

Regional Transport Committee meeting - 5th October 2011

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The meeting today got away promptly at 1000hrs.

Chairman John Bain welcomed all for attending.

Apologies (Item No 1) were received for 2 persons; Cr Joe Carr and Inspector Clifford Paxton. He was represented by Senior Sergeant Stephen Dickson.

Mr Bain also explained the emergency exits and restroom facilities that were available.

Item No 2. 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 1001hrs and Item No. 3. There are no presentations scheduled for this meeting.

Item No.4 at 1003hrs, Confirmation of Minutes of Regional Transport Committee Meeting 3 August 2011 - and page by page there were opportunities to receive comments from members present. John Bain added to the item regarding Stock effluent on page 3 that regarding the concern by Cr Joe Carr on gradients at these facilities it was standard throughout the country.

John Bain advised that Rail in Northland would be discussed later in the agenda.

On to the Information Reports at 1004hrs Item No 5.1 Quorum for Committee Meetings There was no substantial discussion on this item; the presentation of the item was a formality.

Item No. 5.2 (1006hrs) Facilities for the Disposal of Stock Effluent from Trucks – Progress Report.

The Pararaka project was completed and had been officially opened on 23 September. Mr Steve Westgate Environmental Sustainability representative advised that with NZTA delegating a project manager that this was instrumental and a key factor in having this project proceed as well as it had.

Item No. 5.3 (1009hrs) Regional Road Safety Update.

Mr Howeth Mountain, Access and Mobility representative gave a brief on this item. He was amazed at a recent article in the Whangarei Leader regarding Warrant of Fitness's and checks for these in car parks. He believed government departments had the information available regarding WOF and Registration to police these issues directly. Senior Sergeant Stephen Dickson informed that police deploy staff depending on risk and focus on driver behaviour and vehicle safety; WOF, tyres, rust and the workings of the cars. He confirmed they had the power to check vehicles in car parks but staff would be tied up.

Howeth Mountain believed speed cameras could be set up and WOF and Registration checks could be carried out in unison with these as the vehicles would have been seen on the roads.

Far North District Council Mayor Wayne Brown arrived at 1014hrs during this item and Chairman John Bain asked Wayne to join them up the front in Cr Joe Carr's chair as he was absent.

Steve Westgate thought the 'yield' from car parks would be better than on the road. *Fair comment Steve but don't police cop a lot of flack for revenue gathering with for example speed cameras? Personally I would prefer to see, rather than speed cameras, all vehicles speeding to be stopped, licenses checked, breath tested and vehicles check for WOF Registration etc. Isn't that all about Road Safety? In my opinion it's not cars that kill people its people that kill people; so full checks are better than revenue gathering.*

Mr Jeff Devine, WDC Roothing Manager, gave a brief update on traffic light phasing in Whangarei, when questioned about the new By-pass intersection near the Whau Valley lights.

Mr Tom Baker, Far North District Council representative asked about the proposal of renewing drivers licenses and that service not being available in areas like Kaitia or Dargaville and people having to travel to Kerikeri. *Sounds like a smart move to encourage people to not renew their licenses; like let's make it harder, not easier.*

It's now 1025hrs Item No 5.4 Northland Regional Land Transport Programme 2009-2012 - Funding Uptake

Chris Powell gave a brief on this item.

Mr Stephen Town NZ Transport Agency also gave more detail on the funding changes that have been introduced and how there was a reduction in available funding. (Read the agenda item page 39-44 to see how funds are affecting projects)

John Bain gave some detail on the strengthening of bridges that had been on a recent news item and how Northland could benefit from more assistance in this area.

Mr Ken Rintoul, Economic Development representative, asked about if the income that was generated from a district with road user charges and fuel tax was spent in that same district.

Sadly the answer was NO; it goes into a big pot in Wellington to be dished out at their discretion as Stephen Town from NZTA explained. There is one fund and they, NZTA have had to slow up on spending as they don't have the capacity to take on debt. Chris Powell gave a very detailed account of the funding process and how the budgets from all districts go together.

