
WAIPA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL

MINUTES 21 JUNE 2007

Minutes of a meeting of the Waipa Biodiversity Council held in the Committee Room, Cambridge Service Centre, 23 Wilson Street, Cambridge on 21 June 2007 commencing at 10.00am.

1 PRESENT

Waipa District Councillor Diane Sharpe, Alan Livingston – from 12pm, Alan Hall, Bill Garland – until 12.45pm, Ted Tauroa, Laurie Hoverd, Pieter van Dongen, Martin Watson, Roy Dench (Chairperson), Dr Bruce Burns – until 11.50am.

In Attendance

Project Manager Heritage Development & Reserves Planning (T Roxburgh), Secretary (C Plowright)

Public – Nil

2 APOLOGIES

RESOLVED

That apologies for absence be received from Hazel Barnes, Kevin Christie and David Findlay and for lateness from Alan Livingston.

D Sharpe/A Hall

3 LATE ITEMS

Nil

4 CONFIRMATION OF ORDER OF MEETING

RESOLVED

That the order of the meeting be confirmed.

D Sharpe/R Dench

5 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

Nominations for the position of Chairperson, Waipa Biodiversity Council, were called for.

RESOLVED

That Roy Dench be appointed as Chairperson of the Waipa Biodiversity Council.

P van Dongen/B Garland

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6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Minutes of meeting held on 19 April 2007 were included in the agenda.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Waipa Biodiversity Council held on 19 April 2007 be received.

M Watson/T Tauroa

Matters Arising -

6.1 Background Information

Some background information was provided with the agenda for members' information. It was noted that Waipa does not have a lot of publicity material on heritage issues and suggested that the Biodiversity Council give some thought to how this might be improved.

6.2 River Walkways and Conservation Corridors

A map showing all Waipa administered land, including river margins, was tabled. Project Manager – Heritage Development and Reserves Planning, Tony Roxburgh, said this is the first map of its kind produced by Council's GIS staff. He said staff are aware there are some errors on the map, and there are pockets of Council administered land that have been overlooked, so feedback from the Biodiversity Council would be appreciated.

An explanation was provided on the difference between esplanade reserves, esplanade strips and access strips and why they are required by Council.

The Chairperson suggested that members take some time to study the map and bring back any comments to the next meeting. Mr Roxburgh said he could arrange for a member of Council's Reserves/Property staff to attend the next meeting to speak on the type/purpose of land holdings Council administers.

6.3 Transferable Development Rights/Environmental Protection Lots (TDRs & EPLs)

Council's Consents Officer, Anna McLellan, attended the meeting at 11.35am to provide an explanation on Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) and Environmental Protection Lots (EPLs). A TDR subdivision consents checklist was tabled to illustrate how a TDR application is processed.

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Pieter van Dongen asked if was possible to concentrate some of the transferred titles into a rural village environment which would be a more valuable use of the landscape than the ribbon developments that are currently taking place. Ted Tauroa suggested that when the District Plan is reviewed Council could look at building up existing rural communities, like Pukeatua, rather than scattering lifestyle blocks around the District. Alan Livingston said it might be possible to look at that suggestion for TDRs. He mentioned that much of Waipa District is in 50 acre titles with the ability to downsize into smaller 25ac titles.

Bill Garland said the former field representative for the QEII Trust has mentioned that Waipa's approach to TDRs is different to that used in Franklin District and it may be useful to find out what those differences are. He said it makes matters complicated for landowners if there is a second layer of rules required through a TDR when there are already rules in place to protect the land through a covenant. Mr Roxburgh said Council and the QEII Trust need to be more consistent about the criteria used to select sites in the first place.

Mr Roxburgh said 40 sites where 221 consent notices have been issued by Council were inspected earlier in the year and generally staff were pleased with the rate of compliance. He said it is intended to inspect the sites on a two yearly basis in future.

6.4 Covenants – Changes in Property Ownership

It was noted that it is generally the responsibility of the QEII Trust to advise new property owners about their obligations on covenanted land but, for varying reasons, some properties get overlooked. Following discussion it was suggested that members notify the QEII field representative if they are aware of a change in property ownership. It was also suggested that the Biodiversity Council could put together a package of information for new landowners explaining their responsibilities and clarifying issues such as rights of access along waterways, consent notices and covenants.

7 MEMBERS REPORTS

7.1 Diane Sharpe

Councillor Sharpe said she would bring up an item in relation to the proposed Maungatautari Plan Change under item 8.

7.2 Alan Livingston

No report.

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7.3 Laurie Hoverd

It was agreed that, because of the sensitive nature of the issue to be discussed, it should be taken in committee.

RESOLVED

That the Waipa Biodiversity Council go into committee at 10.35am.

