

Tenants Consultative Forum

3.30pm Tuesday December 3 2013

The Salon, Convent Building



ATTENDEES:

Sal Cooper, John Di Natale, Robyn DeVries, Charlie Sublet, Matthew Quick, Ilona Topolcsanyi, Alex Landragin, Roland Harvey, Andrew Blackman, Richard Leatham, Gael Bayley, Sara O'Callaghan, Trudy Schuringa, Victoria Marles, Jo Molloy, Jo Saunders, Mirella Zandegu, Maggie Maguire, Tom Rendell

Item 1: Tenant Car Parking

BACKGROUND

The ACF is upgrading the equipment in its car park. It will become a pay on exit system with timed charges. The pricing structure is not yet finalised but the first half hour will be free. Currently developing automated access packages (including access time and price) for tenants, workers, staff of surrounding businesses and external visitors.

FEEDBACK SOUGHT

The ACF is seeking feedback from tenants about their parking needs so it can be considered when finalising our tenant access and pricing structure.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

JDN advised that the City of Yarra will remove all street parking from St Heliers except for disabled parks and loading zones

DISCUSSION & FEEDBACK

A. TENANT CAR PARK SCHEME

Some members of the tenant community expressed concerns about the affordability of the current tenant parking program (\$30 per month). This included tenants who travel irregularly and those who use the free on-street parking as the removal of the street parking means there will be no cheap or free options in St Heliers Street in the future.

There was a tenant desire for flexibility with any new swipe card system in order to allow 9-5 Mon-Fri use but also irregular use. Other needs included later access during an event or a short term pass for temporary employees and contractors. The majority of single use tenants, however, seemed to want 24/7 access if purchasing a monthly card.

There was also endorsement for the plans to prohibit access to Gate 2 and concerns about safety of the car park late at night.

B. CITY OF YARRA WORKS

Further concerns about the City of Yarra works included the increased danger of illegal Clarke St use and the problems of loading and picking up of goods by tenants who do not possess commercial licenses. Suggestions to mitigate this included:

- Creating a tenant loading zone that doesn't require a commercial licence
- Creating a tenant drop off zone in either the ACF car park or possibly on the street – requiring consultation with City of Yarra
- Creating dedicated half hour parking zones close to the front of the Car park allowing easy transfer of goods into the Convent precinct

C. PRICING FOR GENERAL PUBLIC

In relation to the pricing structure for the general public, the possibility of a cheaper rate for general public who utilise Wellbeing was also raised. There could be a cheaper rate for short-term stayers as opposed to the current \$6 flat rate.

D. FURTHER CONSULTATION BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION

There was a request that the ACF provides the opportunity for the tenant body to comment upon the new price structures before they are implemented.

ACF RESPONSES PROVIDED DURING THE MEETING

When queried as why a schedule of proposed prices was not tabled at the meeting the ACF stated that they are only in the planning stages and it would be inappropriate to talk about potential prices before the packages are set. In terms of public pricing, the ACF has not committed to anything other than there will be timed parking and half an hour free. It is anticipated that short term visitors and clients will pay less than \$6.

The feasibility of a tenant loading zone and half hour preference parking will be considered but it was reiterated that with consultation the ACF, tenants can facilitate onsite car access. It was noted that cars are allowed on site before 8.00am and after 5.00pm.

It was also noted that lighting will be installed by winter to hopefully increase safety in the darker months.

It was noted that Tenant Consultative Forum's defining function is for consultation and gathering feedback rather than seeking approval.

It was also communicated that we will lose a minimal amount of car parks due to the new infrastructure and that the rear area of the car park will not be sealed at this point in time. The Johnston st entry/exit is not an option in the short term but is still a long term option.

Item 2: Structure for Rent & Utility Bills

BACKGROUND

Currently most tenants are charged a combined rental that includes all utilities. This produces a fixed rental charge each month.

In the last twelve months utility prices have risen dramatically and the Council will now levy a specific Fire Services Levy for tenancies in the Convent Building.

FEEDBACK SOUGHT

The ACF is seeking feedback from tenants as to whether they prefer the current all inclusive charge or whether we should move to separate bills for utilities.

DISCUSSION & FEEDBACK

Tenants present wanted to know if this is a precursor to a lease rate hike. There were also concerns that it wouldn't be useful unless electricity could be isolated and yet that process of isolation may itself result in added cost in admin.

