

Whangarei District Council meeting - 27th April 2011.

[LINK to appropriate Agenda](#)

With Deputy Mayor Cr Phil Halse in the chair this meeting is underway promptly at 1000hrs. Phil welcomes Councillors, staff and members of the public.

An apology is received from Mayor Morris (180°) Cutforth.

It was now onto Item No.1.the 'Public Forum'

First up it was Jane Davidson who spoke in regards to a Tree Protection Policy. Jane was a concerned resident that circulated a petition in regards to WDC (Whangarei District Council) & NZTA (New Zealand Transport Agency) removing trees in Mander Park to widen State Highway 1. Jane spoke passionately for 1 min 30 seconds. One of her quotes that paints an awesome picture was "Trees are the Lungs of the World". *A thought, certainly worth pondering.*

Next it was Jeff Griggs and he introduced two young ladies who are two of a group that are attempting to form a Whangarei Youth forum (WYF). They meet every Monday night and work with identifying and addressing problems with youth. They propose a Youth Centre where they can have regular dialogue between WYF and the WDC. The wish to connect with council, WDC and bring those issues youth are having to the council. There can be a close connection between their needs and Councils Youth Policy. They filled their full 3 minute allocation.

Emma Cribb addressed council regarding the lack of parking being experienced in her street. Local Authorities have enforced parking infringements on a number in the street but only being a cul-de-sac, there was insufficient areas to park and parking needs to be made available on the island. *Let's hope her pleas for common sense by council are listened to.* Emma only spoke for 1 minute 5 seconds. Emma offered to sing out her time, but Councillors failed to accept her token of friendship that she had offered.

At 1008hrs it was Item No. 2, the Minutes from the previous meeting and all were approved with no issues needing any discussion from them.

Item No. 3. Minutes; Creative Communities Assessment Committee, Tuesday 22 March 2011. As there was no need for discussion at 1008hrs, this was all over in seconds.

With time at 1009hrs it was Item No. 4. Minutes; 20/20 Inner City Development (City Centre/Urban Design) Subcommittee Thursday 14 April 2011. All must be in order as no discussion was necessary on this item.

Item No.5.the Police Report and Area Commander Inspector Paul Dimery, was here to present his report at 1009hrs. Paul apologized for no written report available. He supported what the Whangarei Youth Forum had spoken about earlier and suggested to council that we need to listen to the people that will lead us into the future. *Brilliant comment Paul, you are right on the money.* Paul continued explaining they had had exceptionally busy month with 223 arrests and a number of burglars arrested. It was a very small percentage of the community responsible for the vast majority of crime. Vine Street was again becoming a problem area especially when the car park had not been locked as organized. Police were standing up to criminal identities like the Rebels. They were into the meth trade and bullying our kids. There had been instances where some council staff don't want to be involved and he intended to meet with senior council officials to discuss this. Their group of volunteers are doing a grand job.

Cr Merv Williams showed concern about the Vine Street car park and hoped Paul would attend the City safe meeting.

Paul emphasized together they need to close down licensed premises that allow the criminal element in.

Cr Sue Glen asked in reference to a letter in the paper "If push comes to a shove, how are you going to run a gang out of town?" She added "How do I support you?"

Paul response high-lighted some issues. In the 60's and 70's they would be gone, it was really good. We say we don't want them here. They are not going to sell meth to them, they are not going to influence our kids, we are not to rent them premises, we don't give them building consents altering premise for their activities and you can't have novice Control Officers going to gang pads.

Cr Sue Glen asks 'if it would be prudent to meet with who leases the building?'

Cr John Williamson had some road safety concerns regarding the chasing of vehicles. Paul commented that if we allow them to run we will have twice as many fatalities, we can-not accept that behavior

Cr Sharon Morgan had concerns about the higher number of resources involved with the present issue (gangs) how were other areas being affected.

Paul reassured there was no real problem, no potential danger to the community and they would keep it up till they left town.

Cr Kahu Sutherland thanked Paul for a quick response his team had received at the Town Basin which resulted in the arrest of a wanted criminal.

Cr Crichton Christie felt the council should not stand behind the police but should indeed be standing beside them. We need to get their heads together and work in areas strategically where they can and he too did not want 'them' in his town.

