

Environmental Management Committee meeting - 25th October 2011

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The meeting today got away at 0930hrs as Chairman Joe Carr welcomed all and advised that two more were coming.

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.

Joe also explained emergency exits and meeting points in the case of evacuation through whatever causes.

Apologies were received for Cr Di Maxwell (FNDC) and Richard Booth (Farming Community)

There was no show or apology from Cr Crichton Christie (WDC)

Item No.1. Confirmation of Minutes – 23 August 2011. (0932hrs)

Brian McEwing (KDC) believed that an alteration was required and that was duly done With no further discussion necessary and no other matters rising from the minutes it was on to the next item.

0934 hrs Item No.2. River Schemes – Update Report

Bruce Howse, Land/Rivers Senior Programme Manager gave some details on this project described in item 3 on page 4.

Dr Greg Blunden (Environmental Interest Groups) arrived at the meeting at 0934hrs during this item.

Cr Joe Carr commented that 'if the Hatea Bridge didn't proceed funding would be available for the Rust Avenue bridge'. *Good call Joe, you are so right, they need to get their priorities right.....maybe they could spend the money on the failing sewerage system in Whangarei.*

Cr Tony Davies-Colley queried 'when you go to NZTA with river projects it appears you run into a headway'.

Cr Joe Carr, not agreeing with that comment, informed that 'when it is route security with flooding issues its big spends and that is the issue'.

Joe wished to table an item and this was approved.

Time now at 0943hrs Item No.3. Biosecurity Operational Plans – Progress Report Don McKenzie, Bio security Senior Programme Manager highlighted the Regional Pest strategy. There were 2600 introduced weeds in New Zealand. There were animal, insect, weed and pest invaders.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley insisted that Don and their people needed other tools to address the issue with noxious weeds. There was something missing with toxic weeds and there were 6 aggressive weeds in reduced light of our native bush like ginger, privet and Taiwan cherry. The tools weren't sufficient to deal with these issues. We want to change the way we do it.

NRC Chair Craig Brown asked TDC what he wished to change.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley replied that 'it was the way we do it; we are not covering our responsibilities'.

Cr Joe Carr added that it gets back to resources and funding availability.

Ms Nicole Anderson (Cultural Interests) informed there were joint ventures and we need to work with CEO's, we need innovation in the approach to control these issues in our workshops.

Don McKenzie informed that 'we were winning the battle at sites; but not the war regionally.

Acting Chief Executive Tony Phipps advised that only last year we adopted a Pest Control Plan.

NRC Chair Craig Brown suggested that they use the RPS (Regional Policy Statement) to evaluate the financial effect on the region.

Cr Joe Carr advised they won't move the recommendation; they will come back at the end of the meeting to view the power point presentation Don has available.

Item No.4. Eucalyptus Tree Pest – Gum Leaf Skeletoniser at 0959hrs.

Cr Graeme Ramsey asked questions regarding a parasite wasp.

Don McKenzie, Biosecurity Senior Programme Manager gave a valued answer and informed this was an issue they were working on and would investigate these.

Cr Bill Rossiter queried if it was an airborne pest. *Careful Willy you don't meet it while flying.*

Cr Tony Davies-Colley queried how landowners in the area of concern are contacted; was it brochure or?

Don McKenzie advised that there were areas down in Port Road; their normal areas were domains inland. *Strange you didn't know Tony; being a substantial land owner in the Port Nikau area.* There were spray contractors on the job trying to nip it in the bud.

Geoff Gover (Forestry Industry) informed that it had been in Auckland for a while.

Don McKenzie advised 'they had been there for 10 years; but we don't want caterpillars'.

NRC Chair Craig Brown asked how many projects are successfully controlled.

Don McKenzie said Mist flower was an example where a fungus effect bio agent was causing die back to it. Ragwort was now not an issue in a managed form and with Gorse, 3 to 4 bio agents has suspended it. Bio control is not a panacea for the control of these weeds but assists and is the smartest step forward, rather than toxic herbicides.

