

Whangarei District Council Infrastructure and Services meeting - 14th September 2011

LINK to appropriate Agenda

Chair Cr Greg Martin called the meeting to order at 0900hrs and welcomed all.

Apologies were received for Cr Crichton Christie, Cr Shelley Deeming, Cr Kahu Sutherland and Cr Sue Glen for being late.

Time at 0902hrs and it was Item No.1. Minutes of a Meeting of the Infrastructure and Services Committee held 10 August 2011 and these were passed with no discussion necessary.

Time still at 0902hrs. Item No. 2. NZTA Investment Priorities for the 2012-15 National Land Transport Programme (page 7)

Cr Aaron Edwards was very disappointed with NZTA. They had reduced funding assistance for public transport, cycle ways and walk ways. We weren't meeting the needs of the community.

Group Manager Infrastructure and Services Simon Weston confirmed that funding reductions will make it hard for all councils to fund projects.

Cr Merv Williams informs that we must be sure that the Regional Transport Committee does its job and lobbies, keeping the lines open to Wellington

CEO Mark Simpson advises that Government sets its GPS (Government Policy Statement). Presently it is at GPS2 with its policy for spending money.

Cr John Williamson explains that Road safety Programmes have taken the biggest hits in funding. *John I know they may have missed out on \$60-00 worth of funding by you wriggling out of a parking ticket; What does that have to do with road safety, you may ask? Well it was blocking visibility outside a school, was where the ticket was issued; but you used your contacts to get off it. Shame on you.*

John continued that volunteer groups like Plunket, checking Children's safety seats and community groups manning fatigue stops they receive little assistance with these projects.

Cr Jeroen Jongejans believed it was disappointing but a reality. He was pleased that SH1 remained on Roads of National Significance to bring people north. *Jeroen is in tourism for those that don't know; owns Dive Tutukaka and he is driven by tourism. Anything to do with tourism mentioned and his eyes light up.*

Cr Sharon Morgan emphasizes that the letter sent by Stephen Town from NZTA to WDC, CEO Mark Simpson spells it out clearly the position of funding.

Mayor Morris Cutforth, (*oh he's back, that's right he recently made front page news about his woodpile*) agreed with Aaron (*don't know if that's a good recommendation* Aaron) in the sense that many will be using cycle ways and walk ways because society is heading in that direction. In 30 years we will have 50% of our population riding to work as the cost of transportation will be such that only the rich people will be able to afford it. I would like to encourage cycle ways and walk ways. *Is this another of your false promises? We know you say things Morris and regret them afterwards. Strange comment as when they had a 61% subsidy available for cycling; they didn't use it.* Cr Brian McLachlan in his right of reply advised 'that we have to make the most of it'.

Item No 11 was slipped into this spot at 0913hrs. Report on the Parking Management Strategy Summary of Public Feedback before the next item was to be discussed. This report was received and no discussion was entered into.

Cr Sue Glen arrived during this item

Item No.3. (0913hrs.) Parking Management Strategy (page 36)

Cr Merv Williams said he didn't know of any city in the world that doesn't have parking problems. They must look for some simple solutions, like where there is parking. He is happy with the process and wanted to congratulate the staff on this project.

Cr Aaron Edwards explained there is no such thing a free parking; there is the cost of operation. It is important that parking is in appropriate places.

Cr Sue Glen claimed the John Street car park needs to be revitalized.

Cr Brian McLachlan emphasized the crux of it was on page 37.

Cr Sharon Morgan hoped the upgrades resulted in more usage.

Cr John Williamson informed that most of this was about parking in the CBD. He encouraged staff to also look at parking outside the CBD, eg. Kamo. *Gee John I thought you had a plan for the ease of parking; by parking on broken yellow lines.*

Item No. 4. 0921hrs. Tarewa Park – Sale of Land – Public Works Act (page99)

There was a group from "Wagon" proudly displaying messages to council demanding not to sell parks and save "Mander Park". *Good on you, keep at it, they don't like to listen so embarrass them till the next election and hopefully get a change to the ones that need changing.*

Group Manager Infrastructure and Services Simon Weston outlined the proposal.

CEO Mark Simpson explained there was some history of this. Whangarei had traffic system problems. Progress was not being made as quickly as possible. This has been going on since Pamela Peter's days as mayor, who was also trying to keep traffic flowing through SH1.

Cr Aaron Edwards said it was disappointing for Whangarei; level of consultation is not satisfactory. Here there is 3000 sq metres of Council Park being taken. It's out of our hands. NZTA didn't march into town and make it happen; Whangarei District Council asked for it to happen.

Cr Phil Halse tells that Aaron Edwards will understand it's a collective decision that has happened over years. We want as many vehicles as possible over our state highways. There is an increase in road vehicle usage. This is about getting government to pay for upgrading our highway. He added that it happened to his land a few years back when the highway went through. *Did we hear a number of stories that Phil had hang out for a long time for a better deal for his inconvenience?*

Cr Warwick Syers said he endorsed Phil Halse's comments. *That's not really a surprise.* It would be naïve and reckless of this council if we didn't make our roads more safe. He said he was sorry for Cr Aaron Edwards whose figures will be disproved. It is inevitable that traffic will not increase. It is very easy to be inward, inverted and do nothing. The highway was the backbone of the city. I congratulate this council for moving forward. *Is it hard to pat yourself on the back, Warwick?*

Cr Brian McLachlan believed a minor part of the compensation was a walkway and cycle way under the bridge; was this correct?