Cr Greg Martin shared an experience he with his wife and grand daughter had in Hukurangi over the weekend when the gang turned up canvassing the locals. It was no doubt a recruitment drive. It was very intimidating and seeing all the police made him feel comfortable.

Paul confirmed that 101 infringement notices were issued, 47 licence breeches leaving only a small amount now legally allowed to ride big bikes (bigger than 250cc). And 7 had to push their bikes back home for varying reasons. Overall he was "rapt" with his staff in the way they worked on the problem. *Paul it's good to see a strong leader in control of the police and recognizes their efforts in Whangarei, keep up the good work.*

The time now at 1027hrs. Item No. 6. Contract 10013 - Lower Harbour River Crossing - Design & Construction - Tender Recommendation. Moved by Cr Greg Martin seconded by Cr Sharon Morgan.

Cr Aaron Edwards was quick to say he won't be supporting this. NZTA had only offered a 50% subsidy; any cost overrun will be 100%. He also had concerns about Cr Jeroen Jongejans being in the working group. *(Jeroen is one of the main drivers behind the Loch/Weir design for the harbour promoted by some big players in town)*

Deputy Mayor Cr Phil Halse confirmed Jeroen had some 1st hand experience with 'the Hub.'

Cr Merv Williams said he would vote for the motion on the understanding that they keep control of costs. He was concerned no Okara ward representative was in the working group and had concerns that both he and Aaron Edwards had not been getting any feedback.

Sharon Morgan queried if other councilors can sit in the meetings.

Phil-*In* Halse said it "was not general but they could listen."

Cr Warwick Syers said *(oh you are awake)* they were moving an amount of \$200k. The outcome will be the estimates. Only after the estimates will the responsibility be on us. We don't want to get the cart before the horse and we must remind people this bridge is a fundamental piece of our roading plan.

Phil-*In* Halse commented the cost isn't design and build.

CEO Mark Simpson, *to the rescue*, this is only part of the process, tenders have had to confirm they can build it for \$29 million. Quantity surveyors had estimated \$26.5mil. This working group is to get the technical ideas and come back under \$29mil.

Cr Sue Glen having her say, as elected councilors we represent the whole district. "It irked me that no one in the Okara ward was on the group." There is anxiety in this room about how the group has been constructed.

Cr Crichton Christie explained 'that there were 3 points he had concerns about'. 1/ 'The Bridge has been on the LTCCP (Long Term Council Community Plan) for 20 years'. 2/ 'It is part of a network to solve city congestion'. 'We can do Spedding Road update, Porowhini Ave Bridge and we are doing our own bit with this project but the government has pulled the pin on State Highway 1 upgrade'. 'There has been no comment from government about why and we haven't seen a mayor in Wellington or anything.' 3/ 'He agreed with Cr Edwards and Cr Williams about someone from Okara being in the group and there should be an amendment for that to look at costs in an accounting way'. 'My fellow Councillor, *patting Cr Jeroen Jongejans on his shoulder*, wants to add money for his weir.' *Congratulations Crichton you are saying what many have been thinking and talking about, say it as it is, and keep saying it louder, as it is.*

CEO Mark Simpson, *deep in donkey doo in this project*, says Cr Christie has raised some interesting points about the network. The spine is the State Highway 1 and we provide the arterials. We have been at work with the government and with our local MP Phil Cheatley. They are trying to slow it down and we are asking NZTA and National about the spend on their roads and not our roads.

Cr Phil Halse trying to gain some control claims Christie's bit is not on the agenda.

Cr John Williamson wanted confirmation if the \$14.5mil had been indicated or confirmed as the NZTA subsidy and was it approved. Is the process we are in satisfactory for their requirements? *Where have you been John this has been discussed previously?*

Cr Halse claims "it is not just a bridge but a roading network." *Phil, it is a bridge that supersedes the stagnant bridge at the Town Basin you and your peers want to put umbrellas over. Bridge in the Collins Dictionary quotes; a structure for crossing river, something joining or supporting other parts. Now do you understand what a bridge is?*

Cr Kahu Sutherland wanted to speak to the amendment as it would solve a lot of things if Cr Merv Williams was in the working group. There was no difference between 2 or 3 councillors being in the group. He also asked what assurances were put in place for local content. What could ensure local contractors get the work?

