

Minutes of a meeting of the Maungatautari Reserve Committee held in the Committee Room, Cambridge Service Centre, 23 Wilson Street, Cambridge on Wednesday 3 October 2007 commencing at 9.10am

1 PRESENT

Councillor RJ Cooper – Chairperson [from 9.37am]

Members

Councillor GC Flay (Waipa District Council), S Mackinder (Landowner representative), JB Mylchreest (Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust), R Smith (Parawera Marae), P Tairi (Maungatautari Marae), B Townend (Landowner representative)

In Attendance

Project Manager – Heritage Development and Reserves Planning, Tony Roxburgh
Committee Secretary, Noelene Barr

RESOLVED

10/07/30

That due to the absence of Chairperson Cooper, Committee Member Mylchreest preside as Chairperson until his arrival.

Townend/Smith

Committee Member Tairi opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

RESOLVED

10/07/31

That apologies for absence from Mayor Livingston and for lateness from Councillor Cooper be received; Committee Member Tairi to leave the meeting at 10.00am.

Mackinder/Townend

3 LATE ITEMS

RESOLVED

10/07/32

That the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust Policy and Plan for Managing Vegetation near the Pest Proof Fence report be included as a late item.

Smith/Mackinder

4 CONFIRMATION OF ORDER OF MEETING

File: 01-85-26

RESOLVED

10/07/33

That the order of the meeting be confirmed.

Townend/Flay

5 VISITOR

Mr P de Monchy, Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust, Operations Manager.

6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

File: 01-85-26

Minutes of meeting held on 1 August 2007 were included in the agenda.

RESOLVED

10/07/34

*That the minutes of the meeting of the Maungatautari Reserve Committee held on 1 August 2007 be received subject to the amendment on page 3, item 7, **Townend** to replace Taranaki as seconder of the resolution.*

Tairi/Mackinder

7 MAUNGATAUTARI RESERVE COMMITTEE – OFFICER’S REPORT

File: 01-85-26

Report of Project Manager – Heritage Development and Reserves Planning dated 28 September 2007 was included in the agenda.

RESOLVED

10/07/35

That the report of Project Manager – Heritage Development and Reserves Planning dated 28 September 2007 be received.

Smith/Mackinder

Tony Roxburgh reported that the Bylaw has been fully adopted by Council and is now awaiting response from the Minister of Conservation’s office. The appointment of two to four rangers has been suggested with the basic role consisting of receiving reports and then reporting to the Trust and Council. Council will fund administration costs, the use of private vehicles and training.

The key objective is to prevent pests gaining access through the entry gates and reporting information from the local community. Council and Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust (MEIT) staff will receive training to be rangers. The community will be notified of the appointment of rangers via the MEIT newsletter and updated signage. The public will be well informed where the access points are and a facility will be provided for visitors to check their belongings rather than unintentionally taking pests through the gate ways.

Referring to the Environmental Protection Lots (EPL), Mr Roxburgh said that there has not been a lot of progress in this area, however it is still the intention to acknowledge landowners and to meet with them to discuss their obligations.

Committee Member Mylchreest said that a third option could be available when considering the transfer of title. He said that the actual ownership of the four metre strip where the fence is located becomes part of the reserve rather than placing a covenant on that area. It would allow Council to control it and would resolve issues as to whether or not it was rateable. A mix of both options could be used, that is, where private land inside the fence is retained by the landowner with a covenant on the title and where the fence is on the boundary, being included in the reserve.

Committee Member Mylchreest and Mr Roxburgh are currently compiling costs relating to the ongoing reserve management. There are a number of issues still to be resolved.

Referring to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Mr Roxburgh said that copies would be available at the end of the meeting for those members who would like a copy. This is to be considered further following the forthcoming Local Authority Elections.

[Chairperson Cooper arrived 9.37am.]

The Long Term Council Community Plan has indicated \$523,260 for access, car parking and public toilets. The funds are available for additional improvements, seal carriageway around the bush frontage from Tari Road, car and bus parking areas and toilets. Additional land will be required for the parking area. The toilets will need to be of a high standard to provide for the continued growth of visitors. The upgrade of Hicks Road is largely completed.

There is an expectation that the Trust has to start generating some income on its own behalf and has created a four “pronged” funding and business plan –

- Set up investment fund as first priority to generate income
- Commence guided walks and charge for visitors
- Increase member base and possibly increase fees
- Continue seeking grants and donations

A number of previous sponsors are indicating that the Trust has had its share of funds and there is a need to find other sources. The challenge is that the Trust will not be given any donations whilst there is money in the bank and therefore reliant income streams need to be created.

