



# Montville Chamber of Commerce Inc.

## GENERAL BREAKFAST MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Venue: Secrets on the Lake

**ATTENDANCE:** Shiralee Cooper; Otto Lechner; Tracey Malkin, Wayne Malkin, Juliannne Maher, Kate Scrace; Scott Kroeger; Andrew McLean; Aryna Dryden; Alan Dryden; Scott Aitken; Aldi Johnson, Reinhard Ryva; Sam Ryva; Ryan Hollis; Fran Hoffman; Phil Hoffman; Daniel Hoffman; Dulcie Williams; Graham Gardner; Lynn Fallon; Tove Easton; Rafer Rogers; Melissa Chaddock; Paulette Steele, Clive Waring; Elizabeth Waring; Arabella Lubbers; Wolfgang Engles; Tina Cooper; Richard Sargent; Geoff Bale; Frith Duggan; Joy Aimee; Susan Maynard; Karen Muir; Phil Casey; Margaret Casey; Susan Diplock; Peter Collins; Shell Rodney; Ali Khan; S'raya Rahmat; Pat Habner; Martyn Baldwin;

### GUEST SPREAKER:

Winston Johnston – Sunshine Coast Councilor, Div 5; Dan Jones; Jamie Franklin;

### APOLOGIES:

Tracie Sanim; Linda Jones; Nicole Hilton; Susan Brant

### The Meeting opened at 7.15am with Shiralee Cooper as Chair.

A warm welcome to members from both Maleny Commerce & Montville Chamber, and guests was extended by Shiralee Cooper, President – Montville Commerce.

### ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 at The Edge.

Shiralee moved the Minutes of the Meeting held Thursdsay 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2020, be confirmed as a correct and accurate record.

**Proposed by Shiralee Cooper**

**Seconded by Julianne Julianne Maher**

**Carried**

### CORRESPONDENCE be accepted as presented.

Shiralee moved the correspondence be accepted as presented.

**Proposed by Shiralee Cooper**

**Seconded by Julianne Maher**

**Carried**

### Shiralee gave a warm introduction to Winston Johnson, our Division 5 Councilor.

WJ began by sharing his affection for the Maleny / Montville area and the significance it holds in his heart. Council will be announcing the new CEO of the Sunshine Coast Council tomorrow after the resignation of Mike Whitaker in February. (After an investigation of the allegations against the former CEO, the allegations were found to be improper but not illegal.)

The new CEO will give a focus to culture and community service for service delivery. Previously, the council was focused on major projects located down the coast, and most hinterland communities felt neglected. WJ made a point of saying he would not support the “tower of

power” the term the new council chambers in Maroochydore are known as. He soon found that he had to swallow his strong view in this regard. As the decisions had been made and the contracts let regarding the new council chambers. WJ is on a number of committees and will have some influence around how the council will operate in the future. Councilor Dixon and WJ are concilors on the service delivery of the foyer and that includes internal and external service and delivery throughout the whole local authority including roads and parks, and internally responsible for town planning, waste management, local laws.

This council has a good balance of experience including the previous Mayor, 5 new councilors and 5 previous councilors. The comment that he gets most often fellow council members and members of the public, is that this council does not support development for the sake of development but is a breath of fresh air. But after only 5 months and a further 3 and half years to go, the view may have changed!

Getting things done in the area Montville Maleny and the Blackall Range region is of most interest to this audience. The views along the Blackall range and lookouts had largely disappears and that is one reason that brings people to this region – our beautiful views are a definite drawcard. Our own particular challenge in the hinterland is that we can’t just put councilors on a bus and bring them up her due to Covid 9. But gradually they are coming up here to see how the constant battle with weeds and trees take its toll on the views. After being told the management of weeds/trees couldn’t be done due to lack of available funds, funding was found so that this work could progress. But these are minor costs and can generally be funded, unlike funding for major works like roadworks etc.

Since elected, and because of the work of Jenny McKay, Russel Family Park and the playground for the children has been open. And the amenity block has or will include a new pump out unit, The walkway up from the park to the IGA including signage, handrails, steps etc all improvements to the park. The braille trail on the top of Razorback Lookout. It was developed by QCWA but not maintained in recent years and is now unusable. It is too dangerous to have it located in this original place, and put a braille trail in Russel Family Park which caters to a section of our community would provide a wonderful amenity for our vision impaired members of the community.