CEO Mark Simpson said 'previous projects like the stadium and police station had local contractors'. *Kahu, maybe what % of the work was done by local contractors might have been harder to answer.*

Cr Kahu Sutherland claimed 'to date the stadium and police station hasn't worked'.

Cr Greg Martin in his right of reply said he was happy to have Merv Williams in the working group and it was crucial to keep costs in line. The group had in it also the CEO,

Paul Dell etc and it was a powerful team. *You are so right Greg, so powerful you and the other 3 will have a hard job turning it from the direction that the 'power plant' wants to go in; spending rate payer's money on something that is not essential to Whangarei and not needed when other bridges are sitting there idle. Wake up and smell the roses before it's too late and we are in even more debt than the \$160mil we are in now. We can't afford it! It's not a game of Monopoly.*

Cr Shelley Deeming called for a division. They were all for it except Cr Aaron Edwards Who voted against it? *Maybe Aaron is the only councilor that listens to his constituents.*

Item No. 7. It's now 1047hrs Future of Rail in Northland. A large contingent of rail supporters holding placards, in support of Saving Rail to Northland, were in the public gallery waiting for this item. Cr Aaron Edwards wishes to propose another recommendation. [Link to Proposed Recommendation](#)

Cr Brian McLachlan wants to support Aaron Edwards recommendation as we need competition. Carriage of rail is cheaper than road.

Cr Shelley Deeming also wants to support Aaron Edwards recommendation. Marsden Port is the crux of the matter. It is vital to get the link between the port and Whangarei but she would not like to see the 4 laning of the highway jeopardized.

Cr Warwick Syers believed the key issue here is that it must be mothballed, to boos from the public gallery. *Hasn't taken them long to sus you out, Warwick.* We have to be pragmatic, we don't want a rail closure and Auckland needs to support it. Government is not going to give us rail and a 4 lane highway. It has to be maintained. *I know what is better to keep our long term future, on track.*

Cr John Williamson complimented Cr Edwards for bringing this forward. "Mothballing is forever". Rail is brilliant mechanism point to point. E.g. Coal, milk & trees. The road network is not going to happen for 20 years. You will get Auckland to Puhoi, you may get Puhoi to Wellsford but not Wellsford to Whangarei. We have to protect to keep transport off the road and we need to get into bed with the ports, better.

Cr Sue Glen wants to support Aaron Edwards recommendation and claims it is great to see people here in support of rail.

Cr Merv Williams had discussions with the NRC at their meeting about what's best for all operating rail. Moth balling rail is not good for Northland. We must keep input to the greater Auckland Plan and we must represent our people and lobby central government.

Cr Sharon Morgan also supportive of Aaron's recommendation and believes rationalising with Tauranga, Auckland and Marsden ports is important with opportunities for the large output of logs from forestry. We must liaise with us, the Regional Council and our MP's.

Cr Phil Halse has lived in the area for 32 years. He had met with Jim Quinn, CEO Kiwi Rail and had in-depth talks on rail. The capital spend for rail is focused on cities. We need to point people in the right direction. "We need to talk to the Regional Council Transport Committee of which their chair, Mr John Bain is sitting at the back, Welcome John." It is solely with the Regional transport Committee it is their role to push the issue.

Cr Aaron Edwards in his right of reply thanked fellow councilors for supporting his recommendation. What he found strange was Central government could find \$2billion for roads but not \$2million for rail.

What I find strange as to the change of attitude of councilors when the gallery is full of placard waving citizens when normally any councillor trying to change recommendations is usually hung, drawn and quartered. The pressure of an audience would make you think its election year.

The majority of rail supporters left after the rail item on the agenda.

It's now 1105hrs, Item No. 8. Hundertwasser Art Centre Whangarei.

