

Northland Regional Council meeting - 7th December 2010

The December meeting started promptly at 1300hrs but it wasn't long, after a supplement of tabled items was handed out, that Cr Graeme Ramsey showed concern that 88 pages were issued minutes before the meeting. He also requested that copies of notes of some meetings mentioned in the Chairman's Report be circulated.

The Chief Executives Report was presented and there was a little discussion on an item regarding the Stock Truck Effluent Dump site that is going ahead in South End Avenue. Apparently there is much concern from local business owners although the consent process was completed in 2006.

Cr Ian Walker also voiced his concern about the staff of NRC publicly opposing policies set down by Council during processes similar to submissions. One has to ask, is this breach of their rights, to have a personal opinion?

There are serious concerns about soil water content as it is well below expectations for this time of year.

The Councillor Remuneration and Allowances item No.4.7 only gained queries regarding travel expenses and where travel started and finished. In regards to travel, CEO Ken Patterson claimed it's all about truth. Basically tell it as it is, where you were and where you go afterwards.

Richard Northey was nominated as the Zone 1 representative on behalf of the NRC on the LGNZ National Council in Item 4.8.

Item No.4.9 Future of Rail in Northland and there was debate and compliments on a well written report by staff. There was no chance of not understanding Chairman Craig Brown's stance. He's all for it, has been for many years, quoting to Cr Tony Davies-Colley 'He's been there for 18 years not 5 minutes'.

The Northland Events Centre handover to Whangarei District Council Item No.4.10 had concerns from Cr Joe Carr as he felt the accountability of the asset for 15years before it's paid off is of importance. Cr Ian Walker believes the asset must stay as per its original role, a 'Multi Events Centre'. It was decided this item wait until the requested auditor's report is received. It is great to see the NRC is being accountable to the holders of the debt;

you the ratepayer as this debt is on your shoulders in the form of a targeted rate.

Chairman Craig Brown was most accommodating allowing the Item No.3, a discussion by Ms.Zelka Grammer, which was scheduled for 10minutes at 1315hrs to be held after her arrival at 1338hrs. Cr Ian Walker protested about Zelka's comment regarding her stating that 'she represented the primary producers of the region'. Chairman Craig Brown gained control stating 'he was chair, Zelka had the floor and there would be question at the completion of her presentation' After the allocated 10 minutes (no short timings here compared to the WDC Public forums) there was not one question asked of the presenter.

The Environmental Monitoring Report Item No.6.1and the same old issue of polluted waterways with Cr Tony Davies-Colley putting some interesting points forward. Chairman Craig Brown stated 'there is still crap going into the waterways'. Cr Ian Walker believed it was not just the farmers that were the culprits but that some of the NRC procedures could be better, it was not one sided. Someone felt Ian Walker was just defending the farmers. Another issue under resource consent process was questioned by Cr Bronwyn Hunt, but the chair suggested it may be a conflict of interest how the question was asked. Cr Hunt took his advice and withdrew the question saying 'she listened to his words of wisdom'.

The Recreational Swimming Water Quality Strategy Item No.6.4 was queried by Cr Graeme Ramsey asking 'what were they approving? and added 'it had already been published in the media. Why ask now to support'. Good question, a little misunderstanding but the staff were keen to get it right in the future, but had deadlines to keep informing people before the holiday season began. Cr Bronwyn Hunt claimed she believes it's the locals that check the website etc on where it is safe to take their families swimming. Cr Ramsey felt that communication needed to be better all round.

The Item on the Kauri Dieback was discussed and it was established it was in the "containment situation".

Mangrove Management Item No 6.6 and it was Cr Walker that felt people must be treated fairly in this process. A faint grunt was heard of Cr Bill Rossiter and the chair believed that was a sign the item had not passed unanimously.

Humour filled the chamber as a small error on agenda Item No 6.8 would have had an extremely long stop bank approved if the correct State Highway 10 (not 12) was not realized before adoption.

The Item No 6.9 on Rainfall and water resources returned some seriousness to the meeting as the caution of the West Coast remaining dry over summer which could duly impose water restrictions. Cr Walker was keen to be kept updated, for the possible chance of being on “Close Up” regarding water shortages and was not really keen on that idea. Come on Ian you handled it well, with a bit more practice, you’ll be a TV star.

The next few items on the agenda went as quick as you could say the titles and then a ten minute break for quick refreshments and a top up of the parking meter.

A discussion on the Regional Policy Statement for Northland was next and it was hoped the people of Northland will take part in the stages of this important discussion document. Initial input is required by 17th December and further processes will follow later. The details of the process are available on the NRC website. [Click to View](#).

Item 7.4 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement and the issue regarding vehicles on beaches revealed that only WDC had acted promptly by ensuring control of this problem was by them. The other local authorities had not become involved so let’s hope there are no issues forth coming they will regret at a later time from lack of action.

It was time to discuss the items relating to Committee Structure and while there was work to be done to fill these committees it appears they are in capable hands. Councillor appointments created a little interest and I found it most amusing that Youth Education was given to Cr Bill Rossiter. Yes Bill is the oldest but it must be his ‘baby face image’ that secured this position for him.

The Meetings Calendar for 2011 was discussed but appears some changes may be expected and quick drying ink was not used in this instance for this particular item.

The financial reports, Investment Schedule and Paid accounts, as per normal nice and tidy, were passed with ease.

The meeting finished after the last public Item No. 6.11 the appointment of Hearings Committee before the team went into Business with the Public Excluded at 1615hrs.

[LINK to appropriate Agenda](#)