R Dench/B Garland

The Waipa Biodiversity Council came out of committee at 10.40am. Laurie mentioned that the Kakepuku Conservation Society, with the help of 175 school children, has planted 600 native trees on Council administered slopes of Kakepuku.

7.4 Ted Tauroa

Ted Tauroa said two male Kaka chicks have been released into the aviary on Maungatautari and other Kaka had been spotted in the area while the aviary was being built.

Ted mentioned an exhibition his nephew is involved with concerning the original crossing at the Horahora Power Station and said he felt it would be of value to the community if the exhibition could be viewed locally. He asked if Council could provide a venue for the exhibition, such as the Cambridge Town Hall, and said he has mentioned the suggestion to Mayor Livingston. Alan Hall said he would like to raise the issue with the Waipa Heritage Council because they would be interested.

7.5 Bill Garland

Bill Garland mentioned the earlier work undertaken by the Waipa County Council in advising farmers in the Maungatautari area about the importance of remnant native bush in terms of the landscape. He said that work left Maungatautari with a culture of protection going back to his father's generation and, as a result, there is a high density of covenanted land in the area.

Bill said the Biodiversity Council might want to give some thought to how areas in the hill country that are hard to fence can be managed and protected by other means. Mr Roxburgh said the Biodiversity Council could come up with some land management ideas, including advice on "best management practise" for steep land, which could be built into the District Plan review.

7.6 David Findlay

No report.

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7.7 Martin Watson

Martin Watson said he looked forward to the information sheet promoting the Biodiversity Council being made available to the community so they have a contact point for biodiversity issues. Mr Roxburgh said the information sheet could: go out with the rates demand; be distributed from key sites in urban sites; emailed to various groups; and, included in the Word on Waipa. Martin said he would speak about the objectives for the Biodiversity Council at the AGM of the Pukerimu Preservation Society.

Martin mentioned an area of bush in the French Pass Road area that is on two titles with a boundary fence through the middle. It is identified in the Council map as a significant area of bush. He said one of the titles is for sale and is not protected by a covenant. Mr Roxburgh said Council does not have a fixed criteria for dealing with such issues. He said all landowners should be encouraged to acknowledge any areas of native bush on their property but Council has to be careful about approving EPLs on small lots because a developer may have no intention of protecting it. He said the wording in the District Plan focuses on forest and this needs to be broadened to include other heritage features. This could be achieved through the District Plan review process.

7.8 Pieter van Dongen

Pieter van Dongen said the process required to clarify ownership of the area around Lake Mangahia is progressing well and the next step is to formalise the title. He said once the title is in place funding can be applied to get rid of the willows and start the restoration work. It was noted that Lake Mangahia is not included in the Heritage Trail brochure.

Pieter said he is becoming aware of concern amongst local landowners about productive land being lost to subdivisions and they have asked whether Council could look at other options. The Chairperson said lifestyle blocks in rural areas often create management difficulties for farmers when, for example, spraying and spreading fertilizer.

Pieter mentioned that the owner of a neighbouring 50 acre block who is currently looking at sale and subdivision has a significant stand of Kahikatea on the property. The Chairperson said it needs to be explained to landowners who have bush blocks that protecting the bush through a covenant enhances the value of the land.

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7.9 Roy Dench

The Chairperson said he has contacted Council staff about an area behind the boat shed at Lake Ngaroto that is becoming difficult to control because plants have been put into an area of wandering willie (*Tradescantia fluminensis*).

The Chairperson asked if the Biodiversity Council could put pressure on Waipa District Council to do one last cut of the pine plantation on Pirongia and let it return to native forest. It was noted that any harvesting has an impact on water quality. Mr Roxburgh said the Biodiversity Council could raise the issue with Council if it feels strongly about it. Bill Garland said it would be a worthwhile exercise to look at all available options for the block and obtain some feedback. Bruce Burns said it would depend on how much reserve land Council wishes to manage, and the costs associated with managing a reserve of native bush.

Mr Roxburgh said it was useful to obtain guidance from the Biodiversity Council on what should be the future strategy for Council administered land. He said once Council has a clear steer from the community on this issue it can incorporate those ideas into its planning processes. He suggested that a member of Council's Services/Property staff could attend a future meeting to talk about the issues around forestry and water quality.

7.10 Alan Hall

Alan Hall spoke about the Heritage Council's interest with Matakītaki Pa, because it combines cultural, heritage and archaeological issues, and that it could also be of potential interest to the Biodiversity Council. He mentioned the change of property ownership at the Waiari Pa site and that the new owner has been made fully aware about the importance of protecting the Pa site. He also updated members on recent developments at the old Pirongia dump site.