8 PROGRESS REPORT FROM MAUNGATAUTARI ECOLOGICAL ISLAND TRUST

File: 01-85-26

Progress Report from the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust dated 27 September 2007 was included in the agenda.

RESOLVED

10/07/36

That the progress report from the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust dated 27 September 2007 be received.

Townend/Smith

The recent poison drop was a successful operation overall. There are 1700 tracking cards to check which will be achieved by the end of the week. Some areas were not treated due to lambing which will be completed next week when the weather is suitable.

Staff and volunteers cleared the areas where the poison had been dropped incorrectly and the advice from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority indicated that problems will not occur if it is not ingested. It was very disappointing that the pilot made this error as it was an opportunity to show landowners concerned that these operations could be carried out without any incidents occurring. A draft legal agreement specifying conditions that the Trust will meet is being considered by landowners' solicitors.

[Committee Member Tairi left the meeting at 10.05am.]

Reintroducing species is being undertaken as funds allow. Kaka appear to be doing well and there have been reports of increased tui numbers in residential gardens in Leamington. Other bird species are to be reintroduced and kiwi numbers increased.

The translocation of tuatara is being progressed with Department of Conservation giving provisional support subject to approval by Alderman Trustees. It is proposed to carry out a survey of the islands in January 2008. Up to 10% of the population could be harvested over a 10 year period without having any effects on the remaining population. Department of Conservation will contribute towards the costs associated with the survey. It is anticipated that 10 to 20 individuals will be eventually settled in the tuatarium which will comprise of 900 square metres of wetland.

An application will be made to the World Wildlife Fund for funds associated with robin translocation which is looking promising. A kiwi, thought to be only 19 months old, is sitting on an egg within the southern enclosure however there is some indication that this is a male bird.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) requires updating and will be pursued once results of the elections and the structure of the committee are known. There are benefits for the Trust, being a community organisation, to continue with the MOU to manage the project on a daily basis with a contract to undertake Council responsibilities.

There have been some benefits with not having the covenants in place at this stage as it has given the opportunity to learn what impact the fence has had. Greater access to the fence line will be needed as funds are limited for further track building. As the project develops, it will become an important conservation site and additional tracks will be required for scientific purposes and 50 kilometres of track may be needed over the mountain.

Breaches in the fence must be repaired as soon as possible (within 90 minutes of if occurring) as research has indicated that there is a high number of pests on the outside of the fence. Camera footage indicates that animals are present every 60 to 100 minutes. Good management and operation procedures need to be in place to continue good relationships with landowners. Some landowners do not want staff and volunteers going through their properties during the hours of darkness. Pest control outside the fence could reduce likelihood of invasion but should not be relied upon as the only method to prevent invasion.

9 MAUNGATAUTARI ECOLOGICAL ISLAND TRUST POLICY AND PLAN FOR MANAGING VEGETATION NEAR THE PEST PROOF FENCE

File: 01-85-26

Committee Member Mylchreest said that as the fence is not located on a natural boundary and goes through pasture and tall forest, it is presenting problems with windfalls over the fence. Any trees that need to be pruned or cut down requires the approval of the Minister of Conservation. If the Trust can maintain the margin on the reserve side of the fence to reduce the possibility of windfalls, this will reduce the risk to the fence and the number of times access to private property is required to repair it. Any pongas and trees that are overhanging the fence would be removed and the regeneration of problem tree species is prevented. The strip of land between forest and fence could be replanted with flaxes and low growing shrubs that will not fall over the fence line in future.

The vegetation would be assessed annually and problem trees identified. Some of this work has been carried out as there have been a number of problems with ponga fronds falling onto the electronic wire, setting off the alarm. This also applies to trees outside of the fence which can pose a higher risk as allows rodents living in the trees, to access the reserve if the trees falls across the fence. Because of funding issues, the areas of highest risk will take priority as this will in turn reduce costs of repairing the fence. An arborist would be engaged as funds allow.

Mr Roxburgh said that the policy being promoted is not specifically addressed in the management plan but can be included at some point when other amendments are made. Authority will also be required from Department of Conservation.

RESOLVED

10/07/37

That the Maungatautari Reserve Committee endorse the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust Policy and Plan for Managing Vegetation near the Pest Proof Fence and recommend to Council.

Mackinder/Flay

There being no further business the meeting closed with a karakia at 10.49am.

CHAIRPERSON _____

DATE _____

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Next Meeting: To be confirmed following the Local Authority triennial elections.