



8 July 2008
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Minutes of the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee held in the Committee Room, Greater Wellington Regional Council, 34 Chapel Street, Masterton, on Monday, 7 July 2008, at 3.30pm.

Present:

Peter Gawith (Chairperson), Cr Ian Buchanan, Jamie Falloon, Jenny Boyne, David Holmes, Emily Crofoot, Andy Pottinger

Officers Present:

David Cameron, Ian Gunn, Wayne O'Donnell, Jim Flack (Communications Advisor)

(1) Apologies

Resolved (Jenny Boyne/Andy Pottinger)

That the apologies from Michael Blundell and Geoff Dick be accepted.

(2) Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved (Cr Ian Buchanan/Jenny Boyne)

That the minutes of the meeting of the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee held on 9 June 2008 be confirmed.

The Chairperson advised at this point that the concept of total catchment management as a way to improve Council's management of natural resources would be discussed under General Business should time allow.

It was proposed that this would be an item on the agenda for future meetings in order to seek comments and get direction as to the way in which the Committee should be thinking.

(3) Hill Country Erosion Fund – Council meeting update

Dave Cameron outlined to members that Report 08.367 had been considered by the Council at its meeting on 10 June 2008 and Council had resolved to leave the report to lie on the table subject to further discussions with MAF. Report 08.429 (which supersedes Report 08.367) and included in the WHCAC agenda for this meeting was presented to the Council on 30 June.

The report included amendments requested by the MAF assessment panel which included the preparation of a ten year project, matched GW and HCE funding in each year, and equal funding at year ten from the three partners. Council had approved 5.1 of the recommendation, i.e. additional funding of \$525,000 for 2009/10 – 2012/13, subject to approval by MAF of the Stage 2 application and the 2009-19 LTCCP process, so that the WRECI can commence in 2009/10. As of now Council has supported the proposal in principle and this is now in the LTCCP process but will be a year later in commencing.

MAF have agreed to ring-fence the \$525,000 for 4 years and understand that GW wishes to proceed through the LTCCP process.

Emily Crofoot asked about the 100 new Sustainability Plans and the definition of “new”. Dave Cameron indicated that any Plan in the existing five catchments would have an opportunity to be part of this initiative and would be set up around the number of properties and hot spots. Every property in each of these catchments would have a Sustainability Plan and may very well be a new Plan where none had previously existed.

Dave Cameron indicated that across the whole 10 years 72% of the money is going into works. In the first 4 years there is not a great deal of implementation but 72% of the \$6.3m goes into works.

Jamie Falloon asked about the LTCCP process and how projects were ranked on the list of projects. Cr Buchanan responded by saying that there is to be a series of LTCCP Councillor workshops on 22, 23 and 24 July to which members of the Committee could be asked to attend.

Members were advised there was opportunity to put forward projects to add value to what GW already does. Catchment Management and Biosecurity have had discussions and there are projects under the title of Degraded Environments, including Maintaining the Gains, hill country erosion, and biodiversity.

Emily Crofoot asked about putting in place a stage 2 MAF proposal for the Council to consider along with stage 1 and to tie in with the forthcoming LTCCP process. Dave Cameron considered that in his opinion stage 2 would have to be a new initiative.

Cr Buchanan said that further discussions needed to be held to see if Council will make additional provision in year 2 or 3 so that should money become available from MAF the Committee is in a position to proceed.

Dave Cameron raised the issue of whether nursery development should be looked at as rate funded rather than loan funded through the Akura business unit. One of the upshots from the delayed Council decision is that there is time to look at future pole requirements and the requirement for additional land. Putting this to Council or looking at the business unit model around the dividend was raised.

Jamie Falloon raised the issue of the Akura Nursery land versus any development of a new nursery site and the scale of development required.

Cr Buchanan indicated that to advance this work long term there was a need to identify the ongoing securing of poles and to look at total production at the Council's Akura and Mangapakeha nurseries and another project in the LTCCP that sits alongside this. Long term the aim is to have a major increase in hill country protection with a three way partnership and be in a position to have the poles available.

