

Minutes of a meeting of the Maungatautari Reserve Committee held in the Meeting Room, Cambridge Service Centre, 23 Wilson Street, Cambridge on Wednesday, 12 March 2008 commencing at 9.00am

1 PRESENT

Members

Councillor GRP Webber - Chairperson

His Worship the Mayor, A Livingston, Councillor LWE Hoverd (Waipa District Council), JB Mylchreest (Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust), R Smith (Parawera Marae), P Tairi (Maungatautari Marae) [from 9.10am], B Townend (Landowner representative)

In Attendance

Tony Roxburgh, Project Manager – Heritage Development and Reserves Planning

Noelene Barr, Committee Secretary

Sharyn King, Committee Secretary (observer)

2 APOLOGIES

RESOLVED

10/08/01

That apologies for absence from Committee Member S Mackinder be received.

Webber/Townend

3 LATE ITEMS

Project Manager – Heritage Development and Reserves Planning requested that the Appointment of Honorary Rangers report be distributed for consideration and feed back.

4 CONFIRMATION OF ORDER OF MEETING

File: 01-85-26

RESOLVED

10/08/02

That the order of the meeting be confirmed.

Mylchreest/Hoverd

5 VISITORS

Nil

6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

File: 01-85-26

Minutes of meeting held on 12 December 2007 were included in the agenda.

RESOLVED

10/08/03

That the minutes of the meeting of the Maungatautari Reserve Committee held on 12 December 2007, as circulated with the agenda, be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

Hoverd/Livingston

Matters Arising

6.1 Environmental Protection Lot (EPL)

Letters are to be sent to landowners regarding the Environmental Protections Lots; meetings for the general public and individuals, are to be arranged.

6.2 Kiwi

The kiwi chick continues to grow and is doing well; it is currently being monitored. A kiwi, "Banjo", unfortunately died as a result of ingesting poisoned bait despite being treated. The iwi who gifted the kiwi has been informed of its death. Every bird in the enclosure is being closely monitored to prevent inbreeding, however once they are released on the whole mountain, they will be left to live a natural life.

7 MAUNGATAUTARI RESERVE COMMITTEE – OFFICER'S REPORT

File: 01-85-26

Report of Project Manager – Heritage Development and Reserves Planning dated 5 March 2008 was included in the agenda.

RESOLVED

10/08/04

That the report of Project Manager – Heritage Development and Reserves Planning dated 5 March 2008 be received.

Livingston/Townend

Referring to the Environment Protection Lots (EPL), Project Manager – Heritage Development and Reserves Planning, reported that progress has been slow.

The draft Plan Change is awaiting comment from Council staff, the key purpose of which is to recognise the contribution of land, provide access to Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust (MEIT) staff and provide public access through private land. Once the plan change has been adopted, the consultative process can commence, landowners will be advised and will be given the opportunity to speak to Council staff and for transparency, staff could speak at public meetings.

The Waipa District Plan refers to forested areas in particular and does not allow for the fence or the land on which it sits; the Plan Change will allow for this and the contribution of land.

The offer from Council exceeds the expectations of landowners and does acknowledge the importance of the project, the commitment from community members and the ongoing disturbance factor. The land will be secured by a legal agreement and will not impinge on any future farm sale. Any future land owner will, through a Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) search, be aware of their obligations.

There was general discussion concerning the role of the committee now that the project has completed the development phase. The committee provides a forum for interested parties to communicate and discuss concerns and forms a vital link between the community and Council. It is an umbrella group charged with the responsibility of proper management of the reserve including accountability and procedures which could avoid conflict in the future and provide protection from future challenges. It has a monitoring role to provide support and security for all concerned.

The composition of the committee was discussed and it was concluded that the number of landowners should be increased and a representative from Department of Conservation and a scientific representative, either from Landcare Research or The University of Waikato, be included. The appointment of proxies to ensure representation was suggested and other representatives could be included in future as required, eg education and tourism.

There was general discussion regarding research applications and consultation with the Tangata Whenua. Council resolved that MEIT manage the applications which are sent to the Tangata Whenua Committee of the MEIT. The onus is on the applicant to do the correct consultative procedures as part of application process.

Rose Smith reported the Tangata Whenua Committee was concerned that during a research project a weta had been harmed, with two feelers removed. Weta are considered as taonga. Some research applications do not always benefit the species.

The numbers of research applications are increasing and there will be a point in the future when some applications will be refused. It is appropriate for the MEIT Research Committee to continue management of the research applications as there is valuable expertise within the committee and the committee has the ability to access expertise from other fields. It may, at some point, be necessary for this Committee to consider research applications that are outside the interests of MEIT.

