

Environmental Management Committee meeting - 21st June 2011

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The meeting today got away at 1000hrs as Chairman Joe Carr welcomed all. He mentioned there was a little bit of pressure on today for time due to another meeting. He thanked council staff for a good agenda.

Apologies were received for Mr Brian McEwing for being absent and Ms Di Maxwell for being late.

The declaration of Conflicts of Interest and the chair stated that any 'Conflicts of Interest' were to be advised item by item as they progressed through the agenda and any appropriate action to be taken.

Time now 0931 hrs Item No. 2 Forest industry presentation by Mr Greg O'Grady from Hancock Forest Management Ltd. There was 24.3 million tons of wood flow in NZ. Of which 40% is exported.

Cr Graeme Ramsey and Di Maxwell arrive during this presentation.

They were having record volumes of 1mill m³ per month which equated to 30-35 vessels per month of exports since October 2010. They were exporting mainly to India, Korea and Japan. Domestic sales were 40% and export was 60% to the Pacific Rim. There had been a 65% reduction in logging truck accidents. Otaika Valley Road had 94/day logging trucks and it was expected that will increase to 226/day by 2018. Part of the safety program was encouraging drivers to go 10kph under corner speed restrictions to prevent rollovers.

80 thousand tons was being moved by rail; which was 5.5% in Northland by rail.

They could be far more 'on track' if they improved the rail network to Northland and built the Marsden Point link, but no, is it just the big boys looking after their truckie mates?

In 2009-2010 there was a 20.2% growth in the industry; wood processing is the fastest growth industry. For their company Hancock Forest Management, they paid out \$97million per year for payments to contractors and salaries. Forestry was long term business and needed a long term relationship from Northland Regional Council.

Greg was thanked by a number for his informative presentation.

Back to Item No.1. Confirmation of Minutes – 26 April 2011 (0955hrs). No discussion was necessary and there were no matters rising from the minutes.

Item No. 3. Eradication of Spartina Update Report, plus a presentation at 0957hrs. An interesting presentation was done by Doug Foster, Land Management Officer. There were areas totaling 200ha in Northland that were being eradicated. It takes 5 years to control these areas after spraying to total clearance.

Item No. 4. Biosecurity Operational Plans – Spartina at 1007hrs. There was only one query to Don McKenzie, Biosecurity Senior Programme Manager, brief presentation by Cr Craig Brown; “does the spraying of Spartina and the related overspray if any have an effect on mangroves?”

Don replied with a No, amidst laughter from many regarding the question. *To those not attending these meetings, Mangroves have by some, especially the previous Chairman as a pet-hate; have been the brunt of many a joke and laugh, for a long while. You just have to be there to appreciate the humorous side of it all.*

Item No. 5. Proposed Community Pest Control Plan to Restore Kiwi at Whangarei Heads (1014hrs) Don McKenzie gave a brief on this program. He introduced a number of members of the Whangarei Heads Landcare Forum group present at the meeting. Mr Chris Jenkin, Department of Conservation believed he had a COI (conflict of Interest) with this item. By all accounts a lot of good work has been done by this group in protecting the Whangarei Heads area of pests and weeds. There had been an increase from this program in the numbers of kiwi. *Great work, keep it up.*

Item No. 6. River Schemes – Update Report at 1031hrs.
Cr Bronwyn Hunt complimented on the speed that they are doing this work.

Item No. 7. Priority Rivers Project Update (1032hrs)
Cr Bronwyn Hunt had a query regarding a pilot study (pg 29) which was duly answered. *Some aviators present may have thought it was to do with the airport.....pilot study.*

It was now 1035 hrs and it was onto Item No. 8. Soil Conservation and Erosion/ Sediment Control Programme Update. No discussion was necessary on this item.

Item No. 9. Sourcing Poplars for Northland Soil Conservation – update on expressions of interest. It was now 1039hrs and there was again no need for discussion.

Environment Fund Criteria Update, Item No. 10. 1040hrs and Deputy CEO/Operations Director Tony Phipps gave some clarification to this item.
Cr Bill Rossiter commented that central government gave funding to this but those funds were normally earmarked for special projects.

It was time at 1041hrs to jump onto Item No.14 Kaipara Harbour - Overview of Activity; Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group - This included a presentation by Leanne. This was a good presentation about the Kaipara Harbour, the group and its importance to the region. Check out the agenda Item on page 66 or go to their website for more information; <http://www.kaiparaharbour.net.nz/> *You will sure be impressed by what they are all about.*

Time now at 1101hrs it was Item No. 11. Report on Environmental Monitoring for the Period 1 May 2011 - 31 May 2011. No discussion was necessary on this item, so Riaan Elliot, Monitoring Senior Programme Manager and his team obviously have all in order.

Item No. 12. Community Wastewater Treatment Plant Discharges – Current Compliance Status (Updated) - (1107hrs).

Cr Bronwyn Hunt had a query in regards to the FNDC (Far North District Council) submitting a management plan by 3 June 2011 (page 59). Bronwyn wanted to know if it had been submitted.

Riaan Elliot was not up to date on that particular item but was happy to check it out and report back.

Chairman Craig Brown made mention that there was some sewage discussion held during the Mayoral forum at Kaipara yesterday.

Was he for real, or was this Craigs subtle way to say the Sh_t was flowing yesterday as it just might have been 'Browns Cows'

Item No. 13. Environmental Monitoring Reporting Programme Update at 1112hrs.

Cr Joe Carr had a sincere query regarding (4th item on page 64) microbial source tracking work, and whether the pathogens were they harmful to humans or not?

Riaan Elliot to his feet in reply to, 'Joe, Sorry Mr Chair' gave a very concise and detailed explanation of the risks to humans and other relevant factors. *It is certainly reassuring when well qualified staff who are fluent in the subject can respond with no pre warning of these types of questions.*

I have said it before and will say it again; our councils do have some very professional staff readily willing to give good sound advice. On the other hand we also hear of some that don't fit into that category.

The meeting closed at 1120hrs.

So it is now off for lunch allowing the Councillors a quick bite, before the afternoon Council meeting.