Council Roading Manager, Jeff Divine & Group Manager Infrastructure and Services Simon Weston confirmed that was the case.

Cr Merv Williams confirmed that the walk way was significant. What we have here is the far least invasive of all the options. We want people to turn into town, stop and visit. The roundabout was to be far more invasive. The council took a strong position; the road being effective but not obliterating our park. I take offence at the inference of destroying our park. We have to put the whole thing in a holistic manner.

Mayor Morris Cutforth explained that last week council passed a resolution not to sell the Holiday Park. *Check the footnote to Item No 11 on WDC Council meeting report 24th August on my website. I predicted that resolution was a smokescreen for things to come and here 3 weeks later my prediction was correct.*

He was sorry about Mander Park, but we have to live with it. *Will you be happy then Morris when the trees are cut down and you have your wood pile?*

Cr Sue Glen explained that we have no control over central government so we negotiate to get the best deal for the city, road and park. It is out of our control we can only work as a team and negotiate.

Cr Phil Halse, in his right of reply, said the issue has come along; this is a state highway, the spine to the rest of Northland. We have 10x the amount of recreation areas of other councils. He was pleased it was open discussion in front of the people and it was started when Pamela Peters was mayor. *Shouldn't you be pursuing rail to*

get freight moving throughout Northland, having less impact on our roads and making them safer for everyone? Look at the accident statistics!

It's now 0938hrs and Item No. 5. Roadmarking: Extension of Contract 06028 (page 143) Group Manager Infrastructure and Services Simon Weston gave a brief explaining this was a key contract for the district and this was a 1 year extension for the contract. *There was no discussion required and a decision for \$490,000-00 made in less than a couple of minutes.*

Note: - Is this the same company that donated \$1500-00 to Morris Cutforth's Election Campaign funds? Interesting eh? (Coastline Markers made a donation of \$1500-00) If so.... is a \$490,000-00 contract extension for a \$1500-00 investment, a good deal?

Item No. 6. 0939hrs. Temporary Road Closure (page144)

Cr Phil Hales withdrew for this item because he had an interest in the item.

Cr Merv Williams explained that this was going to save some money; it was going to get the job done quicker. He believed it was the best way to go about it; but he knew his phone will ring hot.

It's now 0941hrs and Item No. 7. Library IT Upgrade (page149)

Simon Weston gave a brief explanation and no further discussion was required.

It's now 0942hrs and Item No. 8. Update on SH1Improvements

[Link to Supplementary Agenda](#)

Cr Aaron Edwards informed that public organised meetings had been held and a commitment made by council.

Simon Weston confirmed they were waiting for NZTA design approval. Meetings will be held after that but the project was going to go ahead.

Cr Merv Williams queried if the project was set or were they receiving the report. He wished to have a discussion on some of the specific items. There are some contentious issues and could be a waste of ratepayer's money. Some of these projects are ridiculous. There may be more information but it should be available. There is a lack of consultation leaving the ratepayers in the dark for too long.

Cr Phil Halse explained a lot of this is out of our control. Funding is required from the government and he was comfortable where we are.

Cr Sharon Morgan believed some of the later items (page3) are alerting us to what could be happening

Aaron Edwards, in his right of reply, agreed with Cr Merv Williams about some projects to support and some not. He doesn't agree with Phil Halse's ideas on car registration.

Mander Park had no consultation to date and he had an aspiration to take the local communities opinions into account.

Time at 0951hrs and Item No. 9. 2011/12 Roading Programme

[Link to Supplementary Agenda](#)

Cr Aaron Edwards wished for a correction to be made on page 39 where the kerb and channelling in Fourth Avenue be changed to '100 metres' from the '100 kilometres' they had listed.

Simon Weston gave a brief on this item.

Cr John Williamson had a query about the stock effluent site in Whangarei.

Council Roading Manager, Jeff Divine confirmed there was a proposed site in Kauri, the construction to be fully funded by NZTA but ongoing maintenance to be paid by council.

Let's see if council can get this sewage disposal right and not discharge into a waterway.

It's now 0956hrs and Item No. 10. Littering of Roadside Verges

[Link to Supplementary Agenda](#)

Cr Aaron Edwards was happy there was a range of actions being proposed.

Cr Sue Glen believed the signage looks good.

Cr Sharon Morgan commented that they must lead by example adding that most of the city is looking respectable at the moment

Simon Weston claimed it was changing times for the district; there was a lot of pride in the district. *Simon I sincerely hope that after making improvements recently for the rugby that they don't pull funding in the future which affects ongoing maintenance as has been done in the past to our assets and infrastructure. It's alright to build something but maintenance is ongoing to maintain its value and appearance.*

Cr Merv Williams commented that pride is up and traffic light phasing needs some attention.

Chair Cr Greg Martin thanked all for attending and concluded the meeting at 0959hours.

Greg made comment that Yvonne Stewart who was known as the 'Hikurangi mayor' had passed away last Friday and will be sadly missed.

To the library for a quick coffee and back before the next meeting at 1030hrs.