Having the lookouts and road verges sorted out will take a little while and will not be completed until the following financial year most likely. WJ will be meeting with the owners of the land on the eastern side of the lookout working to get the vegetation removed or height lowered so that the lookout remains viable.

\$66,000 of divisional funds have been located to minor capital works to improve these lookouts. Council has upgraded the standard of maintenance of various public areas like roads and parks. \$1.4m has been allocated to upgrade sections of Hunchy Road because there have been a couple of accidents over the last couple of years, a new clubhouse for the AFL grounds at Palmwoods, Maleny Showgrounds upgrade, and a solar system at the Showgrounds which will be funded by the State. WJ has plans and ideas about recognizing efficiencies, Div 5 and 10 have 76% of all gravel roads in the SCC, equating to over 600ks. Increasing the rate of improvement from 3ks a year to 3 or 4 time that amount is one way of tackling this issue over time. Living with the dust, noise, and danger is no longer acceptable in this day and age.

Covid 19 has had a big impact. Council will have lost net revenue since last financial year to this financial year – not charging licence fees, parking fees, – total net loss of \$23m. Council used the disaster fund to give Covid Disaster relief to every rate payer. The rates should have increased by an average of \$35 at the start of this financial year however now they should

remain the same as this time last year (unless your property has had an increase in valuation. However the next rates notice will reflect \$35 rate increase.

The SCC is in the early stage of going through of all of council's systems looking for efficiencies and savings, and ways of doing things better. It has been pointed out by WJ at a Service Excellence meeting that Council, due to Covid 19, and changes to the way it works, it has been able to achieve things in 2 months that usually takes 2 years to effect. And that is due to excessive bureaucracy.

WJ invited members to contact him, to meet with him, and to see what it is you want improved or changed. Taking a photo and requesting changes explained by a photo has been very effective. He has put in more requests in the last 4 months than other councillors in 4 years.

SC mentioned that our Streetscape requests were actioned in 48 hours – a very impressive turnaround.

SC invited Alan Dryden to talk about connectivity between Kondalilla Falls Rd and Montville. AD mentioned KFR has the council parking area for the park and has a lot of traffic due to the large number visitors and accommodation houses on it. The connection of KFR through to Montville would benefit the area greatly for walkers and cyclists. AD has been talking to Marty Hunt and Andrew Powell re finishing off the walk between Mapleton and the southern side of Montville. The two main areas connect Montville to the bus stop near the top of KFR. It is a state and council issue. The area between Mapleton and Ensby Road is also an issue. The Ensby Road section as far as the Div 5 boundary cost is \$700,000. The pathway needs a ramp built, and removal of a lot of camphor laurels. Between Kondalilla Falls Road and Montville the amount would be over \$1m. Other requests for footpaths in Div 5 total over \$15m.

SC suggested seeking other ways to connect these areas would be worthwhile. An area at the bottom of Manley Dr and adjacent to Flamehill Vineyard, which is council owned land could be an option of connecting walking areas through this area. Local surveyor Brian McLellan has surveyed a pathway providing connectivity through Russel Family Park via Skenes Creek. WJ requested Frith Duggan email the surveyed map. John Hargreaves, one of the landholders, has indicated his support for this proposal but it will be dependent on whether there is support to the proposal by other landholders in this area. Council has to follow the Australian Design Standards which private owners aren't required to do which adds to the cost of any of the proposal put forward.

Maleny is one the most searched areas on Google, due largely to Adam Scott playing golf at Maleny Golf Course and sharing his experiences.

Ryan Hollis, a member on the SCC Active Transport Committee, is happy to work with a group to come up with some solutions. Cr Johnston requested residents send an email to WJ of these ideas and he will work them through. He will be trying to achieve whatever he can over this term and into the next term. It takes time for money to become available.

WJ wanted to thank Andrew Powell and the TMR in relation to clearing the blind spots on corners and intersections. They have responded very well to the pressure when a concerted effort is presented.

One of the issues with Western Ave is that on public holidays people park from the corner of the road to about 1km down Western Ave, causing partial blockage of the road. Improved signage could improve this issue.