Craig Brown 'disputed the suppression of gorse, looking at all the yellow coloured flowers around, or were they just fallen off Kowhai trees?'

Geoff Gover (Forestry Industry) asked if they would consider a leaflet drop.
Acting Chief Executive Tony Phipps advised that they were programming for a special council bio security information meeting.

Item No.5. Recreational Swimming Water Quality Programme (1019hrs)
Riaan Elliot, Monitoring Senior Programme Manager advised that water quality had not been as good as previous years; we have had 2 or 3 significant storm effects and suggested 'swim on the open coast'.

Cr Joe Carr asked if the national guidelines regarding water quality need to be looked at.

Item No.6. 2011 Lakes State and Trend Report (plus presentation) (1037hrs)
Riaan Elliot, did a power point presentation on behalf of Emma Simpson, Environmental Monitoring Officer which was informative. (The report in the agenda on this item is worth a read pages 39-42.)

Item No.7. Annual Monitoring Report 2010-2011(1055hrs)
Riaan Elliot, Monitoring Senior Programme Manager explained this was a synopsis on the monitoring that had been done; it was a high level summary.

It was now 1100hrs and it was onto Item No.8. Monitoring and Compliance – Self Audit Health Check

Riaan Elliot gave a brief on how they were faring in this area.

Cr Bill Rossiter had a question in relation to 5b. as below

Does the regional council have a good understanding of whether the regulatory and non-regulatory programmes aimed at maintaining and enhancing freshwater quality are effective?

This was duly answered professionally by Riaan Elliot.

Item No.9. Report on Environmental Monitoring for the period 1-30 September 2011

It was now 1105hrs and there was again no need for discussion on this item.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley wanted to speak to this item; as a past offender he would like to speak to it. *That is a fair enough qualification to speak to an item.... 1st hand knowledge eh?* He believed 'it was now management issues since infrastructure improvements have been made it was now operational matters in training'.

Item No.10. Community Wastewater Treatment Plant Discharges – Current Compliance Status (Updated) (1124hrs)

Cr Tony Davies-Colley asked where were the timelines, previously asked for in the report.

Cr Bronwyn Hunt had queries regarding the Awanui - Kaitaia reticulation (page 68)
Riaan Elliot, Monitoring Senior Programme Manager answered the previous questions.

It was time at 1128hrs Item No.11 Update Rainfall and Water Resources – Dry Spring
Cr Joe Carr advised the report was self explanatory and thanked staff for comprehensive reporting.

Time now at 1129hrs it was Item No.12. Presentation: Enviroschools Northland – Project Possum

Susan Karels, Enviroschools Regional Coordinator gave a most informative address on Project Possum supported by a selection of photographs on the successful programme which was a hand on possum control program. This program met the 4 well beings; Social, cultural, environmental and economic.

Geoff Gover (Forestry Industry) asked how the possum carcasses were disposed of and this was duly answered. *The 'restaurant kitchen at Bellamy's' in Wellington was not the correct answer but could this alternative could be looked at in the future?*

Dr Greg Blunden (Environmental Interest Groups) could be supplying choky fish at the next meeting as his cell phone erupted during the presentation at 1138hrs.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley asked if they believed the \$500-00 cost of a poison license is a barrier for these kids.

Item No.13. Presentation: Northland Marine Oil Spill Response and Contingency Plan (1142 hrs)

Regional Harbourmaster, Captain Jim Lyle gave a most assuring presentation regarding the Oil Spill Response and Contingency Plan. He advised about the 3 tiers of response to incidents. Tier 1 is local attending to the incident. Tier 2 is a Regional Council response and Tier 3 which is a national team response. He informed of an Oil Pollution Fund which has recently reduced from \$8million to \$2mill.

There were some concerns raised about a rock/reef off Home Point which could be an issue with any larger ships entering our harbour.

The power point presentation was brilliant and would be great to see on the NRC website. People out there are titchy about the recent event off Tauranga and the vessel "Rena". The previous NRC harbourmaster Ian Niblock has been featuring regularly during the incident that is unfolding in Tauranga.

The meeting closed at 1204hrs.

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