Cr Kahu Sutherland, to his feet speaks to the item. Kahu introduces Mr Richard Smart of the New Zealand Hundertwasser Foundation who goes into a full sales pitch on how great this project will be. *Geez Wayne did this guy previously sell vacuum cleaners or Encyclopedias? This sales pitch certainly could not have fitted into a public forum time allocation.* There was a comparison on visitors to Spain and how much they had gained from it. *There is a big difference in numbers visiting Spain than those visiting New Zealand.*

CEO Mark Simpson was keen to put things in context; this was about rebranding the city. *Remember when they wanted to re brand Wanganui and Michael Laws and who wants to rebrand Whangarei? Have you asked the people that you are a servant to?* Whangarei is growing at the rate of one thousand a year; we are the 8th largest region. We are developing the Town Basin, building walkways, cycle ways, roads, bridges and sewage upgrades. *People note where the sewerage upgrades is at the end of his list. It should be Bl--dy first.* It's about rebranding Whangarei.

Kahu Sutherland, *back on full song and so he should be too, as he and Simo, the CEO had a ratepayer funded trip to Austria to check it out, so now they have to sell the idea to us to justify the frivolous spending of ratepayers money.* He thanked Richard Smart for his support and that of the Foundation. Every city has iconic features. "Whangarei is a large town smoldering waiting for something to happen for too long". People have been content to exist with cafes and nightclubs. Whangarei features predominantly for all the wrong reasons. Our health statistics, unemployment and economy amongst the worst. For too long we have accepted it and I'm fed up with that. Today you are charged with a decision that could lift Whangarei out of the doldrums. *Warwick's not listening*

Kahu, he has his eyes closed, can someone give him a nudge. I believe you are missing the point; People make things better....not buildings

Cr Greg Martin voices his concern that it was unfortunate that the proposed recommendation was circulated after the meeting had started and he wanted some changes to it regarding Special Consultative Process.

Cr Crichton Christie called for a point of order as Special Consultative Process is required outside an LTCCP. (Long Term Council Community Plan)

CEO Mark Simpson confirmed that was correct.

Cr Greg Martin was certain that they needed to take the public with this.

Cr Phil Halse reiterated that Special Consultative Process is in the Act for anything over \$4million.

Mark Simpson confirmed there must be a Statement of Intent, publically advertised, to have a submission process and conduct hearings. *That's right, but there is nothing in the Act about them having to listen to what submitters say, or act upon them.*

Crichton Christie is sure the Act sets the minimum standards, times etc. It doesn't set the maximums. There are certain things we must tick off or we break the law.

Cr Merv Williams agreed with Cr Greg Martin.

Cr Sue Glen queried why they have to go to the public when the 30/50 plan says it.

Phil Halse claims it's a big picture and this is only part of it. *Right Phil, it is part of a big picture, but it's a big 'Expensive Picture' that we can't afford. You don't hang a Matisse on the wall and have no food in the pantry.*

Cr Warwick Syers (*he's awake now or talking in his sleep?*) All the innuendos about council having a model, or not having a model. *If you were transparent about ratepayer money we wouldn't have to trip over your secret purchases in the upstairs foyer and assume!* Warwick continued that we must grow Whangarei, if we stagnate, we will die. This is an opportunity for an iconic, unique rare opportunity. *Well Warwick, you certainly have grown our debt and it's about to grow some more with your grandiose ideas.*

Greg Martin withdraws the changes to his amendment. *Who got to him?*

Crichton Christie thanked Richard. The consultation must be right. We have got to get it right and take the people with us.

Cr Sue Glen felt we must be crystal clear. If we are confused what are the public? *Doesn't Sue know about the model either, Warwick?*

Sue Glen read out a poem from HWTM Morris Cutforth.

Dream what you want to dream, Go where you want to go, Be what you want to be, Because you only have one life and one chance, to do all the things you want to do.

A suggestion for Morris; Don't give up your day job even if it's part time. It is obvious his dream was not to be here and it's not what he wanted to do, or where he wished to go.

Cr Aaron Edwards has serious concerns about this project. There has only been one option. Only one proposal can be found, what are we getting for \$214,000-00?

Phil Halse tries to clarify that you inherit some of the previous council, but there is only one council and that is the current council of the day. *Don't worry Phil, thought you have been on them all for about 7 or 8 terms so look in the mirror and take some of the blame and stop having the 'Not Me' attitude.*

Cr Sharon Morgan believes an economic impact study and holistic report needs to be done. *What a financial impact study for ratepayers?*

Phil Halse confirms there will be some indications by the meeting in May.

Kahu Sutherland, in his right of reply, wanted to reassure councilors who had concern that the Hundertwasser way is a very different way, done with the people and I urge you for the sake of Whangarei and New Zealand to support this. *He's convinced, check his coffee.*

Cr Sue Glen requests a division on the vote.

Cr Aaron Edwards is the only one against the recommendation. *Good on you Aaron! Again Aaron is the only councillor who appears to be listening to his constituents and then also stands up for them. Remember Aaron 'Stand up for what you believe in - even if you have to stand alone'*

It's now 1159hrs, Item No. 9. Elected Member Remuneration. The Chair, Cr Phil Halse, clarified that the \$111,495-00 for the mayor included a vehicle.

Cr Shelley Deeming had a query regarding those councilors sitting on community hearing. Should other councilors be deducted to cover the cost of the hearings? She was keen to have it added to the recommendation.

Cr Sue Glen, perhaps a little upset at the 30 kilometer restriction, asked who are these people? (Can only assume she is talking about the ones setting the rules) *Sue, as an elected representative thought you should know, it is part of the State Services Commission and I have furnished a link to enable you to be informed.*

[Link to Remuneration Authority](#)

Cr Phil Halse advised that the Democracy and Legal Services Manager, Jazz Singh, had been in correspondence with the Remuneration Authority regarding the travel issue especially in regards to rural electorates. *See Sue, Phi-in lives rural, he will be chasing it up and he could have told you who the Remuneration Authority was or is he just keeping it quiet because you do not live rural and may not benefit from any change to it?*

Cr Crichton Christie raised a point of order; He only wished the mayor was present to hear what he was about to say.

Cr Phil Halse, obviously a little nervous with Jillian Cutforth (*180's wife*) sitting in the public gallery, cautioned Cr Christie about what he may be going to say and should he wait to say it?

Crichton Christie was determined, this is the forum and I believe it is immoral to take a pay rise when this mayor is only working 20 hours per week. *Do Puppets have morals?*

Phil Halse interjected saying he works more than that.

Cr Crichton Christie continued nothing was going to stop him, *he was on a roll*; if it was me it would be immoral. I'm not the judge of the moral standards of the mayor. He must make that sort of decision. *Do Puppets have morals? [Link to audio](#)*

He hasn't come to this council to ask for leave of absence. He has stated many times in the paper that he only works 20 hours per week. The actual position of mayor is probably worth that pay rise, but the position of this mayor is not and that is my reason to not support this.

Jillian looked a tad uncomfortable, was it about much needed income for an investment property or something? Were their dreams about to unfold?

A screaming match resulted between Cr Crichton Christie and Cr Phil Halse with Phil desperately attempting to, but unsuccessfully, trying to gain some control. *Go Crichton, give it to them tell the facts as they are!*

Phil Halse claimed the mayor received an honorarium, not a salary, the figures quoted in the newspaper could not be verified and his job was to ensure the council was functioning efficiently and in my opinion it is running very well. *Of course Phil is going to say that it's running well, he has the reigns as he has always wanted.*

It was getting a little more heated but it all needed to be aired in the public arena.

Cr Merv Williams called for a point of order and silence fell upon the chamber. *Merv maybe you should be up the front?*

Cr Shelley Deeming attempted to bring a touch of clarity to the situation by saying "the vote was about the position not the person".

The vote was carried but with Cr Kahu Sutherland against the recommendation and Cr Crichton Christie abstaining.

Cr Shelley Deeming asked that there be a motion for the CEO to investigate a method to reimburse the commissioners.

The meeting concluded at 1208hrs having a 5 minute break before resuming to discuss 4 items in confidential section of the meeting. One was about a 'Services Contract' held by a Councillor that was circulated yesterday, Tuesday, in the media.

Didn't Morris campaign that he wanted open and transparent council, or did the Puppet lie? (It looks like more property transactions are in the muzzle and they don't want us, the owners, to know)

All information in regards to this meeting's agenda and others are available on the Whangarei District Council website by clicking on this [link](#).