SC asked Ali Khan and Shell to discuss their concerns regarding Western Ave and the safety aspects of walking or bike riding along the avenue. Danger exists for any road users, but of particular concern to Ali is the safety of his son. Western Avenue to the Narrows Road is particularly difficult as it has no shoulder or safe walking area. For a young boy to walk or ride this area is fraught with danger. It is one of the \$15.5m requests for footpaths.

The Western Ave verges need to be safer for walkers. If mowing of the verges could happen more frequently that would help. A larger number of people live along there in addition to visitors and walkers. FD mentioned the standard of footpaths is so high effectively putting them out of reach of rural councils.

It was suggested that rural roads that record lower usage may be able to follow different specs. At this rate it would take 33 years to improve the roads in this area.

SR spoke to the issues on Western Ave and Kondalilla Falls Road. From a safety perspective they are both a disaster waiting to happen. SR stated that surely we don't have to wait for a child to be hit in order to get something done. A simple audit would help.

WJ said that the major works programme is a 10 year programme. So to put something into the Works Programme you have to take something out. The priorities in the past have been the airport, the underground cable, the new Maroochydore council chambers etc. Competing priorities mean that some of the work we want done will not be funded.

SR asked if the council will undertake an audit of the speed of Western Ave, clearing the vegetation on the corners could create improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and children. Where the road narrows significantly, has some concerns for some residents. However some residents insist it should be left as it is. It is not easy to balance the requests of competing residents.

WJ received a resounding round of applause to thank him for his commitment, efforts and time.

SC joined in with the online version of Destination Q last week, which a Queensland Travel Forum. One of the presentations was from CEDA, Committee for Economic Developments of Australia. The speaker talked about headwinds, crosswinds and tailwinds. We are in a sheltered spot here but job losses in tourism have been high, uncertainty have been high, our dollar is high but not impacting tourism at the moment. The dollar will impact exports, and in time, tourism when our borders open again. Airline industry has also borne the brunt of Covid 19.

The attitude to plane travel, attending large events, corporate travel, have all been affected by fear and uncertainty. People prefer to stay away than risk exposing themselves or families to health risks. Our local businesses are mostly not suffering as much as other areas of the country.

42% of businesses in Australia are on government support. Concern is very real about what will happen to those businesses when government support is wound back.

This experience has changed the view of what people want to spend their time doing and experiencing. Accommodation choices have changed, and this region has been a beneficiary of what people are now looking for, as they move away from large hotel chains to more intimate experiences, in safe green environment, and having their own cabins etc. What we need to continue to do is funnel overseas travellers to explore our domestic markets.

Positives are that the recovery in Australasia has been stronger than in North and South America, the UK, New Zealand and most parts of Europe. Even though things are difficult they are not as dire as what is being experienced in other countries.

SC also joined in with the Chamber Alliance meet ups. The downturn experienced at restaurants and accommodation places in Noosa are showing in the vicinity of 75% down from past years. Noosa is thought to be so critically affected because of its reliance on oversea travellers. Mooloolaba has not been so adversely affected. It makes it apparent that our hinterland region is doing significantly better in terms of occupancy % with many local businesses recording best months ever, and over consecutively months.

Transport issues – people don't want to use public transport, there is not enough parking where there are walking tracks.

Mental health issues are increasing so it is important that we look out for people struggling with mental health in our region.

The Wedding Industry service provides, tour operators and event based businesses have had very little business since March, and yet their costs are largely unchanged. It is gratifying to see that some spring weddings are happening across the hinterland, and bookings are increasing.

It has been amazing that accommodation places have been full, yet there have been no weddings. The relationship between accommodation and weddings has changed where once accommodation was reliant on wedding guests to fill their beds, that is not currently the case.

In our area the rate of job losses has been high, but the Sunshine Coast has also recorded one of the highest turnarounds. The Sunshine Coast is kicking back, and unfortunately it is getting more and more difficult to recruit employees. It will be interesting to see the effect of the drop in Job Keeper and Job Seeker amounts on people's search for employment.

There has been a loss of the major print media (SCD) in our region, which has given an opportunity for local publications to get a stronger toe-hold in the local media space.

