

Northland Regional Council meeting - 25th January 2011

At 1000hrs, this soon to be challenging meeting, kicked off as a start to the New Year of 2011 for the Regional Council.

Chairman Craig Brown started in his normal professional manner stating, 'Conflicts of Interest' were to be advised item by item going through the agenda and also explained 'emergency evacuation procedures' and the location of rest rooms to visitors. *(Are they going to have this sort of effect on us?)*

First Item 3.1 was about the handing over of the Northland Events Centre and it was resolved that this was still not to be happening, as they were still waiting for the necessary reports to be received. Cr Tony Davies-Colley queried if the trustees should be made aware and it was confirmed the trustees are appointed by the Whangarei District Council and it was their duty to comply with such process. *Congratulations on sticking to the rules as the last thing they (NRC) need is any backlash on this issue.*

Item 3.2 Confirmation of the previous minutes were passed and all must have been in order as no discussion was needed.

The Chairman's Report Item 3.3 and the meetings that were held regarding kite boarding were mentioned very briefly. It was claimed there were continuing discussions on this important issue.

It was Cr Graeme Ramsey who was primed ready for action and he had deep concerns that Chairman Craig Brown & Cr John Bain had met separately with people from 'Project Promise'. Both these people, having conflicts of interest by being on Northland District Health Board, and the possible rating in the future for this project, could have the public concerned as what may be perceived. Cr Graeme Ramsey was totally supportive of the 'project' *(not necessarily the funding of by NRC) = (YOU & ME)* but processes must be seen to be above board and he needed the reassurance of the chair that they were.

Chairman Craig Brown responded stating that he would speak with anyone who approached him for discussions, but after 30 years in local government he was well aware of his responsibilities regarding conflicts of interest and did not appreciate people questioning his integrity. Cr Ramsey insisted Cr Bain and Brown should not partake in the discussions with 'Project Promise' and he would be delighted if other councilors, without conflicts, were involved.

Cr John Bain claimed he was at the meeting to witness what was said and that Chairman Brown acted honorably. *Could someone else have been a more credible witness?*

Cr Tony Davies-Colley believed 'perception was paramount' and with Project Promise it must be clear and obvious.

Cr Ramsey again insisted all projects must be handled in a transparent way and he may take this instance to the Auditor General. Chairman Craig Brown invited him to do so.

(Best of luck Graeme, we know many that have approached similar offices of government and it seems to be a complete waste of time. There are offices with flash names on doors and it appears there is nobody with integrity at home or willing to sort out the crap. They all appear to be looking after each other's interests)

Cr Ian Walker felt it was time to get on with the real issues and stop playing politics.

Next it was Chief Executive Report *(this CEO can obviously write)* Item 3.4 and it was revealed there had been a verbal withdrawal (by Ex Mayor Semenoff) of the Whangarei Stock Effluent facility location. There was nothing in writing but his word (Semenoff) needs to be suffice. *(Great news, in my opinion there are 2 logical places for this - outside the Waste Water Treatment Plant in Kioreroa Road or at the Kauri Stock Yards. But I'm not a rocket scientist)*

Cr Bronwyn Hunt had some queries over Regional Bus services being core business of Regional Council.

CEO Ken Patterson supported by saying Regional Bus services were the responsibility of Regional Council and not District Councils.

There was discussion regarding submissions made by the NRC. Chairman Craig Brown wondering why there was no 'political arm' involvement with some of the submissions made by staff and that the right hand needs to know what the left hand is doing. It was decided after much discussion on these issues and that there needed to be a review of the process to keep all informed. There had also been some misrepresentation by media on a submission in Kaipara region and Cr Graeme Ramsey brought this to the attention of the meeting. CEO Ken Patterson agreed there needed to be a review on some issues on what's happening with submissions. Cr Ian Walker claimed the management policy needed a review to ensure that staff is aware of their parameters. Cr Walker also felt there needed to be good press releases on the work that has already been done on river management, to enlighten people on flood prevention, in areas of concern.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley has concerns about Farm Dairy Effluent as it is discussed at every meeting and there doesn't seem to be any progress. Cr Joe Carr claims it's now a fresh committee so let's give them a chance.

Item 3.5 Committee Membership and Item 3.6 Committee Delegations created a little debate with claims that the process needs to be looked at as some chairs had had interference from others. *(We wonder if that would be a pain?)* Cr Tony Davies-Colley believed the Terms of reference were set by the Auditor General in the form of Best Practice Guide. Chairman Brown felt that was a generic document. Cr Bill Rossiter *(oh he's awake)* claimed the staff had made improvements to the Terms of Reference. Cr Ramsey believed the Terms of Reference needed to be reviewed, so a new motion was to be discussed at a workshop. With some behind the scenes chatting going in the background, in his normal matter of fact way, Chairman Craig Brown stated "I only want one meeting" and order was promptly resumed. *(Craig doesn't take prisoners)*

Cr Ramsey also insisted that a performance and review committee met urgently to review the CEO's contract that was due in the future.

Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Item 3.7 was over as quick as it could be said.

Item 3.8 Remuneration Authority Expenses Policy and the Chair was prepared to discuss one item personally with a councilor but he was happy to state the mileage allowance could be from where they come from at the time to each meeting. Some councilors move around and the mileages can vary.

Cr Rossiter, wide awake, questioned if coming from London would qualify. (Ask Santa Bill, he will know the mileage, as he's been everywhere, man.)

Arts Promotion Trust item 4.1 obviously had no fish hooks as it was "over and out" in a flash.

Item 5.1 Environmental Monitoring and it was good discussion as Cr Joe Carr commented about councils who did not have Management Plans and how could they operate efficiently. Cr Tony Davies-Colley stressed it needs to be a level playing field for all.

Consent Decisions item 5.2 also was over promptly. (*Would this indicate the consents teams have this all under control?*)

It was interesting to note that from discussions on Item 5.3 Juvenile Oyster Mortality on Northland Marine Farms, was an increasing issue. Mortality has risen from 40% to 50% at a cost to Northland a loss of \$20million per year is predicted. Cr Rossiter queried about a budget to assist in this program.

Item 5.4 Objection to Costs - Marine Farm Reviews and Consents also created robust debate in regards to the extensions of time for late objections. Cr Tony Davies-Colley again emphasized that all should be treated fairly. (*Good call Tony*). Staff had made a variety of recommendations and there were concerns of future precedents being set. Tony Davies-Colley again stated they must be consistent with how they behave. (*Does he know something?*)

Chairman Craig Brown believed the Commissioner's selected should make the decisions on if or any extensions being granted.

The Appointment of Honorary Enforcement Officers for Whangaroa Item 5.5 was duly passed with no discussion necessary.

Item 5.6 Mangrove Management Support Programme created some discussion but certainly lacked some stigma without "Captain Mangrove" Mark Farnsworth present. They (mangroves) are prolific and the programs being instigated may ease the issue. (*We must ask WHY are they Prolific? My thoughts are stop feeding them, they derive many nutrients from sewage, so Councils stop the sewage discharges and they may decrease. Go back to your promises made before elections. Our harbours are not*

dumping grounds for lazy or cheap solutions) Another interesting comment heard was 'if the mangroves came to council meetings they may die of boredom or perhaps old age.... Yee ah!

Lunch time was getting near and the concentration span possibly shortening so Items 6.1 Aquaculture Legislation amendment, Environmental Protection Authority Bill Item 6.2 and Item 7.1 Report on the Northland CDEM Group meeting minutes were received with no necessary discussions needed.

The meeting finished at approximately 1220hrs after the last Item No. 7.1 and there was no confidential section to this meeting

[LINK to appropriate Agenda](#)