
WAIPA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL

MINUTES 19 APRIL 2007

Minutes of a meeting of the Waipa Biodiversity Council held in Committee Room 1, Waipa District Council Offices, 101 Bank Street, Te Awamutu on Thursday 19 April 2007 commencing at 10.00am.

1 PRESENT

Waipa District Councillors, Hazel Barnes and Diane Sharpe
His Worship the Mayor Alan Livingston - Te Pahu and Karamu District
Alan Hall – Pirongia Historic Visitor Centre/Waipā Heritage Council representative
David Findlay – Whitehall and Te Miro District
Ted Tauroa – Arapuni and Wharepapa District (from 10.55am)
Laurie Hoverd - Kakepuku and Te Awamutu District
Pieter van Dongen - Koromatua and Rukuhia District
Martin Watson – Kaipaki and Cambridge District
Roy Dench – ACRE representative
Dr Bruce Burns – Landcare Research representative

In Attendance

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

Public – Nil

The meeting commenced with a round the table introduction by each member of the Waipa Biodiversity Council. It was explained that the Biodiversity Council meetings have been scheduled for 10.00am on the third Thursday of every month so they alternate with the Waipa Heritage Council. Meetings will alternate between Te Awamutu and Cambridge as is the practice with the Heritage Council.

2 APOLOGIES

RESOLVED

That apologies for absence be received from Kevin Christie and Bill Garland and for lateness from Ted Tauroa.

Cr Barnes/Cr Sharpe

3 LATE ITEMS

Nil

4 CONFIRMATION OF ORDER OF MEETING

RESOLVED

That the order of the meeting be confirmed.

Cr Sharpe/Cr Barnes

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5 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

Project Manager Heritage Development & Reserves Planning, Tony Roxburgh, called for nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Waipa Biodiversity Council. Following some discussion, and an explanation on the role of the Chairperson, it was agreed to defer the appointment until the next meeting, on 21 June 2007.

RESOLVED

That election of a chairperson for the Waipa Biodiversity Council be deferred until the next meeting, on 21 June 2007, and that Tony Roxburgh chair today's meeting.

Mayor Livingston/Cr Sharpe

6 MEMBERS REPORTS

Mr Roxburgh said this item provides the opportunity for members to bring up biodiversity issues relating to their local areas.

6.1 Waipa District Council representatives (Councillors Hazel Barnes and Diane Sharpe)

Councillor Barnes spoke about the "clean/green" vision for Waipa that Council has identified. She also mentioned the restoration project at the old Police House in Kihikihi.

Mr Roxburgh offered to send members some background information on Waipa heritage issues, such as the Heritage Trail brochure.

Councillor Sharpe said that with the District Plan review starting at the end of the year she is keen to find out how well the current District Plan has worked environmentally, as far as planning and meeting the increasing pressure of subdivision. She said it would be helpful to get feedback from the Biodiversity Council during the District Plan review process on how the current District Plan is working and how it might be improved.

6.2 Te Pahu / Karamu District (His Worship the Mayor Alan Livingston)

Mayor Livingston suggested that the Biodiversity Council should seek some direction from Council on the management of areas such as Kakepuku and Maungakawa, which are currently managed by Council's Parks and Reserves staff, but require some management input from a heritage development perspective.

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Mr Roxburgh explained that Council's Property division administers any land that has not been gazetted under the Reserves Act, such as the land Council owns on Kakepuku, and reserve land is managed by the Parks and Reserves department. In answer to a question from Councillor Sharpe, he offered to provide some information on the management of river walkways and conservation corridors.

Mayor Livingston spoke about the benefits of having so many Enviroschools in Waipa District and that the Biodiversity Council might want to consider how to support and encourage those relationships.

Mayor Livingston suggested that the Biodiversity Council might also want to consider how it can provide independent advice and guidance to landowners on the covenanting of bush stands and how this can be promoted. He said the Biodiversity Council should make it a goal to have every area worth protecting covenanted within five years. He said landowners need to be made aware that Council has incentives available to assist with this process.

Mayor Livingston said another issue for consideration is the extent to which Council should be supporting the ongoing maintenance of covenanted bush on private land, such as through assistance with weed and pest control, and how this could be monitored and funded.

6.3 Te Awamutu / Kakepuku District (Laurie Hoverd)

Laurie Hoverd said problems can arise with covenants through changes in property ownership and he asked if a mechanism could be established to advise any new owners what their responsibilities are on covenanted land.

Laurie spoke about the complications of having two different branches of Council managing reserve and non-reserve land and he asked if this can be better defined. He also asked for clarification on the areas covered by each member of the Biodiversity Council.

6.4 Arapuni / Wharepapa District (Ted Tauroa)

Ted Tauroa spoke about the implications for landowners in having cultural or historical features on their land. He also commented on the recent release of Kokopu (freshwater fish) on Maungatautari and that Kaka will be kept in an aviary, currently being constructed, in order to acclimatize to the Mountain.

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Ted said Iwi throughout Waipa support Council on its stance regarding the proposed transmission line upgrade and in recognising the importance of preserving Waipa's landscape.

Ted asked if new landowners are notified when they purchase land that has urupa identified on it. Mr Roxburgh said there is no formal process for this and it comes down to word of mouth. He said new landowners should be encouraged to come to Council and check the District Plan maps to see if there are cultural or historic sites on their land. Councillor Sharpe said this is an issue the Biodiversity Council can give some thought to during the District Plan review.

Ted said there needs to be more discussion on the borrow pits issue and, in consultation with Iwi, identify which ones need to be protected.

6.5 Rotorangi / Karapiro District (Bill Garland)

No report.