Without complete consensus the majority decided that if there is going to be rate increases ahead of CPI then it would be useful and transparent to know where it comes from.

ACF RESPONSES PROVIDED DURING THE MEETING

It was noted that this does not necessarily indicate that rates will be going up ahead of CPI, rather it is a suggestion for tenants if they want to see a broken down payment. Ultimately it can be trialed and reviewed but there are no immediate plans to implement the changes.

Item 3: Fire Brigade Call Out Charges

BACKGROUND

We have recently had the Fire Brigade called to the site due to inappropriate activity being undertaken within a leased space. When the fire brigade attend the site to answer a false alarm it is able to charge the ACF an amount of approximately \$2,500. This is sometimes waived at MMFB discretion. We normally have about five or six alarms a year from a range of sources including the kitchens of our Food & Beverage tenants through to dust gathering on sensors in the Basement.

The ACF would like to develop a policy on what should happen in those instances when alarms are triggered by tenants.

FEEDBACK SOUGHT

The ACF is seeking feedback from tenants as to what this policy might say.

FEEDBACK & DISCUSSION

Concerns about the particle system included:

- Sensors seem erratic and overly sensitive
- Artistic tenants in the Convent building are unsure what activities set off the particle alarms
- Tenants who have been here for a long time have outdated information in their leases or original induction process
- As a general suggestion it was asked if particle detectors could be replaced by heat detectors, also currently in use
- The majority of Tenants agreed that grossly negligent or illegal use that results in a call out should be charged to the party concerned
- As for dealing with the MFB's irregular charging, despite a few suggestions there was no consensus and most of the plans were deemed too hard to enforce

ACF RESPONSES PROVIDED DURING THE MEETING

It was noted in response to tenant concerns and suggestions:

- If tenants are not clear on what their lease requirements are regarding to the particle detectors information can be supplied to them
- All tenants inducted under Mirella Zandegu should have been made aware of the dos and don'ts
- According to fire code particle detectors, despite their sensitivity, must be used in conjunction with heat sensors
- Commercial tenants that set off alarms due to kitchen fires and the like will also be charged if the MFB enforces the fee
- At this stage charges will continue to be at the MFB's discretion unless there are extenuating circumstances. If a Policy is developed, the ACF is committed to consulting the Tenant body again

Item 4: Summer Visitors

BACKGROUND

Last summer the Convent was visited by an extraordinary large number of visitors who spent considerable amounts of time around the convent. These were both local and international. Some of these visitors used the buildings and the various facilities in an inappropriate manner. The ACF took some specific action earlier in the year to minimise this impact.

FEEDBACK SOUGHT

The ACF is seeking feedback from tenants as to what additional actions could be considered for 2014 and to review the efficacy of the actions already undertaken.

FEEDBACK

Tenants noted that as a lot of these changes occurred towards the end of summer last year the results are hard to assess.

Tenants discussed the difficulty with access, recognising that everyone still needs to be reminded to lock exterior doors after 5pm and stop chocking them open. It was noted that having doors open increases air flow in hotter months

Tenants suggest increased signage to remind tenants and their employees to close certain doors and to make unwanted people aware they are not to enter after hours.

ACF RESPONSE PROVIDED DURING THE MEETING

The ACF noted that people should continue to use the Site Coordinator number, noting their working hours have been extended until 8.30pm, 7 days a week and can be deployed if anyone feels threatened or uncomfortable.

Potentially unwanted usage can be reduced by monitoring the vans parked on Clarke St, where it seems some unwanted users of the amenities sleep overnight. The ACF will investigate with City of Yarra what their policy on this is.

Conclusion

FEEDBACK

At the conclusion of the meeting some general thoughts were raised including suggestions for next meetings. Some tenants put forward specific agenda items: web access for tenants, general concerns about tenant added agenda items, earlier communication and why was TSDC abandoned?

RESPONSE

There was acknowledgement from ACF and from the Board's Chair Vic Marles that in future there will definitely be tenant raised issues added to the agenda ahead of time.

The TSDC was disbanded by process undertaken in the last two meetings of the TSDC. The ACF encourages tenants to think about what they found effective about the TSDC and to incorporate that into the TCF, to fulfil the same function.

Vic Marles finished with suggesting that from the Board's perspective it was good to be an observer in the process and that she expects the TCF will evolve and encourage tenant input for systemic concerns.