



7 April 2009
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Minutes of the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee Meeting held in the Committee Room, Greater Wellington Regional Council, 34 Chapel Street, Masterton, on Monday, 6 April 2009, at 3.30pm.

Present:

Peter Gawith (Chairperson), Cr Ian Buchanan, Jamie Falloon, Jenny Boyne, David Holmes (representing Wairarapa district councils), Andy Pottinger, Michael Blundell, Cr Prue Lamason.

Officers present:

David Cameron, Scott Ihaka (for item 3), Jim Flack (GWRC)

(1) Apologies

Resolved (Jamie Falloon/Michael Blundell)

That the apologies for absence from Cr Fran Wilde, Wayne O'Donnell and Emily Crofoot be received.

(2) Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved (David Holmes/Jenny Boyne)

That the minutes of the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee held on 9 February 2009 be confirmed.

(3) Project brief – Wairarapa landscapes

Scott Ihaka attended the meeting to brief Committee members on a landscape project that Greater Wellington is committed to under the proposed Regional Policy Statement. The project will provide a comprehensive and consistent inventory of Wairarapa's landscapes for the three Wairarapa district councils in terms of their responsibilities. Method 49 in the RPS requires GWRC to undertake a landscape character assessment for the whole of the Wellington region. Wairarapa has been chosen as the first district because it fits in well with the commitments within the Combined Wairarapa District Plan. Other districts will be being undertaken in varying stages as their district plans come up for review.

Scott explained that effectively it is an overall assessment of the landscape and works out character types, e.g. varying layers on the landscape, i.e. vegetation. By pulling these together significant characteristics can be defined within the landscape

It was intended to engage GW consultants to carry out GIS identification, ground truthing, discussion with landowners, iwi, and other stakeholders, to identify character units. A landscape assessment will be undertaken with commitment from the Combined Wairarapa District Plan along with a schedule of identification sites.

Scott indicated he was keen for the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee to be informed of what is happening as the Committee could be directly affected.

Andy Pottinger was nervous about the control mechanisms that may be brought about.

Scott Ihaka indicated that there was a need to review the protection mechanisms to allow those landowners which have outstanding or significant landscapes to have a say through the protection mechanisms. There will still be an opportunity to review the rules and policies in relation to the landscapes.

An evaluation of what district councils would do related to the identification of sites will eventuate and this required buy in from the community.

Discussion focussed on the issue of the level of controls.

Peter Gawith thanked Scott Ihaka for his presentation and asked him to report back to the WHCAC Committee as required.

4. Update on LTCCP meetings

Cr Buchanan updated the Committee on the series of LTCCP meetings he was holding. Three of the meetings had been organised for hill country landowners – Tinui, Tukurumuri, and Gladstone. Further meetings were proposed for Whangaehu, Mauriceville, Masterton and Greytown. A meeting had also been held with Sustainable Wairarapa on the LTCCP and future planning models.

Cr Buchanan indicated there was strong support for the hill country initiatives over WRECI, bringing the Akura Nursery expansion forward, pest management issues and the Bovine Tb Strategy.

Dave Cameron reported that landowners, apart from lifestylers, had received mail outs advising of the scheduled meetings on Council projects that affect rural landowners. Gladstone, however, was one meeting that had a small turnout which indicated that mail outs may not have been received with sufficient notice to landowners.

Andy Pottinger thanked Cr Buchanan and officers for their excellent PR and said that there had been positive feedback from those attending the Tinui meeting. Most landowners were feeling comfortable and confident with the GWRC.

Peter Gawith updated the Committee on the Gladstone meeting and explained the reason for the low turnout of landowners with the leaflets distribution and the venue and time scheduled on a different page. Had advance notice of the meeting been known information could have been placed in the Gladstone School newsletter.

Officers were asked to follow this up with the rural delivery co-ordinator.

5. Circulation lists

A boundary map was tabled of districts where Committee members' were located. It was proposed that this would form the basis of circulation for future landowner meetings.

Discussion focused on the best fit for each locality to establish future distribution lists.

6. Akura Nursery

Amended Akura Nursery model February 2009 spreadsheets for lease 2009, lease 2012, and buy 2009, were tabled.

Dave Cameron explained the three options open to the Committee.

Jamie Falloon asked questions relating to the Masterton District Council's Homebush land, and how the outsourcing profit and loss figure was made up.

Andy Pottinger considered that the lease 2009 was the obvious option to pursue.

Jamie Falloon indicated he was supportive of commencing in 2009 but could not understand how GW could not pursue the MDC's Homebush land option. He asked whether there was the possibility that a letter of intent could be signed by the Chair of GWRC and the Mayor of MDC.

Cr Buchanan responded by saying that it was a timing issue. A lease could not be signed until the Council had decided to bring the matter forward. MDC consents for the application of wastewater at Homebush will be put out in early May. Cr Buchanan considered that the Committee should explore the opportunity at a senior level with MDC.