7.11 Dr Bruce Burns

Bruce Burns mentioned the Project Kahikatea field day taking place at Roy Dench's property the next day. He said the intention is to talk to farmers who have patches of Kahikatea on their properties to see what condition they are in and to build up a database. He said farmers would be provided with advice on how to care for the Kahikatea fragments on their properties. He said it is hoped to form groups of landowners who are interested in protecting Kahikatea and applying for group funding to encourage fencing and protection.

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Bruce said funding has been obtained to look at the effects of forest management on biodiversity so the best possible management techniques can be recommended to landowners. He also mentioned the idea of a Biodiversity Trail that might open up corridors for recreation and becoming part of the Te Araroa national pathway was also suggested. This runs from North Cape to Bluff and a section of it passes through Waipa District.

7.12 Kevin Christie

No report.

8 WAIPA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL – OFFICER’S REPORT

Report of Project Manger – Heritage Development and Reserves Planning dated 13 June 2007 was included in the agenda.

RESOLVED

That the officer’s report dated 13 June 2007 be received.

A Livingston/D Sharpe

Diane Sharpe said Council’s Policy Committee has recently asked staff to initiate a process with central government to increase the penalty for contravening the Reserves Act to a fine commensurate with the international environmental significance of Maungatautari. She said the Committee did not feel that a fine of \$250 was appropriate for such a significant reserve. Alan Livingston said the Bylaw would cover offences committed on reserve land but would not apply on private land. Mr Roxburgh said other legislation would cover offences on private land.

It was noted there is still opportunity for feedback on the Peat Lake Reserve Management Plan as it is planned to go to the Policy Committee in August.

The Chairperson said the boundary fence on the western side of Lake Mangakaware is very close to the edge of the lake. Mr Roxburgh said it is hoped to gradually move the fence out, where appropriate, and Council is fortunate to have a very co-operative lessee.

Mr Roxburgh said it is hoped to send out the Waipa Heritage Newsletter with the rate demands at the end of July.

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There was discussion concerning recognition of heritage sites and it was asked why some sites have not been included in the Heritage Trail brochure. Ted Tauroa mentioned a significant site at Pukeatua that was associated with Orakau and has a story attached to it. Alan Hall said the Heritage Council had to prune back the list of heritage sites included in the Waipa Heritage Trail and multiple tours of heritage sites would be the only way to cover them all.

The Chairperson mentioned a significant site at Lake Ngaroto, which used to be an island Pa, where a hole has been left as a result of a dig carried out by Waikato University. He said it would be a good site to interpret with the different layers visible in the hole. Mr Roxburgh said that suggestion has been made to Nga Iwi Toopu o Waipa who agree the site has great potential and are happy with some development in this area. This would be expanded when the management plan for the Lake Ngaroto Recreation Reserve is reviewed.

Mr Roxburgh said DOC has written to Council about the future use of Council land on Kakepuku and has suggested a new route for the summit track through Council land. He said the suggested new alignment would be a much better track and would take in some Pa sites on the way.

9 PROTECTING OUR PLACES – INFORMATION ABOUT THE STATEMENT OF NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR PROTECTING RARE AND THREATENED BIODIVERSITY ON PRIVATE LAND

Documents published by the Department of Conservation and Ministry for the Environment in April 2007 were provided for members' information.

10 NATURAL HERITAGE OF WAIPA DISTRICT

Reports prepared by Wildland Consultants Limited in March 2007 were available at the meeting and copies can be provided to members on request.

11 GENERAL BUSINESS

11.1 Annual Projects Programme 2007/08

Mr Roxburgh said Council staff are keen to develop a list of biodiversity projects, varying in size and complexity, to cover the next year.

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He said he had noted some of the issues mentioned during the course of the meeting that might be potential projects. He said a list would be compiled and circulated to members and he invited members to bring any ideas for projects to the next meeting.

Mayor Livingston said it should be one of the goals of the Biodiversity Council to identify and protect all significant bush and wetland areas within Waipa District.

11.2 Current News and Events

It was agreed that, where possible, news items/newsletters and other material will be sent to Biodiversity Council members via email. Those not on email will obtain this information via a "clipboard" system as described at the meeting. When the information sheet is available it will be sent out to members with everyone's contact details.

12 ITEMS FOR NEXT WAIPA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING

Items for the next meeting to be provided to the secretary 14 days before each meeting. This can be done by writing to Waipa District Council (attention Cathy Plowright) or phoning her on 07 872 0030 extension 7511 or emailing her on cplo@waipadc.govt.nz

13 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Waipa Biodiversity Council will be held on Thursday 16 August 2007 in Committee Room 1, Waipa District Council offices, 101 Bank Street, Te Awamutu commencing at 10.00am.

Ted Tauroa gave his apologies for the next meeting.

Meeting closed 1.00pm.