

Whangarei District Council Environment meeting - 13th July 2011

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Chair Cr Shelley Deeming welcomes all with a good morning, to all those present at 1030hrs.

Apologies were received for Cr Brian McLachlan and Cr Jeroen Jongejans.

Item No. 5. Plan Change 117 Northpower was withdrawn from the agenda and Group Manager Environment Paul Dell was asked to give a brief explanation as to the reason.

It was 1032hrs. and on to Item No. 1 - The minutes for the previous Environment Committee, Wednesday, 8 June 2011 meeting were accepted with no discussion taking place.

With the time still at 1032hrs it was on to The Environment Group Monthly Report June 2011, Item No. 2 and Environment Group Manager Paul Dell was asked by the chair to speak to the report as they proceeded through it.

Group Manager Environment Paul Dell explained that some consents that were due to expire had been dusted off and applicants reapplied. He explained that the Alcohol Reform Bill as mentioned on page 4 (paragraph 6) was not till the end of August but he felt nothing will happen pre election. Also freedom camping in our district was not an issue.

Cr Sharon Morgan queried if it would be an education program to campers and how would it be implemented. *Cr Crichton Christie's cell phone broke the atmosphere and this created Cr Warwick Syers to grasp for his cell phone which he had obviously forgotten to set in silent/meeting mode, him giving his hand a little slap after successfully changing its settings. Naughty boy Warwick and we were so looking forward to some choky fish from you as recompense. I can only recollect one that has produced chocolate fish in the past for this misdemeanor; and that was the ever so quiet Cr Alan Goodhue in the last term producing fish for councilors and even the public gallery but sadly no cup of tea as well, to wash it down as that is not allowed.*

Paul Dell continued that it could be through the Information Centre on a need to basis.

Cr Merv Williams commenting on the Alcohol Reform Bill felt that politicians did not have the guts to follow through on the bill. LGNZ (local Government New Zealand) were intending to set up a committee for 'social behavior.'

Cr John Williamson, (in reference to paragraph 1 on page 3), had a query on sub division applications.

Paul Dell gave some clarification. Paul continued and gave some in depths to the District Plan Changes on page 11.

Cr Merv Williams had concerns regarding the amount of work out there and were they giving consideration to the amount to read up on.

Paul Dell confirmed that a lot of them were Private Plan Changes

Policy and Monitoring Manager Paul Waanders gave an insight into the processes

Cr Merv Williams queried the Motorsport Park and trusted they were going to have some documents to view then the community will also have something to view. *This is the Motorsport Park proposed at Gomez Road, Hikurangi that the Hikurangi Ratepayers action group is vigilantly watching and rightly so, especially when council discussed it with the sporting groups but failed to discuss it with the residents who will be affected by the park.*

With the time at 1051hrs it was on to Item No. 3 - Approval of Plan Change 76

Environmental Engineering Standards

Group Manager Environment Paul Dell gave some brief information and explained that they now had 2 documents that were quite clear now.

Item No. 4 (now1052hrs) Plan Change 83 – Northgate: Port Marsden Industrial Area – Hearing Commissioners' Recommendations

Cr Aaron Edwards explained that due to a potential conflict of interest he would not be partaking in this item on the agenda. Aaron then rose to his feet and left the room. *Did you notice that councillors?.....Aaron left the room completely; he didn't just roll his chair back, but left the room. Good on you Aaron, it's nice to know that a councillor has some integrity and abides by the rules and has some standards.*

Cr Merv Williams informed that he sat on the hearing as a commissioner and 'it was very interesting to say the least'. When this proposal started it was a totally different financial environment.

Paul Dell mentioned he was pleased that council staff had good early involvement in the project.

Item No. 5.had been removed from today's agenda.

Item No. 6. 1059hrs Rural Development Strategy – Community Consultation
Cr Phil Halse moved the recommendation and Cr Sharon Morgan seconded it.
Group Manager Environment Paul Dell explained they had already had a Coastal strategy and now it was a rural strategy. He thanked councilors for the huge amount of documents they had gone through.

Cr Shelley Deeming thanked the councilors for turning up to the focus meetings and thanked Nick Williamson (Team Leader District Plan) as well.

Cr Phil Halse claimed the Rural Strategy was most important and we must lift our economic base. Northland needs some economic drivers and we must take care of these areas.

Cr Shelley Deeming said 'it was all about protecting what we have got.'

Cr Merv Williams explained there were areas of reverse sensitivity, protection zones and buffer zones etc.

Paul Dell informed that reverse sensitivity must be highlighted.

Cr Sharon Morgan hoped that the consultation process would work in well with local community meetings like Lions etc.

Paul Dell assured that council will work in with community meetings. *But remember, that doesn't mean they will listen to the community wishes.*

Cr Sue Glen, though the chair but to Mr Dell, believed they had done a good job quoting "I don't feel anxiety in any way with this." *What does this mean? Does it mean the medication is working???*

Item No. 7. 1107hrs Review of Council Policy on Dangerous, Insanitary and Earthquake Prone Buildings

Cr Aaron Edwards moved and Cr Merv Williams seconded the item.

Paul Dell explained that this was timely after the Christchurch earthquakes. It had to be put into a Northland perspective and he believed a twenty year time frame was appropriate. People must check buildings are fit for particular activities.

Cr Aaron Edwards insisted that we must make sure we are dealing with Northland and not Canterbury; but the importance was on safety.

Cr Greg Martin believed it was ironic that we were letting all the development go on in marine areas and sandy areas after all the problems Christchurch had experienced, but he did have a query on the date of the policy commencement.

Cr Crichton Christie informed that he must be the 'biggest risk taker there' but he prefers Option 1, (see page 275) Status quo. Directing his comment to Paul Dell he states "My professional opinion is as good as his professional opinion" as he has been in the industry for 30 plus years.

Paul Dell retaliates with "We have to do a review and not just sit on our hands"

Cr Crichton Christie quick to respond with "Don't put words in my mouth Mr Dell"

Cr Shelley Deeming, in an umpiring manner bringing this battle of words to a halt, claims we are not here to argue, but the report will go out for public opinion; the CBD business owners will have a say.

Cr Aaron Edwards finishes this round, stating 'See what the business owners come back with, as costs of property values may be affected'

The meeting concluded at 1118hrs with Cr Deeming thanking all for attending.

Cr Phil Halse wished to relay some comments that had been made by the Deputy Mayor of Christchurch, Ngaire Button during a recent visit. She wished to thank the councils for their quick response and volunteers in their time of need. 'Some of your best plans fail'. Cell phones for example are flat within an hour, phones are out, cell phones are out and power is out. The help from some of the experienced staff who went to Christchurch was certainly appreciated. *Being privy to a presentation by a WDC staff member sent to Christchurch certainly had enlightened us to the turmoil that was experienced in Canterbury. Let's hope it never happens in Northland. Have your emergency supplies ready in the event of a local crisis. An old Boy Scout motto - 'Be Prepared'.*