

Croke Park Community Liaison Committee

Minutes of meeting held November 26th 2008

Chaired by:

Claire Barry, Sonas Consulting Ltd.

Attendees:

Pat Gates (CPARA)

Noel Morris (CPARA)

David Purdue (CPARA)

Julie McDermott (CPARA)

Cllr. Mary Fitzpatrick

Cllr. Aodhán Ó Riordáin

Roddy Guiney (Páirc an Chrócaigh Teoranta)

Julie Manahan (Páirc an Chrócaigh Teoranta)

Inspector Tony Gallagher (Fitzgibbon Street Garda Station)

Conor Martin (Drumcondra Businesses)

Charlie Lowe (Executive Manager, Central Area, Dublin City Council)

John McPartlan (Public Domain Officer, Central Area, Dublin City Council)

Bláthnaid Casey (Assistant Staff Officer, Central Area, Dublin City Council)

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising:

Roddy Guiney proposed the minutes of the meeting of October 21st were in order, Pat Gates seconded the minutes.

2. Response of stakeholders to the study:

Charlie Lowe distributed and read out a report with updates on matters identified in the study as matters specifically for Dublin City Council.

Roddy Guiney gave Croke Park's response to the report. In relation to the Croke Park newsletter, they will expand its frequency and reach; they plan to reach 10,000 households and to cover a wider expanse. The newsletter will also provide a provisional fixture list. He said that the ticket lotteries will be explained and that Croke Park will upgrade programmes in relation to schools. He said that Croke Park is also willing to host the workshops recommended in the report.

Roddy explained that in relation to the community liaison officer, the role of the person will need to be scoped out. With regard to Traffic he said that Croke Park will continue to promote public transport and should a group be set up to examine Park and Ride, Croke Park will participate in this. Croke Park's Community Gain programme will be launched in the New Year. In relation to the employment of people from the local area, he said this can be encouraged. He also stated that the GAA has begun to talk to tourist companies in an effort to incorporate Croke Park more into the life of the city.

Pat Gates read out a statement putting forward CPARA's response to the report. While CPARA are happy with the outcomes of the study and accept the conclusions and recommendations set out in it, they expressed disappointment at the lack of robust recommendations in relation to parking and transport. Pat listed CPARA's priorities for action, which are those issues identified through the surveys and workshops carried out as part of the study.

Inspector Gallagher gave details of his reaction to the report. He suggested that an explanation of the concept of the cordon might help assuage people's unhappiness with it. He reported that no injuries have occurred within the cordon area as a result of a traffic accident. He said he feels that gardaí will be unable to fulfill residents' requests to erect barriers earlier than they currently do. The barriers are set up at 8am on a match day, when the area is quiet and he doesn't think any benefit would be gained by erecting them earlier still. He said that perhaps the comments referred to nighttime concerts. In such instances, barriers are not erected until the evening, in order to prevent disruption to normal daytime traffic in the area.

He expressed surprise at the resident's claims that distribution of parking permits is unfair, he said some residents are transient and give their passes to others. With regard to clamping cars earlier in the day, he said that the gardaí will liaise with Dublin City Council on this issue. Inspector Gallagher referred to the report's executive summary that mentioned that the gardaí couldn't be seen as a 'force for hire.' Inspector Gallagher would like to clarify that he did not state this, what he had referred to was the power to search which is a power reserved for the gardaí that stewards don't have. This matter will be corrected via the consultants and the accurate position will be indicated.

Cllr. Fitzpatrick said the report provides a good objective snapshot in time and provides a long list of improvements. She expressed disappointment in the areas of parking, transport and access, and said the report does not provide very comprehensive recommendations on these issues. She suggested that the group should agree on whether it wants to move forward, and if so, it should agree a set of objectives and formulate a work plan from that.

Cllr. O'Riordáin said that the report only has merit if it forms the basis on how to proceed and improvement comes from it.

The committee agreed that the report was a legitimate one, notwithstanding the disappointment expressed by some members in some of the detail of the recommendations/solutions put forward in the areas of parking and transport.

3. Future of, and for, the Croke Park CLC:

Charlie Lowe listed the original terms of reference agreed by the committee:

- To facilitate assessment of the impact of Croke Park on the community, both positive and negative,
- To identify achievable improvements and oversee their implementation.
- To maintain constructive dialogue with relevant stakeholders.

He said he felt that the first item has been achieved, and suggested that if the committee decides to continue in existence the committee should deal with the bigger issues only, not the operational issues.

Roddy Guiney said he is unsure that the committee can solve the problems; he suggested that through collective leadership the committee could evaluate solutions and then explore who the committee might need to engage. Pat Gates said the committee should be a champion to force the issues to be resolved. Cllr. O'Riordáin said communication is the key; the long-term goal should be to turn Croke Park into a positive for the area. David Purdue suggested the committee set a series of small targets, which are achievable.

Roddy expressed disappointment that the consultants did not come across another stadium where the same problems have been tackled successfully.

Julie McDermott said that as it stands families have no incentives to use public transport; it is cheaper for a family to use their car.

Cllr. O’Riordáin suggested that Iarnród Éireann be asked why the railway line beside Croke Park remains disused. He also pointed out that QBCs are not operational on Sundays, and that this should be changed.

Conor Martin said his intention would be to have another representative from the commercial sector with him on this committee and that their attendance would rotate.

With regard to the makeup of the group, Claire Barry asked if anyone has been left out, or if anyone was redundant. Pat Gates said the group should be able to co-opt people onto the group if they have a particular expertise. Also, as the CPARA representatives are due to be reviewed soon, there may be a change of personalities on the committee. A discussion was had on the merits of having a GAA representative, Julie Manahan to put the suggestion to the GAA that a representative join this committee.

Charlie Lowe suggested the committee set some key performance indicators.

It was agreed by the group that the committee is doing well and will continue to operate to work on the report recommendations. There was a discussion about the role of the Independent Chairperson. It was agreed to retain Claire Barry as independent chairperson and that purpose of the role is to enable the committee members to provide their own leadership and direction, with a view to the committee being able to operate without an Independent Chair in the future. It was also agreed that the group will meet in December to set up priorities, agree timelines and structure.

4. Plan for dissemination of the report:

It was agreed to place the study report on the Dublin City Council website. Charlie Lowe read out a prepared press release in relation to the report, this statement will be released should any queries regarding it arise.

As some attendees of the workshop held by the consultants are anxious to receive copies of the report, Charlie Lowe is to arrange to supply a copy to those who request it – letter to issue to each attendee.

The issue of the public meeting was deferred to the next meeting.

5. AOB:

Tim O’Sullivan, Executive Manager Roads & Traffic Department, would like to attend the next meeting to listen to views of members before reporting back to the Traffic and Transportation SPC with recommendations on the way forward. It was agreed to defer his attendance until the committee priorities have been agreed at the next meeting.

Copies of minutes of meetings to be circulated to all Councillors in the Central Area, as per requests for same. It was agreed that minutes should also appear on Dublin City Council’s website.

The letter from Hugh Cawley, Chairman of Croke Park Stadium Executive Committee, (copy circulated), was deferred to the next meeting. In the meantime Claire Barry to email Hugh to explain that his letter will be discussed at the next meeting and a response from the committee will be forthcoming thereafter.

Next meeting to be held on Tuesday December 9th, (same venue).