Council has been contacted by a landowner expressing concerns over the track construction. There is a general understanding that the existing route would not suffice for the use of large numbers of trampers and had to be brought up to national standard. MEIT require improved access to the mountain for management purposes and it is logical to improve the track for the two purposes. The intention is to build the track to Department of Conservation (DOC) "day walk" standards. DOC also retain responsibility for the removal of vegetation for construction purposes. In future when DOC issues authority to MEIT, copies could be issued to Council to ensure communication between the three organisations.

Peter Tairi reported that a landowner had expressed concerns to him that the track was too wide - three metres in some places.

In response Jim Mylchreest said that DOC approved a width of two metres and MEIT have tried to keep the width of the track less than this requirement. However it is wider in places due to encountering wet areas, windfalls and steep contour. During the construction process, the track and environs look very raw but will recover more quickly now that pests have been removed. The track will enable better access for management of the 3,500 hectares and to the monitoring lines. Approval is being sought from DOC to extend the walking track network and possibly for 4x4 quad access if needed; a map was distributed illustrating the service tracks as at 5 March.

Jim Mylchreest stressed the proposed track is very scenic and by joining the existing track with the proposed Akaterere route will provide a loop track for walkers who want to finish at the same side of the mountain that they began their walk from. The new track will also improve access to the fence from the northern enclosure. A track, which was indicated in yellow on the map, could possibly be required to access the fence where it is located on private land. Jim Mylchreest believes this may be necessary if MEIT cannot negotiate access. The fence has to be accessed on a 24 hour basis and any breach should be secured within 90 minutes.

In response to a query from Peter Tairi if the track would be used to transport tourists to the top of the mountain, Jim Mylchreest said that it would only be used in that manner for fund raising purposes and taking potential sponsors up the mountain as it is a spectacular site.

Tony Roxburgh advised that the Reserve Management Plan prohibits the use of motor bikes and other motor vehicles in the reserve, except for essential management purposes.

The original walking track will be kept open as long as people continue to use it as it provides a greater challenge for higher fitness activities. However too many users on an unformed track would cause more damage than on a metalled track and it would be difficult to manage two tracks.

8 PROGRESS REPORT FROM MAUNGATAUTARI ECOLOGICAL ISLAND TRUST

File: 01-85-26

The Progress Report from the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust (MEIT) was provided at the meeting.

RESOLVED

10/08/05

That the progress report dated 11 March 2008, from the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust, provided at the meeting be received

Smith/Tairi

Jim Mylchreest distributed a map, as at 2 March 2008, outlining the present pest status indicating that the project appears to be clear of all large predators with the main concern being the mice infestations around the fence line. There are indications of mice on the walking track and it is assumed that they are attracted by food source as there is currently a large number of tawa berries dropping on to the ground. Poison will be spread by hand around the fence line and it is anticipated that there will not be any indication of mice activity during the next month. There has been increased activity with colder temperatures than during the summer months. A huge amount of resources have been utilised to eradicate the mice and the reintroduction programme will be delayed until this has occurred.

The Reintroduction Co-ordinator's Report was included in the Progress Report; a summary of the five translocations proposed for this year – Taranaki kiwi, tuatara, kokako, white heads, robins – was also included. It is necessary to use kiwi from Taranaki to expand the current gene pool.

A report, prepared for MEIT by The University of Waikato, containing survey results on The Value of Native Birds in New Zealand indicated that 87% of respondents were prepared to pay an additional \$50 per year in their rates to support a programme to increase native bird populations or reintroduce native birds into the Waikato region.

To ensure agreement is reached with two landowners who are restricting access to the fence due to their intensive farming practices, a negotiation panel is to be /has been formed with a third party to act as mediator. Currently access to the fence is restricted during lambing but access is required throughout the year to carry out repairs, maintenance and regular checks. The landowners are supportive of the project and a breakdown in communication exacerbated the situation. It is hoped to move forward with a mediator and it is anticipated that a satisfactory agreement can be reached. If all options are exhausted, a new track (as indicated in yellow on the map) could be built at a cost of \$1.2 million to enable the fence to be approached from the rear. This would require Department of Conservation (DOC) approval.

9 APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY RANGERS

File: 60-12-18

Project Manager – Heritage Development and Reserves Planning distributed a discussion paper to members for consideration and feedback.

10 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Meetings will continue to be scheduled for the second Wednesday of every second month. However, due to a clash of dates in May, Chairperson Webber requested that the next meeting be held on 7 May being the first Wednesday of the month and requested a schedule of meetings to be distributed to members.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.15am.

CHAIRPERSON _____

DATE _____

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS