



Sweeping changes at Peppermint Grove by new Mayor Brian Kavanagh have been welcomed.

Anyone can see the agenda now

New Shire President Brian Kavanagh has led sweeping changes to Peppermint Grove to make council decisions more transparent and head off community anger.

Residents of the usually civilised and quaint borough can expect to know a lot more about the shire's business after the council decided to open previously secret meetings for a 12-month trial.

Many residents have said that council secrecy prevented the community knowing about on the controversial subdivision of 18 Irvine Street.

Mr Kavanagh has also been praised for his training scheme for new councillors so they can hit the ground running.

His changes will mean agen-

das will be available to the public before meetings.

Only councillors Peter Bacich and Gunnar Vikingur opposed the changes.

Mr Bacich told the meeting the changes were illegal but council staff said the changes were permitted by the Local Government Act.

Mr Bacich said he was concerned public meetings would cause problems.

"In the past we have made derogatory comments about the type of people applying for approvals and the type of architecture of their buildings," Mr Bacich told the meeting.

But Mr Kavanagh said councillors should think before they speak whether the public is in attendance or not.

"Robust discussion happens, but you'd hope councillors represent the community in a diligent and respectful manner," he said.

Mr Kavanagh was also quick to bring Mr Bacich to order during council debate about the \$70 million Oswal family home on Peppermint Grove's superblock (POST, November 17).

Mr Bacich said council's refusal to grant the Oswals a rear service access bordered on racism.

"I take offence at this decision," Mr Bacich said.

"It borders on racism and that these people seem to have a lot of money," he said.

Mr Kavanagh said the comments did not make sense.

"How can you get racism and money out of a discussion about a service access?" he said.