep it brief but none of us as Councillors has really ever have a hope of getting anything done without the staff they're our "the arms and legs" as Anne Dunn told us when we were first elected.

Firstly to the CEO, David Spokes. David took over as CEO almost a year ago. I said then that I felt his appointment on behalf of the Council was right for the times and I think that is being borne out. I agree with John that you have the makings of an excellent CEO and the work that I have seen to date, and I don't think that that is in any way a backhanded comment, when we appointed you we asked for evolution not revolution. It would take a couple of years to accept a service culture and the improvements to basic physical services, things are moving in the right direction.

One of David's only flaws I think is that he does too well in disguising his intelligence and basic compassion with the CEO face. Now have a look at it now, he has got it on now, he does, he has pink socks on. Now the former CEO was well-known for making an idiot of herself in public and singing I mean in public, not stuffing up but her community aspects. I'm going to have a go and see if we can break that face because I finally broke Anne's CEO face at her outgoing meeting because I told everyone what her gesture meant. Everyone who has worked with Anne would know that gesture that you got from time to time, she made the mistake of telling me what it was one day, tell someone who gives a damn, that was her gesture and she's say this is the way I can listen to maniacs talking to me, why did you do it to all the staff and all of us.

David's story, I got it actually from one of your sons when I happened to be out drinking one night, well I only had two beers so it wasn't like that because the Health Minister's here but I was out at the Prince of Wales and we ended up at the Espy and it turned out after an hour or two that this bloke we had just been chatting to, his girlfriend was there, he was David Spokes' son and he said "Oh, you guys have made Dad so happy, you made him the CEO", and that's a reflection of the fact David is a career Local Government professional and he loves local government and he loves communities and he is very dedicated and passionate about it but Ciaran told me the little story about that little party you had with your family soon after we appointed you, a little celebratory David party and he told me this story and we might do this dance together down there later on. He told me the story of when your sister Judy Spoke, who also has worked in Local Government, you had had quite a few wines and you were dancing around the tennis court singing CEO to the tune of YMCA, so I think we can collectively practice that downstairs later on. Thank you for letting me break the CEO face.

David has been ably supported by the General Management Team, David Graham who was the former Town Clerk, CEO at Port Melbourne, Geoff Oulton who I had the pleasure of going to France with and studying public transport, Sally Calder, David Yeouart and Stephen O'Kane.

I can't really mention other managers for fear of offending because there's so many that could be mentioned. But I'm going to break that rule and single out three and a half people. I hope no one takes offence in me doing so.

- Firstly, I want to mention Bruce Phillips, Bruce is a third level manager who is the Manager of Planning and Building Services. It is a testament to you Bruce is that the people who applauded are the Residents Planning Action Groups, I don't think you'd find a Council in Victoria where the planning activists applaud the Planners. Bruce is an outstanding local government professional, he is a planner by trade and a Manager by accident I think because of his skills, he has been offered other opportunities in the organisation but has so far consistently rejected them and said no I'm a Planner. If there is any area that has the potential for just downright mistakes, stuffups, corruption or what else its Planning and Bruce runs a very clean and tight planning department. I don't think any other manager has the late nights and the consistent problems and Committee Meetings as Bruce does and I thank you for your service to the Council. The half person that I wanted to mention is your sidekick Sue Wilkinson who has the makings of a very good senior officer and sticks with many late nights with us as the Team Leader of Planning.*
- Secondly, the other Bruce, Bruce McKeon, Bruce McKeon is the Manager of Property and Regulatory and also came across from the City of Port Melbourne with David Graham, the reason I mention Bruce is that he is the epitome of the old style of Local Government which was very much about service in small communities and he brings that cultural heritage and corporate knowledge which is invaluable to this organisation. He gets things done.*
- And the final person I want to mention who is on his way back from Sydney from meetings and so on is Allan Gatiss, the Manager of Communications. As Anne Dunn famously said "Every organisation needs a Gatiss but only one".*

- *To all the other Staff, 38% of you live here, I think that would probably be a record for any local government organisation that 40% of the people who work here actually live here, and you are part of this community. You are a wonderful team and it's the sort of organisation that I would very much like to work in myself. You seem to have a positive culture, you work hard, you are passionate about what you do and I thank you for your service to the City and the community.*

The Matriarchy upstairs as Dick pointed out when he was Mayor continues on, the only thing is that we swapped a girl CEO for a boy CEO and there's two of us up there:

- *Mary Baensch, the Councillors' Secretary and Assistant; Mary has stuck out time with the Commissioners and has continued to serve the Councillors; she's a wonderfully, wonderfully, I'd say the word placid, without meaning it in any derogatory way.*
- *Connie Ticinovic, the CEO's PA; your dedication to the Councillors although you work for David, thank you for the ways you help us out.*
- *Marisa Tramontana, the Office Manager; Marisa was a new appointment when we appointed David and merged the Mayors and the CEO's office and I think that's largely a sign of the maturity and trust between the Councillors and the Management that we now have a jointly run CEOs and Mayors office, there's not that separation that occurs in many Councils, Marisa is an absolutely outstanding administrator and we knew you were right for the job and thank you.*
- *Two very personal and heartfelt thank you's to Carmel Shute, who is on her way back, the Council Media Officer, I said I wouldn't do the poop shoot joke so I won't. Carmel is I think a very dear friend of the Councillors and of the community and has had previous involvement with the community and she is wonderful to work with if at times challenging, Carmel and I know our sleeping habits by the way we can always ring each other on Tuesday until 11.30 because she will either be doing her media releases or watching Star Trek or both at the same time. I can't praise you highly enough Carmel and I know having seen the amount people pay media consultants, I know how much money you could make in the real world, so to speak so thank you.*
- *And to Barbara Higgins, the Mayor's executive assistant I love you dearly and I thank you for the support you have given me professionally and personally; there was times when you picked Elly up from school and dealt with me being sick and dealt with all sorts of other crises that come up when I integrated my personal and work life. Thank you. There's not really enough you can say about Barbara and I think Dick said the same about Barbara when he was Mayor. So thank you.*

To the silly idiotic candidate who has been ringing the staff this week telling them he'll split them up, have them sacked or whatever if he gets elected, that would be the dumbest thing that you could do! That team of women that I have just outlined are absolutely outstanding in their service to the Councillors. There are other thank you's, apologies but this does need to be recorded.

To the local Members of Parliament and the State Government who have played an enormously valuable role in getting things done.

Assertions this is an ALP kowtowing council I think are patent nonsense as John would testify that we have had our fights with all of you at times and put things vocally when necessary. But we do get on and work with all our local MP's of any political persuasion.

- John Thwaites, our local State MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Health and, until recently, Minister for Planning. To John I don't know how you handle your Ministerial role and your role as a local member; you're accessible to us, you attend Council meetings, you attend community events, your door has always been open and you have certainly used those two roles particularly on drug policy and planning to deliver for this community.*
- To Andrea Coote, Member for Monash Province and Peter Katsambanis, Member for Monash Province, the two Members for the Upper House, they are great fun, and we certainly get on well with them both when they are in Government and when they are in Opposition, they have certainly helped us, they are very good local Members I thank you.*
- To Leonie Burke who is of course the Member for Prahran and Michael Danby, the Federal Member and Senator Lyn Allison who is a Democrat Senator for Victoria and who is a resident of Port Melbourne and a local community activist particularly on planning matters. Thank you to our Parliamentary representatives.*

Thank you to all the members of the communities who have been members of our advisory committees and reference group members especially Older Persons Reference Group and the Younger Persons Reference Group of whom there's one or two members here tonight being the newest Reference Groups at Council.

Thank you to the immense range of local organisations and businesses who I won't name. I think this Council has about half the number of Resident Planning Action Groups in Victoria, we've got about half of them here in Port Phillip, pretty much every street has its own local Action Group but that is a sign of the community strength and interest in the community, you can't even chop a tree down around here, literally you cannot chop a tree down without getting a call from a resident as a Councillor saying you chopped a tree down, so they have got a system to tell us the day before they chop trees down so we can sound intelligent and informed.

As I said I am going to skip the achievements list. I think I hope that the record of Council stands testament to that.

Local Government is still about service delivery. There is no doubt about it, it is about service delivery, roads, rates, rubbish and roundabouts or the three or four Ps of Local Government, Prostitution, Parking, Poo and Planning. Provided the basic services are right, however I think this community is big enough to accept that the Local Government has a bigger role beyond that basic service delivery and that I see is the contract between the Council and the community that provided we keep delivering the basic services, you encourage and commit us to go off and advocate in other policy areas be they drugs, planning, prostitution, VCAT reform, home care funding or whatever.

SUSTAINABILITY is still the theme and has remained so for this Council and I think in all of the four sustainabilities, community, culture, the environment and the economy we have made great strides. The Annual Report is the more appropriate place to detail those strides.

Moving to a close it has been an interesting phenomenon being Mayor working in St Kilda and living in Port Melbourne. I said this last year and it is worth repeating. You can't win as Lianna would well know. Even though you lived in Garden City, if you talked to Garden City residents they'd swear black and blue you didn't know where the place is and that you had never been there. I've doorknocked all of them and I'm always finished doorknocking them twice before the election but they still say you have never been there.

