



CITY OF
MONASH

**MINUTES OF THE ADDITIONAL MEETING OF
COUNCIL
HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2021**

at 7.00 pm

**Council Chambers
293 Springvale Road,
Glen Waverley**

**MINUTES OF THE ADDITIONAL MEETING OF THE MONASH CITY COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SPRINGVALE ROAD GLEN WAVERLEY
ON 9 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7.00 PM.**

PRESENT: Councillors A de Silva, J Fergeus, S James, P Klisaris, G Lake, B Little, S McCluskey, N Luo, T Samardzija, R Paterson, T Zographos

APOLOGIES:

Nil.

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Nil.

OPENING OF MEETING

The Chief Executive Officer opened the meeting and stated that the purpose of the Additional Meeting of Council was for the election of the Mayor for the 2021/2022 term of office and for the election of the Deputy Mayor for 2021/2022.

The Chief Executive Officer advised that in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Governance Rules, she was tasked with conducting the election of the Mayor.

ELECTION OF MAYOR FOR 2021/2022

The Chief Executive Officer called for nominations for Mayor for the 2021/2022 term of office.

Cr McCluskey nominated Cr James.

Cr de Silva nominated Cr Fergeus.

There were no further nominations.

The Chief Executive Officer called for a vote by a show of hands for each nominee, in the order that the nominations had been received.

The Chief Executive Officer advised that as Cr James had received the majority of votes, he was duly elected as Mayor for 2021/2022.

The Chief Executive Officer congratulated Cr James on his election and handed him the gavel as a symbol of office.

The Mayor assumed control of the meeting and made his acceptance speech, a copy of which is appended to the minutes.

ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2021/2022

The Mayor called for nominations for Deputy Mayor for 2021/2022

Cr Klisaris nominated Cr Samardzija.

Cr de Silva nominated Cr Fergeus.

There were no further nominations.

The Mayor called for a vote by a show of hands for each nominee, in the order that the nominations had been received.

Following the show of hands, the Mayor advised that as Cr Samardzija had received a majority of votes, Cr Samardzija was duly declared elected as Deputy Mayor for 2021/2022.

The Mayor congratulated Cr Samardzija on her election and invited her to make her acceptance speech. A copy of Cr Samardzija's speech is appended to the minutes.

The outgoing Mayor, Cr Little, took the opportunity to reflect on the activities and achievements of his term in office.

Councillors present then took the opportunity to speak on the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2021/2022 and on the term of office of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2020/2021.

The Mayor declared the meeting closed at 7.40 pm

MAYOR: 

DATED THIS 25 DAY OF FEB 22 2021

SPEECH BY CR JAMES, MAYOR

Acknowledge outgoing Mayor Cr Brian Little and Deputy Mayor Cr Shane McCluskey.

I'd like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay my respect to their elders past and present. Thank-you to my fellow Councillors for their support tonight.

When I was bestowed the great privilege of being Mayor of this fabulous city at the end of 2019, I spoke passionately about the work I planned to do in a number of areas that are important to me; providing support to parents of young children, assisting with mental health, increasing the participation of women in sport issues, prevention of violence against women and gender equality.

At the end of 2019, I quoted a number of horrifying statistics; every week in Australia a woman is murdered by a current or former partner, one in three have experienced physical or sexual violence and a staggering 85% have been sexually harassed. The terrifying, hidden and unspoken truth is that over the past 18 months, these numbers are likely to have skyrocketed, with people working from home and enduring many lockdowns. As we search for a COVID normal lifestyle, providing support to women who find themselves in these abhorrent situations will be more important than ever.

Everyone listening to this knows, that despite our best efforts, the society in which we live still displays areas of inequity and injustice; whether that be based around gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, wealth, background, or the many other characteristics that are too extensive to list. While Governments of all levels invest heavily to try and provide as much opportunity as possible, and to alter existing ingrained attitudes and perceptions, it is educating our children, and teaching them acceptance, that will provide significant grassroots change for generations to come. Children are more likely to thrive and succeed, if parents are provided with the skills and resources to develop strong support networks for their children, and to learn to become better role models. By assisting in the provision of the right resources, we can help to foster and drive generational societal change in all forms of equality and acceptance. This will be my main focus over the next twelve months.

When I spoke about these core issues and what I had planned for my Mayoral term two years ago, I had no idea what was around the corner. Two months after I became Mayor, reports came in about a man who had returned from Wuhan with a mystery virus that shut down a restaurant in Glen Waverley. At that time no-one in the world really understood what COVID-19 was, or had any comprehension as to what would follow. After a 14-day closure period for the restaurant, myself and a number of State MPs and Ministers dined at the restaurant and encouraged people to return. Four weeks later, the whole entire country was in lockdown.