We are very grateful that we have come through this testing time in relatively good shape. That is not to acknowledge the difficulties businesses have faced, or the ongoing concerns about the viability of businesses in this area. We are seeing strong evidence of resilience within our community, the fact that a lot of little businesses kept their doors open, and continued to trade, making the region attractive to visitors and locals alike

Susan Maynard took the opportunity to share an amazing new initiative with us that has been made possible by HTSC recently. To impart this new initiative, workshops were recently held and attended by a number of chamber members from Montville and Maleny chambers. Susan has worked in the digital marketing space for a long time, and for Tourism bodies. This experience has given her a unique perspective on what challenges most small tourism based businesses face in developing a look and content that is in keeping with their audience and their businesses. With that in mind, she and her team have developed a toolkit of templates, story ideas, library of images, and gifs, along with training materials and support materials to provide you with a fully developed toolkit to assist you get your business established in the digital space. Providing content for social media, website etc is challenging to trained marketers so it can be doubly challenging to relatively untrained business people. The idea is to create a story that is repeated across businesses and provide a unified message coming out of our business community. Increased postings with similar messages will have a multiplying effect on the

message being delivered. As Susan put it, "We need to hunt like a pack." Using Easil, the platform delivers a cheaper better program to users. They have developed training materials, and support materials to take you from an unskilled user to a trained user in about 6 months. A 6 month pilot program has been developed and if the programme can be rolled out to 250 local people, it will be considered a success, and they will be able to build on that success and be around for the future.

Susan encourages members to take advantage of this offer, as it will build a strong cohesive marketing base across the hinterland. Contact Susan for more information.

A change of **Festive Treelighting venue** is being proposed. We are considering moving it to Russell Family Park.

The AGM will be held next month at Flaxton Gardens on October 14<sup>th</sup>. Flaxton Gardens will provide a 2 course meal, and a drink (thanks to the MCoC). It will be necessary to put your applications in advance of the meeting by September 30 if you wish to nominate for positions on the Executive team. You need to be a financial member of the Chamber to nominate at the AGM.

If there is enough interest, the chamber would run a **Meet the Candidates** Zoom session prior to the State election on October 31. There are 4 candidates.

SC Introduced the Sunshine Coast Council team looking after the improvements to the Streetscaping in Montville's Main Street. They are Jamie Franklin, responsible for designs and master planning for the town centres projects, and Dan Jones, project officer working with the Streetscape committee. (The Streetscape committee includes member of the Chamber of Commerce, and the Montville Village Association.) and Jamie Wilson (construction manager).

They have been working on this project taking it from conceptual design, through to tender, and construction. First of all, Councilor Johnson did a wonderful job of securing a further \$86,000 on top of the \$54,000 already allocated to this project.

Dan described the work that will be undertaken by the team in the coming weeks to improve the northern end of the entrance into the Village from Altitude to the Entrance Statement and beyond. Work that will take place on the embankments include clearing out weeds, overhanging trees, adding native and cottagey plantings in keeping with existing plantings in and around Montville. It includes kerbing and channeling, a treatment to the bitumen to help delineate the entrance to the Village precinct, and other matters.

The work will go for tender next week, and a delivery date before the Christmas School holidays is the aim. This will limit the amount of disruption to businesses at this important time of the year. It is an ever evolving piece of work, with a strong vision for improvements to the streetscape of Montville.

The Montville Visitors Information Centre was recently cleaned up by the Blackall Range Lions Club. The MVIC could do with some funding appropriated to it. However, the focus is on the northern end at this stage.

The Chair of Blackall Range Care, Pat Habner, was given an opportunity to take the floor. She mentioned that when Covid 19 hit, their 2000 clients were affected, especially in terms of socialization. The fear of having people in their homes to deliver services was also worrying the

elderly. They changed what services they delivered in a remarkably short space of time, showing what an agile organisation is it.

Our Village Map is due for a reprint. If there are any Main Street businesses represented, they have an extended entry covered by their membership.

Martyn Baldwin reminded us that Movember is coming up soon, raising funding for prostate cancer and other related Men's health issues. Keep an eye out for fundraisers. If you see people around collecting, support generously.

The Clockshop has been open for 27 years, and it has now been sold to their son, Daniel. Congratulations to the excellent family business.

Thanks to all for coming along. A warm thank you to George, Aldi, and the team at Secrets for all the hard work in providing an excellent venue and breakfast.

**Next General Meeting: tba**

The Meeting closed at 8:45am

Signed:.....  
Shiralee Cooper, President