6.6 Whitehall / Te Miro District (David Findlay)

David Findlay asked for a definition of the area that he covers on the Biodiversity Council. Mr Roxburgh said members should not feel they are constrained to a specific area and, as an example, Ted Tauroa can raise biodiversity issues that are of concern to Iwi from any part of the District. Mayor Livingston said that, in selecting representation for the Biodiversity Council, individuals rather than areas had been the main focus.

6.7 Kaipaki / Cambridge District (Martin Watson)

Martin Watson spoke about the importance of Council having updated information on heritage and archaeological sites included in its maps. He said he has recently found that a large cluster of borrow pits located close to a sand quarry are not identified on Council's maps.

Martin said that when a transferable development right (TDR) is transferred, and subsequently utilised, the signature of the original recipient has to be obtained and this often causes time delays. He asked if that process could be simplified. Mr Roxburgh said the process for administering TDRs and environmental protection lots (EPLs) is quite complicated and he offered to provide the Biodiversity Council with some background material on those processes.

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Mayor Livingston said a unique set of TDRs are being developed to acknowledge the contribution made by landowners to the Maungatautari Ecological Island project and the Biodiversity Council will be provided with more details when they have been confirmed.

6.8 Koromatua / Rukuhia District (Pieter van Dongen)

Pieter van Dongen advised that an adverse effects claim is currently being progressed to clarify ownership of the area around Lake Mangahia. This will hopefully free up funding opportunities to allow for restoration work on the lake. He said he has received unanimous support from his neighbours for the establishment of a land care group to undertake work on the lake. He asked if Council can provide any support/advice on the formation of a land care group.

Both Pieter van Dongen and Roy Dench voiced their concern about the increasing amount of rural subdivision taking place.

6.9 ACRE Representative (Roy Dench)

Roy Dench suggested that Council set an example for private landowners by putting some of its freehold land into reserve. He also asked if Council would provide retrospective acknowledgement, through TDRs, of land that has already been covenanted by private landowners. Councillor Sharpe said land covenanted before the current District Plan came into being had not been subject to reserve contributions. She said she was unaware of any retrospective requests for TDRs.

6.10 Pirongia Historic Visitor Centre / Heritage Council Representative (Alan Hall)

Alan Hall spoke about the importance of having a good catalogue of biodiversity and heritage sites clearly identified by Council. He explained how this had worked well for the Heritage Council through the development of the motorised Heritage Trail. He mentioned "heritage landscapes", which is an issue that has been raised by the Heritage Council, and that the Biodiversity Council may wish to give the protection of those landscapes some thought. He said another area of overlap between the Biodiversity and Heritage Councils is conservation of the Matakītaki Pa site.

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In commenting about the “heritage landscapes” issue, Mayor Livingston spoke about Council’s Special Landscape Character Areas that were identified 10 years ago in the current District Plan and suggested that other areas may need to be identified through the District Plan review.

6.11 Landcare Research representative (Dr Bruce Burns)

Dr Bruce Burns said he would bring a scientific link to the Biodiversity Council and could provide ideas and knowledge from the biodiversity science field. He said he could also make the Biodiversity Council aware of resources and publications that might assist the group. He tabled a recent publication from the Waikato Biodiversity Forum – “Restoring Waikato’s Indigenous Biodiversity – Ecological Priorities and Opportunities”. Mr Roxburgh said he would arrange for the facilitator of the Waikato Biodiversity Forum to present that report to the Biodiversity Council at a future meeting.

Dr Burns also mentioned Project Tui, where the public are being asked to report on whether Tui numbers have increased since the pest control operations on Maungatautari.

6.12 ExoFX Pest Solutions representative (Kevin Christie)

No report.

7 CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Inwards Correspondence

Nil

7.2 Outwards Correspondence

Nil.

8 OFFICERS REPORT

8.1 Natural Heritage Features and Assets

A report titled “Promoting the Protection of Natural Heritage Within Waipa District” was included in the agenda and Project Manager Heritage Development & Reserves Planning, Tony Roxburgh, gave a presentation on the report.

It was agreed that public awareness is a critical issue and that regular articles should be included in the “Word on Waipa” as this provides coverage to all areas of the District.

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Mr Roxburgh suggested that the Biodiversity Council firstly look at what it wants to achieve and then set some targets for achieving those goals.

Dr Bruce Burns said he would like to Council to think about the integration of indigenous species into both rural and urban landscapes, i.e. the use of native trees for shelter. Discussion continued on the use of exotic and fruit trees, as well as native trees, in urban areas and plantings alongside streams.

Mr Roxburgh said the key issues arising from the presentation are -

- Incentives to encourage protection of heritage assets
- Criteria for environment protection allotments
- Heritage corridors

9 GENERAL BUSINESS

9.1 Information sheet promoting Biodiversity Council

It was agreed that an information sheet on the Biodiversity Council will be produced. A small profile on each member of the Biodiversity Council will be included together with each member's contact details.

9.2 Defining areas / boundaries for representatives

Following on from discussion earlier in the meeting it was suggested that the geographical boundaries for each member of the Biodiversity Council should be removed. However, each person's location will be included in the information sheet.

9.3 Increasing representation

It was agreed that current representation on the Biodiversity Council is appropriate and, at this stage, there is no need for it to be any wider.

10 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

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It was suggested that members contact Mr Roxburgh in the first instance to determine whether an issue is appropriate for inclusion in a Biodiversity Council agenda.

11 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Waipa Biodiversity Council will be held at 10.00am on Thursday 21 June 2007 in the Committee Room, Cambridge Service Centre, 23 Wilson Street, Cambridge commencing at 10.00am.

Mayor Livingston said that whilst it is useful to alternate the meetings between Cambridge and Te Awamutu, it might be logical to also hold meetings at or near to sites that are of interest to the Biodiversity Council.

Meeting closed at 12.35pm.