If you talk to South Melbourne residents they swear black and blue everyone is trying to close every service down there, that it is all a plot, that we actually hate them. If you talk to St Kilda residents, they say you are from Port Melbourne and you would not have a clue what we are on about. Nevertheless its been very rewarding working in the different neighbourhoods and I hope that we have served you ably.

All in all, I think this shows the strengths in our community and I would rather that sort of reaction rather than apathy.

Some personal thank you's:

- Done the councillors and staff.*
- I want to thank particularly the Port Melbourne ALP Branch members and note that I say the Port Melbourne ALP branch, the ALP is not some monolithic organisation as many people think in local Government, indeed they don't give you any money, they don't give you any organisational support, they don't print your leaflets, but in the Port Melbourne ALP Branch I have a very rare and lucky support group, they are particularly the older Branch members – they are from an era where the local Branch was very much the local community and those community networks and what you have taught me about local community are valuable lessons and thank you to all of you.*
- To the Community Alliance of Port Phillip of course for your broader city wide support, thank you.*
- To a number of local activists and I never get them all but I have gotta name a few who aren't from the ALP because I have very much worked across the political spectrum in Port Melbourne. To Pat Granger, to Janet Belako, to Andrew and Penny Toroc and many many more thank you for your support to me and guidance in this term from the Port Melbourne perspective.*

Outside of this place, its strange but true, but I've managed to maintain a bit of a semblance of a life. Any of my friends who don't have e-mail have since stopped being friends but I hope to sort of find their phone numbers in coming weeks. Thank you to Mum who has helped out and been an emergency child-minder and kept me grounded that is of course to my approach to life. She hasn't told me to stay in my room since I was about four and a half when she put me in it and I destroyed the room.

My brother, Damien, is always there for me and I give thanks that you are always there for me given some of the challenges we have faced in the past few years.

My daughter, Elly, who is not here tonight but she has gone to the Port Fairy Folk Festival showing her eminent good taste in preference to another Council Meeting or a boring Daddy speech.

To a variety of special friends have kept me amused and loved. But the real, actually for any of you locally who have already hung a bit of crap on me for it, there was that letter in the paper a few weeks ago that said, that praised me as a single parent with two children, I corrected the fact that I have not been as productive as the letter implied and I actually only have one children but Lorien, Elly's mother, said I want to write into the paper and say that I am the unsung heroine of Port Phillip. Lorien, Elly's Mum, is my ex and she is also my best mate and we actually live together and co-parent Elly and although she is down at the folk festival I wanted to publicly mention her and thank her. She is the unsung heroine of Port Phillip, I've said it, it was her line but its in the minutes.

I want to show you my secret friend too. Now normally the Council tables are all set up there but there are times in local government when lunatics come and talk to you, not very often but sometimes there are people who come and they are very strange and they say very strange things. This is my special friend who has kept me sane. His name is Cr Teeny and I found him here when I first got elected Mayor. He was Mayor in the year I was born and he sits and looks at me and he looks so stoic that I just wanted to put him on the record. No its not the missing one, he lives in the Bible here which hasn't had a lot of use in my tenure but maybe the next Mayor will do so. Cr Teeny is here should you wish to have a look at him. My secret is revealed.

This job is hard. I'm sorry to say it but to anyone who has any idea of the work of a Councillor these days, the State Government's decision a couple of years ago on pay and conditions was downright pathetic. I thank John for the advocacy which he put in on it on our behalf having been a local Councillor but I still say that the State Government was Herald Sun driven on that and the only difference between the Kennett Government and the current Government on that topic was that they should have known better because most of them had more Local Government experience.

I really hope that that decision will be remedied in a more benign political environment but I think that has to be said on behalf of the Councillors – it is simply not a fair remuneration for the role which this community wants and expects of us and the sacrifices you have all made individually and collectively are immense.

If re-elected, I won't be standing for the position of Mayor. I've enjoyed the challenge. It suits me because I find everything interesting for about two minutes. I wish the next Mayor luck in all of the challenges in particular some of the perennials listening to Wayne Thompson's regular complaints that the council is the cause of his shop not making any money on Carlyle Street, Mrs Bieman's constant calls to me about her recycling bin being left upside down mixed up with her neighbours, to all of the people who ring to complain about the seagulls on the beach, we're sorry, to the person who rings me when the hot air balloon takes off at Murphys Reserve at 7.00am on a Sunday, I know, to the next crop of Councillors who doubtless will continue the argument over whether screening should be 1600 or 1800 mm high and make that the clear focus of Statutory Planning and let the big apartment building through little discussion, good luck and my favourite, to the person who wanted to know what Council could do about the fact that the trees on one side of Page Street in Albert Park dropped more leaves than the trees on the other side of Page Street.

