

Regional Transport Committee meeting - 6th April 2011

The meeting today got away to a little later start, at 1006hrs, as the workshop prior had gone into extra time.

Chairman John Bain welcomed all for their effort attending.

Apologies (Item No 1) were received for 4 persons; CEO Ken Patterson, R Wright, someone from the Health Board and Inspector Clifford Paxton, but another officer was present to represent him.

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.

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

Time now 1007hrs and Item No. 3 Forestry in Northland Presentation by Mr Rowan Struthers. We were treated to an interesting presentation, outlining the value of forestry to the Northland region. China and India are the biggest importers of logs. Log exports are on the increase, 1 million m³ per month which equates to between 30 - 35 vessels per month. New Zealand is currently the second largest soft wood exporter in the world. Northland is the second largest production area in New Zealand of which the Far North does 50% of it. In Northland there are presently between 400 to 500 truck/trailer loads per day and this is predicted to increase to approximately 900 per day by 2029. As far as road safety issues with logging trucks they are pleased there has been a 65% reduction in logging truck crashes and a 75% reduction in rollovers. Otaika Valley Road has some issues with 94 logging trucks on average per day expected to increase to approx 226/day by 2021.

Rowan paused for what he thought was a question, but no it was someone just itching, thus creating a few laughs from the attendees.

He continued by saying there was a demand for rail even though his company Hancock Forestry Management, experienced the costs were more by rail. Forestry and logging was the largest growth industry in Northland at 20.2%. Forestry and wood processing in Northland for 2010 was 7.9% of GDP. Some pretty impressive figures and a great presentation. It was most informative, the presenter knowledgeable and extremely well versed and far from boring. This is an industry that is helping our local economy and we can only hope Kiwi Rail can see there are benefits also to them in continuing to operate north of Auckland.

Item No.4 at 1042hrs, Confirmation of Minutes - 2 February 2011 and page by page there were opportunities to receive comments. No issues, so onto the next item.

On to the Information Reports at 1043hrs Item No 5.1 Northland Regional Land Transport Programme 2009-2012 Funding Update and Mr Chris Powell (Transport

Operations Senior Programme Manager) gives an overview. *Excuse the pun but some roading projects are taking a little while to get off the ground.*

New member on this committee Mr Ken Rintoul appears to be astute as to what is required in regards to value for money. He believes there should be peer reviews on contracts and a percentage paid to the companies that can save money on contracts if such a saving can be made. Some merits in this. *Does he have an insight into the industry and what may be going on?* He continued by saying he wanted a 'better bang for the buck'.

John Bain queried WDC Councillor Greg Martin requesting information on the Rust Ave bridge by the June meeting.

Item No. 5.2 Facilities for the Disposal of Stock Effluent from Trucks- Progress Report at 1102hrs and Mr Steve Westgate explains the progress of the plans. There is now a proposal for the Whangarei District Council to have a stock effluent discharge facility at Sales Yard Road, Kauri. *That is the smartest thing they have suggested in a long time. I personally had vented my opinion about the position at Southend Avenue being a dumb idea believing either by Kauri Saleyards or outside the Waste Treatment Plant, Kioreroa Road as the most suitable choices. But what would I know; some only class me as a stirrer.* A small change, in the date in the recommendation, was needed.

Cr Joe Carr thanked Steve Westgate for all the work he had put into this project. He also added and thanked those involved with work at the Mangamukas.

It's now 1104hrs Item No 5.3 Regional Road safety Report and details of this update were discussed. (Some interesting reading on the agenda pages 19-36 for those interested on some of the good results in road safety) The police officer present commented that the bylaws introduced and work done by the Whangarei District Council in regards 'Speed on Beaches' had resulted in good results and it was now time for both Far North District Council and Kaipara District Councils to address this issue.

Item No 5.4 Vehicles on Beaches Update now at 1110hrs and again comments regarding the positive results the program had achieved in Whangarei. *Good on the team at WDC for have the fortitude to introduce these bylaws to make the beaches safer despite some intense opposition from some sectors of the community and beach users.*

Item No 5.5 1113hrs and Vaughan Cooper (Growth and Infrastructure Manager) outlines the submission on the Puhoi to Wellsford RONS (Road of National Significance)

An interesting comment by Chair John Bain "with the current party in parliament the RONS will remain as it is" *Definitely showing your colours here John, hope you don't end up with a red face. Is this a sign of no confidence, or are some just baffled by bulls..t?*

On to the Decision Reports at 1115hrs Item No 6.1 Draft Northland Regional Land Transport Programme 2012-2015. Mr Chris Powell states the statutory requirements of the programme. He gave a brief on these but claimed it will take a year to put it

together. This report is just to signal to the committee it is coming up but believed that having a workshop with NZTA to go through the stages with the committee was of importance.

