

Environmental Management Committee meeting - 23rd August 2011

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The meeting today got away a tad late at 0933hrs as Chairman Joe Carr welcomed all.

Apologies were received for Cr Bronwyn Hunt, NRC Chairman Craig Brown, Ms Nicole Anderson (Cultural Interests), Dr Greg Blunden (Environmental Interest Groups) & Cr Di Maxwell (FNDC)

Joe explained emergency exits and meeting points in the case of evacuation through whatever causes giving Cr Graeme Ramsey the opportunity to explain that he may have a problem with his best behavior.

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.

Item No.1. Confirmation of Minutes – 21 June 2011. There was a change needed to an item on page 4; the word tourism to be replaced by agriculture. With no further discussion necessary and no other matters rising from the minutes it was on to the next item.

0936 hrs Item No.2. Standing Orders for Meetings. This item was self explanatory and no discussion was entered into.

It was Cr Tony Davies-Colley cell phone that filled the brief silence gap; so looks like its 'choky fish' next meeting.

Time still at 0936hrs Item No.3. River Schemes - Update Report.

(See pages 12 - 18 in the agenda) - Well worth a read as a lot of work has been happening here.

Bruce Howse, Land/Rivers Senior Programme Manager gave an update on the Rivers Schemes. The flooding issue in Kaeo was presently going through cabinet.

Cr Bill Rossiter and Cr Graeme Ramsey had a couple of questions that required some clarification.

Quick as, Bruce Howse had these remedied.

Item No.4. Establishment of a Waitangi River Liaison Committee at 0947hrs.

Bruce Howse, Land/Rivers Senior Programme Manager gave an overview to this item.

Item No.5. Land management Overview 2010/11 and 2011/12 (0950hrs)

Dean Evans, Land Programme Manager

Cr Bill Rossiter claimed that most owners were aware they had registered wetlands on the wetlands register.

Richard Booth (Farming Community) had reservations with the process and insisted land owners need to know what goes on.

Acting Chief Executive Tony Phipps confirmed that the Top Wetland owners are informed by communication from NRC.

Dean Evans advised that wetland information packs were going out.

Cr Graeme Ramsey claimed there was a difference between being publically available and owners notified.

Tony Phipps gave assurance that the communication was going to landowners before the list of wetlands was released to the public.

Cr Crichton Christie queried whether there had been any visits to the sites or was it all desktop communication. *See, as a WDC councilor, he knows how it's done across the way; what communication, to who and why?*

Cr Graeme Ramsey requests a copy of the 'communication plan' to be made available.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley insisted that they (NRC) need the land owners on their side; don't antagonize them.

Tony Phipps informed that the plan of communication had been widely circulated and gone out to committees.

Cr Joe Carr enforced that they must ensure that all the good work doesn't get undone.

Tony Phipps informed that in some districts resource consents were required for permission to dairy farm. *Is this an indication of more compliance to come in the future?*

Item No.6. Environment Fund Progress Report (1026hrs)

Cr Bill Rossiter informed that they had spent \$49,000-00 of the fund so far this year.

Item No.7. Progress on Community Pest Control Areas (1028hrs)

Geoff Gover (Forestry Industry) believed he may have a conflict of interest with this item.

Chair Joe Carr was happy that he remained for the item.

Don McKenzie, Bio security Senior Programme Manager was to give a presentation and asked Steve Henderson to give a demonstration of a new possum trap available. An amazing contraption that activates a bolt by compressed air that instantly kills the pest by penetrating the back of its head and injecting CO₂. A counter is available to monitor the amount of gas left so absentee landowners can see at a glance if the trap is still loaded. This trap costs about \$150-00 incl GST. and one gas cylinder will kill between 12-15 possums.

Don McKenzie gave a power point presentation based on most of the report (See pages 33 - 28 in the agenda) - Well worth a read.

With pests it really is important for everyone to do their bit as cumulatively it will help to eradicate our district of these pests.

It was now 1039 hrs and it was onto Item No.8. Bio security Operational Plans - Progress Report.

Don McKenzie, Bio security Senior Programme Manager gave a brief update on this item. He emphasised there were other agencies that were assisting immensely with funding the pest control program. These included MAF, DOC, Government and many other industries.

Don gave a presentation on Kauri dieback that is having an effect on Kauri in Northland. Chris Jenkins, Department of Conservation advised that research is the key to this as it was being a large challenge.

National Bio security Capability Network for responding to Bio security Emergencies, Item No.9. It was now 1052hrs and there was again no need for discussion on this item.