Seriously I wish the next Council the best of luck. The new Council will inherit a budget, organisation and community in excellent shape, a strong foundation on which to build.

I've made some remarks before about the culture of Governance, and it's an appropriate place to close.

Whatever the result of the Council elections, I hope that the culture of governance and respect that we have created will continue – and that some of understandable political hooah, where people try to create division, will dissipate. The Councillors, Staff, and community, must keep moving forward together. I don't mean this as a pointed political comment on any particular ward but I do sincerely hope that a reasonable number of sitting Councillors are returned.

Some new blood is healthy, but three years is so short to really get any strategic governance and things changed, so short and we learnt that on the France trip where local governments cracked up laughing literally through the interpreters when they heard that our terms are three years. The terms are six over there which is about, I think that is too long but not to put a figure on it but I think three years is a very, very short time. To have five out of seven Councillors new hamstrings the Council again for another year or two while you learn the ropes.

I hope that many of you are back here and can continue and build on that foundation and culture. If that does occur then the next Council will really thrive and be in a position to address many of Councillor Lewisohn's in many-cases well founded comments and criticisms but it is very hard almost the point of impossible to make those strategic changes when the Council is turned over every three years.

So I hope that the results go well.

It has been an honour to serve the Council, and the community. I'll miss lots of bits of this job, I'll miss the people who I've had the privilege to work with. On balance I won't miss being Mayor, its time to move on, I've enjoyed the challenge, I hope I have made a reasonable contribution but I do look forward to spending more time with all of you in different capacities as we continue our adventures in life.

Thank you very much".

9. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S OVERVIEW

David Spokes, Chief Executive Officer, made the following comments:

“This is the final meeting of the 3 year term of the current Council. It sees the end of the second democratically elected Council of the City of Port Phillip. A tradition is clearly being re-established.

Municipal and community Government is dependent in many ways on an effective relationship between Councillors, Councillors and Staff and Councillors and members of the community. Many of our successes are achieved through others. A spirit of commitment and trust in all areas of the community is a vital ingredient to our success. I certainly believe that, that has been built in the City of Port Phillip.

At Port Phillip we pride ourselves on free flow of information and communication at all levels of the organisation.

I believe that this Council has continued a very high standard of team work and collaboration for which they can justly feel proud. This benefits the municipality in many ways, including maintaining a balance between the difficult strategic issues and the always ever present opportunities for improvement in our day to day operations.

I would like to acknowledge both personally and on behalf of the staff the dedication of all Councillors and thank them particularly for the rigorous way they perform their duties whilst maintaining open communication and retaining their sense of humour.

Particular achievements have been highlighted by individual Councillors and it is not appropriate for me to comment on those, prior to the coming election.

Suffice it to say however that I think there are a number of quite significant achievements, made by the Council acting as a group which I believe bode very well for the long-term future of the City.

One of the attractions of Port Phillip I think is the positive reception given to new ideas. The community of Port Phillip is a complex one, and complex and imaginative responses are therefore often required.

A major focus of this Council has been on building a sustainable organisation, treating people fairly, solving problems and responding to requests. These remain a high priority but there is clearly a long way to go.

The incoming Council will undoubtedly arrive with fresh ideas and renewed energy. Both I, the Management Team and the staff welcome them and look forward to their leadership and implementing their priorities to the best of our ability. We will provide sound, fearless and well researched advise.

I would like to acknowledge each of the Councillors, Cr Hill, Cr Brand, Cr Gross, Cr Hutchens, Cr Johnstone, Cr Lewisohn and Cr Ray, for both their individual contributions, their leadership, support and constructive advise both to me and the organisation, particularly during my last year as Chief Executive Officer.

We thank you for your efforts and wish you well in the future. Best wishes to Cr Lewisohn who has chosen not to seek re-election on this occasion. I do hope that we can draw on his ideas, his insightful ability and candour and that his skills can be available to the City from an other way.

A particular thank you to Cr Julian Hill who in his Mayoral Term, who has been of great assistance to me personally and ensured that Council retains its vibrant role.

I wish also to thank and acknowledge the Senior Leadership Group at the City of Port Phillip, the many hundreds of dedicated staff, supported by contractors, who are the backbone of the organisation. Port Phillip is particularly well served by the quality and imagination of the leadership they provide. I am very proud to be a member of that team.

Finally a thank you to the family members and friends of both Councillors and staff who show remarkable forbearance for our passion for Local Government.

Thank-you.”

*The Chief Executive Officer formally presented each Councillor with a Certificate Recognising their Contribution.

10 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Nil.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 8.10pm.

Confirmed: 22 April 2002

Chairperson: _____