Andy Pottinger indicated that until permission was granted it was irrelevant to fast forward it whether it was a lease or buy option.

Resolved

(Andy Pottinger/Michael Blundell)

- (1) That the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee recommends that Stage II of the Akura Nursery development proceeds with the lease 2009 as the preferred option.*

Michael Blundell suggested that the purchase 2009 option with a capital injection would be best way forward and would keep both options open.

Moved as an amendment

(Michael Blundell/Jamie Falloon)

- (2) That the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee recommends that Stage II of the Akura Nursery development proceeds with the lease 2009 option and with a capital injection.*

The amendment was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

7. Presentation from AHB at a future meeting

Cr Buchanan advised that the above matter arose following the LTCCP meeting at Tinui where John Dalziell had presented a AHB point of view. He had expressed a desire to talk to each of the scheduled LTCCP meetings on the AHB's point of view in having a process over the Bovine Tb strategy. Following further discussions, it was considered it was inappropriate for discussions with AHB in the LTCCP forum. It was felt to be more beneficial if AHB were to attend a meeting of the WHCAC Committee in the near future.

Andy Pottinger understood where the AHB were coming from but considered it was critical that the AHB and GW were working together. There were concerns that AHB would be running two schemes and landowners were going to be paying twice. John Dalziell's concerns were that GW would cease all funding after next year.

Cr Buchanan explained that if GW was to pull the \$600,000 from the Bovine Tb programme, AHB had to replace this with their own rate and GW would then come back with its regional possum programme and re-rate across landowners as well.

It was suggested that an invitation be extended to the AHB to meet with the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee to discuss the draft Bovine Tb Strategy sometime towards the end of May.

Andy Pottinger sought assurance that the WHCAC Committee continues to support funding irrespective of what GW is doing in their own plan. Bovine Tb needs to be drawn in.

Cr Buchanan indicated that currently the LTCCP has numbers in there for the next two years and will be supporting the continuation of funding.

Peter Gawith stated that the Committee will support the continuation of funding and will be making a submission on that basis.

It was agreed that the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee will ensure pressure is kept on GWRC not to withdraw its funding in the future.

Andy Pottinger left the meeting at 4.50pm.

8. Communications

(1) Submission on LTCCP 2009-2019

Jim Flack indicated that the LTCCP hearings were scheduled to be heard in GW's Regional Council Centre, Wellington, on 13-15 May 2009.

Cr Buchanan expected submissions from the Tinui and Tukurumuri districts on the LTCCP as well as a submission from the WHCAC Committee. He stressed that it was going to be important that there was back up and this needed to be translated through to the formal process.

Cr Buchanan suggested that it would be preferable to get a confirmed date and time at this stage for Wairarapa submissions to be heard in tandem.

The morning of Wednesday, 13 May, has now been allocated for the hearing of the Wairarapa and WHCAC Committee submissions.

Dave Cameron advised that the WHCAC Committee's draft submission on the LTCCP would be emailed to members for comments and is required back by the end of the week.

(2) Rural Focus

Jim Flack advised that the next Rural Focus publication was due to be circulated after Easter to approximately 7,000 rural landowners.

Stories to be included were:

- Hill country and land management update on the Afforestation Grant Scheme
- Sediment coming off the land and its effects
- Streams Alive programme
- Ballance Farm Environment Awards winners

Michael Blundell commented on the Ballance Farm Environment Awards and the need to encourage more hill country landowners to enter the next Farm Environment Awards

Jenny Boyne raised the possibility of being informed with sufficient notice when various field days in the region were due to be held. It was noted that a dairy farm field day is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 6 May.

The Committee discussed the distribution of leaflets and the lateness with which these are being received in some districts.

Jim Flack was asked to follow this matter up with the rural distribution organiser.

9. General business

Jamie Falloon commented on the Afforestation Grant Scheme and his expression of interest in the AGS. He indicated that the goal posts had shifted since what had originally been planned. At the last meeting there was an indication that there needed to be a balance within the applications with 70% fast carbon and 30% slow carbon.

Jamie stated that the AGS has been sold on a 70-30 ratio and there was no way an application for a slow carbon would stack up in any area.

Jamie explained his position and that of another landowner further up the valley with a similar issue. He still proposed to contribute into the process but he did have concerns on the costing and would have to fund the margin in terms of paying for the additional fencing.

He queried as to whether this was exactly how the AGS was to be viewed and believed it had been sold in a different process. Jamie considered that it had been remiss of MAF to promote the scheme the way it had.

Dave Cameron responded by saying that it had been determined that the Regional Council pool would be a fixed rating system but how it would be fixed had not been sorted out until one month ago. This had caused confusion at the time the first applications were received. It is now fixed on the nett present value of the carbon stored in the new forest over the first ten years.

The meeting closed at 5.13pm.