Cr Joe Carr, after hearing some of the comments from the NZTA representative and others, threw in a bit by saying "Two wrongs don't make it right."
Maybe so Joe but remember, 'Two Wrights made an aeroplane'.

It's now 1123hrs and onto Item No 6.2 Draft State Highway Classification - Submission. Vaughan Cooper outlined how NZTA have proposed a classification of the State Highway network.

WDC's Greg Martin commented that the highways need work, that there are miles of cones and that don't look good for tourists. He hoped they would be gone and the roads fixed by the time of the World Cup. *Is that all you can think about Greg? Bloody footy, what about the safety issues of roads for the people that live here all the time and by the way, pay for the repairs, or have you forgotten where the funds come from?*

Item No 6.3 Review of Rail in Northland. At 1129 the rail issue is again a topic. John Bain informs of the forming of a small committee. There had been meetings to formulate a plan to Kiwi Rail to maintain rail to Northland. He claimed freight would be better on rail. Councils were now working together to produce a submission to Jim Quinn at Kiwi Rail.

Vaughan Cooper claimed this was an opportunity to discuss rail and the committee had worked to formalize this to Kiwi Rail.

Chair John Bain took this opportunity to mention to the media present that a lot of work was going on regards rail and the media had a duty to keep the public informed that it was happening.

Oh are you back with the meeting now John? Great they might not manage without you. It's now 1129hrs and on to Item 6.4 30 Year Transport Strategy - Review of Strategic Priorities. Again its NRC's Vaughan Cooper to give a brief outline and inform that there had been joint meetings with Far North District council and the Northland regional Council.

Cr Joe Carr believed that they needed to look at the long term priorities and the long term costs of the strategy.

Bay of Islands Airport review, Item No 6.5 at 1135hrs. Vaughan Cooper's *getting his share of the agenda today*, informing that a working party was set up.

Cr Joe Carr, referring to page 71 and the departure tax being muted, believed they had to take some steps to make it better for tourism and the area in general. There was an opportunity to add to the cash deficiencies. Parking needed to be addressed and the need for charges for parking in the future to offset costs.

Mr Ken Rintoul claimed all these had been explored before and they were going over the same old stuff. The problems in not receiving assistance from Wellington were that the Ministers thought Far North Holdings was a private company and not a CCTO. (Council Controlled Trading Organisation) He believed that it was needed that a

recommendation goes to Wellington confirming it was a CCTO and funded by ratepayers. If there was no money invested in 4 years there will be a deficit of \$1.4M. It was confirmed that a \$5-00 departure tax will help to make the airport financially viable.

Steve Westgate suggested why not make it \$10-00 for departure tax as the fares to travel to Kerikeri from Auckland varied from \$180 to \$280 and the \$10-00 would hardly be noticed.

Ken Rintoul's reply was "Just get it in first then rake it up later"

An interesting comment followed with John Bain claiming that Ken was standing, as a candidate for Central government, in John Carters electorate in the upcoming election. *This was not confirmed or denied by Ken so those in the 'Northland Electorate' you now know how this guy thinks.*

Joe Carr believed an additional recommendation was required that the Regional Transport Committee support in principal the departure tax, support the principles to implement it, which supports the community asset. *Or words similar but I stand to be corrected.*

Notes for this item: Was I not correct in thinking it was decided any "potential conflicts of interest" were to be brought up as we go through the agenda items? Check the following links for interesting information regarding people who may not have declared interests. [Link](#) to Far North Holdings and a [Link](#) to who are the directors of Far North Holdings. Interesting eh?

Item No 6.6 at 1150hrs Donald Road Bridge. Joe Carr claims there is a category that it can be funded under as this bridge in Kaitaia was Northlands biggest Civil Defence risk. The bridge was in a serious state of dis-repair and a replacement was necessary. The desired length of a replacement was 56 metres to protect the town. We will also need to consult with the people in Kaitaia and need to formalize the process.

Tom Baker, FNDC representative, said it was a matter of urgency and funding should be available. The targeted rating would have to go to consultation but a 56metre span bridge was needed.

Here ended the meeting at 1158hrs so it is now off for lunch.

[LINK to appropriate Agenda](#)