Estuary Monitoring Programme plus presentation, Item No.10. (1054hrs)

Richard Griffiths, Estuarine Monitoring Manager gave an in depth power point presentation. (See pages 53 - 59 in the agenda) - This has been the accumulation of information for 3 years. Well worth a read. *Sadly this presentation was given the hurry up as time was getting on. Hope none of the important information was lost from informing the councillors of what they needed to know.*

Cr Tony Davies-Colley queried 'where in this program is the clarity about value for money?'

Chris Jenkins, Department of Conservation believes 'they had found the problems; now what are they going to do about it?'

Cr Graeme Ramsey confirmed 'the monitoring had been done; now improvements need to be done. What differences are we making or what knowledge are we gaining?'

Jacquie Reed, Monitoring Programme Manager gave some support to the program claiming 'without this kind of science we would not be able to make these decisions'.

So correct Jacquie, some issues need many, many hours of research to have quality facts available for future progress. Real facts cannot be collated in 5 minutes.

It was time at 1124hrs Item No.11 Freshwater State of Environment Monitoring Programmes - Audit

Acting Chief Executive Tony Phipps gave an update on this item.

Time now at 1126hrs it was Item No.12. Report on Environmental Monitoring for the Period 1 July 2011 - 31 August 2011.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley claimed there had been no action with updates as previously asked.

Riaan Elliot, Monitoring Senior Programme Manager informed that at the time of authoring the agenda there were no updates. It was better to advise at the meetings as the information would be another 3 weeks up to date.

Cr Graeme Ramsey also said he would rather have the column on the report with information on updates.

There was a query regarding the infringement after the council had finally complied with the resource consent.

The result was they still failed to abide by the rules in the first place and an infringement had been issued.

Not all councils let people off infringement notices after by laws have been broken.

Check with Councilor John Williamson at Whangarei District Council; he knows how to work the system to have 'parking on broken yellow lines' infringement tickets squashed by his superiors. But you have to wonder is that the system, or is it the personnel that are corrupt, allowing such action to be taken?

Cr Tony Davies-Colley insisted that he still wanted an update as to how the outcomes were in the report.

Riaan Elliot advised that it could be rather a lengthy report. Some of the issues do go on for a long time, so Riaan is probably right. No worries Tony; chop another tree down....you possibly have contacts in the timber/paper pulp industry. But the outcome of some of the on-going consents is a fairly important issue to know if the correct results are being achieved.

Marunui Conservation Ltd, Item No.15 at 1134hrs. This presentation was brought forward but a loss of power to the overhead projector had the meeting back on course until power was resumed.

Item No.13. Community Wastewater Treatment Plant Discharges – Current Compliance Status (Updated) - (1135hrs). This item was self explanatory and no discussion was necessary.

Item No.14. Proposed integrated approach for reducing contaminants to Whangarei Harbour and its freshwater tributaries at 1136hrs.

Justin Murfitt, Planning and Policy gave a update on this issue. Contamination was a concern in the Upper Whangarei harbour. It was from a wide variety of sources. *Yes we know what one is; the irresponsible discharge of raw untreated sewage into our waterways by a local authority. I will not name that authority as Whangarei District Council. I have fought to stop it and will continue until they comply.*

Cr Graeme Ramsey advised that there had been a strong message from the community. Right Graeme and they might get a strong message again when they least expect it.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley felt they must make things happen.

Cr Crichton Christie claimed a similar report was going to the WDC meeting tomorrow to get a result. *About time Crichton, your council is a disgrace; not fixing the sewerage issue properly but spending on projects of far less importance than a healthy harbour, healthy people and a pristine environment. Shame on the lot of you. And now you want*

an outfall pipe into Bream Bay to discharge at a cost of \$26million for a pipeline. You try to portray its clean water to be discharged; then why do you have to take it 3km off the shore. What are you going to hide?

Marunui Conservation Ltd, Item No.15 at 1141hrs. The presentation finally gets underway. And a good presentation of what people in the area of Bream tail are endeavoring to do to protect their local environment.

Cr Joe Carr asked if staff liaise with them to assist with pest control.

Don McKenzie, Bio security Senior Programme Manager advised that the bio-security portion of the Environment Fund may be of assistance. This was an opportunity to talk about a larger community plan.

Cr Bill Rossiter believes that this will give a baseline for something to work towards.

Chris Jenkins, Department of Conservation commented that we all need to tie it all together and work together on these projects.

Brian McEwing (KDC) emphasised that they should support those that showed initiative.

The meeting closed at 1204hrs. Cr Joe Carr inviting the guests from Marunui Conservation Ltd to join them for lunch.

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