While we now know a lot more about COVID-19 and the responses that we need to take when situations arise, at that time we knew nothing – many of us had never even heard of Zoom or Webex or Teams. For Council, our staff, and the organisation more broadly – the situation was literally changing on a daily basis, with our teams listening in to the same press conferences everyone else was and making changes to the way we operated within hours. I remain incredibly proud of the way we were able to adapt to situations none of us had ever experienced.

The past 18 months has been incredibly hard on everyone in our community, but now that vaccination levels are nearing herd immunity, I look forward to the challenge of leading this organisation back to a COVID-normal life. I also look forward to finally sitting down to work on the priorities I had set myself at the end of 2019.

I want to again thank a number of people that I have many times in this place. I owe my parents an unrepayable debt for the life and opportunities they have provided me. They have instilled in me very important core values that define the person I am; family first, above all else, treating every single person equally, providing opportunity regardless of background, and that money is merely an avenue to achieve these outcomes.

A big thank-you to my brother and sister, who have finally returned from overseas but who, due to COVID-19, I have barely seen. Despite a busy twelve months that lies ahead, I look forward to finally spending more quality time with them. Thank-you also to my mother and father in law for their continuous love and support.

To my four children Mara, April, Zoe and Lachlan, noting that's one more than pre-COVID, and definitely the last, thank-you for just being you. You brighten every day and give me such purpose and drive in my life. Mum and Dad have always said to me "wait until you have your own children and then you'll understand", and they were right – I get it now. I am so incredibly proud of all of you and I am amazed on a daily basis at how incredibly loving, caring and intelligent that you all are. Not a day goes by where I don't realise just how lucky I am. Somehow, somewhere, I must have done something right.

To the person who completes me and forever believes in who I am and what I do, my beautiful wife Donna. Not a day goes by where I don't have to pinch myself and wonder if this is all a dream. You are an incredible wife and an amazing mother to our children. Those who know me well know that I go flat out at everything I do. You somehow manage to keep me grounded and provide a solid dose of reality when it's needed. Without you, I wouldn't be the person I am and none of this would be possible. I love you more than words could ever express and more than you will ever know.

Finally, to the Monash community, thank you for your support over the past 18 months. I have said many times how proud I am of the way we have all come together to face the many challenges that have come our way during this pandemic. I know that statements like that can often feel like lip service, but having sat in this chair last year and heard the daily reports of what was occurring throughout this great city - the acts of unrecognised kindness and genuine empathy, of selfless sacrifice to assist others - I can guarantee you that it is quite genuine. We are almost there and over the past two weeks since restrictions started to be eased, many of us have discovered a refreshed enthusiasm and genuine enjoyment for the things that at one time we took for granted. Twelve months ago in this chamber, almost to the day, Cr Lake mused that as a life-long Melbourne supporter I knew deep down that something would get in the way of my Mayoral term in 2020. Given that we are now Premiers, I have great optimism about what the next twelve months will bring. I know from speaking to many of you that there is unbridled excitement towards once again meeting with family, friends and the community at large, as we navigate our way back to a somewhat normal life. I look forward to being able to physically meet with as many of you as possible to share these moments over the next twelve months.

SPEECH BY CR SAMARDZIJA, DEPUTY MAYOR

Firstly, congratulations Councillor Little for your terrific year as Mayor, and Councillor McCluskey as our Deputy Mayor. You've made a great team, and I thank you for your leadership and support during my first year on council.

Congratulations Councillor James for being elected Mayor once again.

You have strong support around this chamber to lead us, and it's not hard to see why. You're one of the hardest working councillors, dedicated to your local community, full of ideas and energy. A collaborative councillor who brings people together. A great team player.

I look forward to working together and supporting you as Deputy Mayor. I think we'll make a great team; and I believe we'll learn a lot from each other.

Thank you to my fellow councillors for placing your confidence in me as Deputy Mayor. It is an honour to serve in this leadership role.

Special thanks go to Councillors Klisaris and McCluskey, my fellow Mulgrave Ward councillors. You have both been a much-valued source of advice and know-how on how to get things done. I believe we have complementary qualities and strengths that we bring to the Mulgrave Ward — and I really enjoy keeping you both on your toes.

I look forward to continuing to collaborate with councillors, our CEO and executive leadership team on broader council-wide matters over the next year in this role.

This next year we must help our community continue to open up following COVID. The best way to do that is to continue providing our core services in an efficient and effective manner, with a focus on local issues and local people.

On a personal note, I want to thank my parents Janja and Mile for their unlimited well of support for me and my family over this past year, as we all continued to work through the challenges of COVID. Thank you for looking after our kids, Mila and Ivan, for the meals and the time and the love. I'm so lucky to have you.

And most importantly, thank you to my partner Blake. Thank you for taking on so much of the load at home so that I can do this. Thank you for helping and supporting me, as well as pushing and challenging me.