Item No 5.5 Bay of Islands Airport Review (1050hrs) Bay of Islands Airport Review

Mr Rawson Wright, Cultural Interests representative, declared a Conflict of Interest as he was a director of Destination Northland.

Mr Ken Rintoul explained how airports such as Queenstown and Rotorua don't want the upgrade of Kerikeri airport to go ahead. Locally we want jets to frequent Kerikeri as after having a good time here they will promote and market Northland overseas to others telling everyone. *We must ensure they do have good times and let's hope they don't have a bad time either as it may not help the situation if they report that back.* Ken continued that *we must push this project harder and faster. He advised that the departure tax proposed will only bring the airport back to not running at a loss.*

Mr Tom Baker believed that Air New Zealand was blocking the departure tax application but was corrected by Ken Rintoul that may have changed recently as they were now supportive of it.

Cr John Bain insisted that the working group must be accurate with all the estimates for the business plan to proceed.

Chairman Craig Brown, who was observing the meeting, *gave some very good sound advice*; you must present us with accurate figures and most importantly outline the benefits to the region for this upgrade at Kerikeri. "You must sell it to us" he added. *So right Craig, benefits are what sell most items, if you don't feel the need to buy it then no one else will either.*

Far North District Council mayor Wayne Brown advised that Kerikeri was the only airport that was owned by a council and its subsidiary, in New Zealand. If during the group investigation into the upgrade this became an issue then his council was open to a change if the region was to benefit.

On to the Decision Reports at 1109hrs Item No 6.1 Draft Northland Regional Land Transport Programme 2012-2015

Mr Chris Powell gave an update on this and advised it was pending as councils were still preparing budgets...

It's now 1111hrs and onto Item No 6.2 New Zealand Transport Agency Proposed Changes to Financial Assistance Rates

Mr Stephen Town (NZTA) gave a power point presentation (This agenda item is worth a read; pages 52 onwards)

Questions were followed by Mr Tony Norman Public Health representative and Mr Steve Westgate Environmental Sustainability representative.

FNDC Mayor Wayne Brown also advised how hard it was to collect rates in his district.

An additional item as previously mentioned; Review of Rail in Northland – Progress Report.

Chairman John Bain confirmed that a person had been appointed to sort out rail usage in Northland.

Mr Ken Rintoul advised that they have had a meeting with Kiwi Rail. A lot of the meeting was held in confidence. The biggest problem in Northland was deemed to be the tunnels and expected to cost \$150million to remedy these. They had sketched up a low bed loader and the idea was now in China being developed and they were advised this could save the project \$1billion. *In my opinion a low bed loader would also have the advantage of lowering the COG. (Centre of Gravity) In turn this would make loads far more stable and secure. A major safety factor.*

They had also suggested that Kiwi Rail use a commissioned based sales developer to promote this business arm of rail. There were lots of contacts coming forward. It has been realised that fertilizer used to be shipped by rail in large quantities, but not now.

Craig Brown, *was obviously well awake*, as he quipped in that “Fertilizer might come out of Wellington” *You are so correct Craig: there may even be a larger constant supply less than 100 metres away from your office.*

Cr John Bain commented that there was a lot of public interest in this issue to keep the rail in Northland.

John Bain opened it up for General Business and went around the room to all for an opportunity to have their say. No takers so the meeting finished at 1139hrs.

I must again say it John, a good way to round the meeting off. Pleased to see this as sometimes there are issues that members present wish to openly discuss and possibly don't get discussed as some may think they don't warrant the formalities of a motion.

Reminder:-

There is a public meeting on Rail in Northland.

To be held at Forum North Tuesday evening 11th October 2011.

Numerous guest speakers including Craig Brown, Gareth Hughes, Aaron Edwards, John Johnston, Kelvin Davis plus representatives from rail user organisations.

Come along support this cause.

Tee shirts available to purchase on the night .

Gold coin donation.