Resolved

(Jamie Falloon/Jenny Boyne)

- (1) That the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee expresses its disappointment with the decision by Council to delay approval of the WRECI funding for the 2008/09 financial year.*
- (2) That the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee requests the Council and Catchment Management Committee to consult with the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee to ensure the benefits of having the WRECI project funded through the LTCCP process are realised.*
- (3) That the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee identifies additional provision in the WRECI programme and its future needs, and that the Council also considers this matter alongside the initial consideration of WRECI.*

(4) Maintaining the Gains – Survey Update

Wayne O'Donnell updated the Committee on the outcome of the recent survey where 600 forms has been sent to affected landowners in the Otaki and northern Wairarapa areas seeking their feedback and support on the future of possum and predator control in the Wellington Region. Of the 600 survey forms forwarded 85 had been completed and returned which was a disappointing outcome – 14%. Of the 85 returned 93% wanted a GW led programme to come in behind the Tb programme. 60-65% wanted the top model which was positive. Only one had responded negatively.

It was noted that a report on Maintaining the Gains was to be considered by the Catchment Management Committee at its meeting on 24 July 2008.

Resolved

(Andy Pottinger/David Holmes)

That the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee supports the Council developing a Maintaining the Gains vector control programme with landowners.

(5) Regional Pest Management Strategy – Submissions Summary

Wayne O'Donnell gave an overview on the submissions received to the Regional Pest Management Strategy. Only 25 submissions had been received which indicated that there is widespread support to the biodiversity focus on the Strategy. There had been issues relating to the status of plants, boundary issues and gorse. Territorial authorities were strongly supportive of the programme, and particularly the resource programme where they fund 50% of the total cost.

Overall the Strategy will remain on a similar path with a focus on new entrants.

Cr Buchanan gave an outline of the formal process covering the hearing of the submissions by the Hearings Committee and reporting back to the Council around September.

(6) Wildlife Act – Status of Wildlife

Wayne O'Donnell reported that the Department of Conservation had commenced a review of the Wildlife Act due to the status of certain animals and levels of protection. In 2006 the Act was put out for consultation and 360 submissions were received with the main pests recognised as being Canada Geese and Plovers along with other birds that have been blown here and have become fully protected.

Following receipt of submissions to the review DoC will forward recommendations to the Minister followed by another formal consultation period which will require an Order-in-Council for any changes to be made.

The change GW is hopeful of relates to Canada Geese, with landowners calling for them to be taken off the protected list and put into the RPMS and under regional councils to control.

(7) Communications

- (1) Jim Flack, Communications Advisor, reported that a media release on Maintaining the Gains had been placed in the Wairarapa News, Kapiti Observer, and the Bush Telegraph.
- (2) Communication work is continuing on the number of poles being planted.

- (3) Members noted that the newsletter prepared by Chris Garland gave statistical farming information over the last 12 months. Jim to be included in this newsletter distribution.
- (4) Cr Buchanan referred to the WRECI funding discussed earlier and the suggestion of a news article expressing disappointment that GW was not proceeding this year but will be working with the Council to ensure this proceeds through the LTCCP process.
- (5) Jamie Falloon raised the suggestion of approaching the TV programme Country Calendar to undertake a programme incorporating land management, the benefits of pole planting, the catchment management approach, and the next 50 years of hill country land management. This was considered a good suggestion which would aim to sell a positive message.

(8) General Business

- (1) Members discussed the Total Catchment Management concept which had been raised at the commencement of the meeting.

Cr Buchanan was of the view that the best way forward was to hold a workshop with Councillors and members of the WHCAC Committee in order for all to understand what the concept involved and how GW would work with the community.

It was agreed to circulate to members the report prepared by Ian Gunn, Integrated Catchment Advisor, on Total Catchment Management – Implementation Framework.

Ian Gunn spoke on the total catchment management and referred to the Mangatarere Stream concept and how research has indicated that work carried out in one part of the catchment has an affect on another part of the catchment. It is a process where issues needed to be worked through, with community consultation occurring, and agreement on a vision and ultimately delivery of an outcome.

- (2) Jamie Falloon asked about the WRECI funding and whether this was going to accelerate on the current land management programme and accordingly have any impact.

Dave Cameron outlined the staffing and money allocation.

- (2) Cr Buchanan sought the Committee's view on the best way to capture the rural community's input in the LTCCP process scheduled in late 2008 or early 2009 in order to get engagement and feedback for the WHCAC Committee in terms of input and resources.

Suggestions included the farm focus days and in particular the Farm Monitoring meetings where up to 200 people often attended with possibly a half hour slot set aside for a presentation and feedback

session. There were other options of capturing landowners by holding a series of meetings with smaller attendances of approximately 10 landowners.

Cr Buchanan commented that it was a partnership and a way of going forward together in developing that partnership.

Cr Buchanan thanked members for their input and ideas and indicated he would follow up on the suggestions raised and discuss further with officers.

The meeting closed at 5.42pm

Date of next meeting – Monday, 4 August 2008, 3.30pm.