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Committee Council  
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## Report of the Parks, Forests and Utilities Committee Meeting held on 23 October 2008

### 1. Purpose

To inform Council about the meeting of the Parks, Forests and Utilities Committee that took place in the Wellington Regional Council Chamber on 23 October 2008.

### 2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2002*.

### 3. Public Participation

Harry Memelink, the present leasee of the Rimutuka Summit tearooms, for the past seven years, provided some further detail to his business plan for the café. There were some questions covering re-opening and whether the business was fundamentally sound.

Dianne Strugnell, a resident of Moonshine Road, Pauatahanui raised some concerns with the Council's processes and consultation covering the proposed Puketiro wind farm and its possible effect on the future water collection on Akatarawa Forest. Councillor Burke requested that officers respond to the issues.

Peter Matcham, the Convenor for the Friends of Belmont Regional Park, expressed concern that the Belmont Management plan had been delayed for some time, and, he was not clear what effect the proposed strategic review will have on the network plan. Mr Matcham also asked for some clarity about regional parks and windfarms referred to in one of the meeting's papers.

#### **4. Final adoption of the Parks and Forests Concessions Policy 2008**

Councillor Kirton advised that the proposed Concessions policy has been through a hearings process and the subject of some minor changes. In addition, leasing has been included for the sake of completeness.

Councillor Wilde requested that, because the parks network was under review, that any concession granted or operating before the new policy takes effect to continue until the term of the concession expired. However, any application for a major concession involving any large permanent structures will require the approval of the Council.

#### **5. Review of the Wellington Regional Bylaws for the forests parks and recreation areas**

Mr Waititi outlined the reasons for the review and the need for the Council to have powers to give effect to and support the Parks' Management Plans. The Bylaws are directed at more extreme and inappropriate behaviour by members of the public at a regional park and authorise officers to deal with such situations.

Councillor Aitken raised a concern that the bylaws were presently inoperative. Mr Waititi, in response, advised that the Bylaws were an enforcement tool of the last resort, and, in his experience, the powers that they contain are very rarely exercised. Also, these Bylaws are optional for councils to put in place.

Councillor Greig inquired about aircraft movement. Mr Kennedy, in response, advised both fixed wing aircraft and helicopters use the park facilities from time to time.

In discussion, it was agreed to commence the consultation period earlier than suggested with the revised consultation period to run from 3 November 2008 until mid-February 2009.

#### **6. Greater Wellington Regional Council's role in providing the Regional Parks**

Mr Waititi explained the need for a strategy that sets out the Council's underlying role, which in turn, shapes each regional park management plan.

Councillor Aitken raised a concern that some international references and the relationship with human and social capital needed to be pursued. In addition, Councillor Aitken requested that the consultation should seek the views of a wide range of people as possible.

In the discussion that followed, Councillors felt that the moratorium on any development of windfarms in a Regional Park should be made clear and officers were requested to revise the paper, as tabled, before presenting it to the Council.

## **7. Wholesale Infrastructure Assets – review of Insurance Policy**

Mr Shaw outlined the reason for the policy change. At this time, with the credit crisis, the policy of using a credit line through our bankers is prohibitive and expensive. In its place, insurance cover was a relatively cheaper option.

Councillor Burke asked for further detail about the mechanics of the reserve fund. Mr Benham, in response, advised that these funds were permanently ring-fenced from other Council activities and any interest earned remained within each reserve.

## **8. Regional Parks Report 2007-08**

Ms Cox presented a pictorial review of the past years activities.

Councillor Greig registered her appreciation of the work and efforts of Amanda and her team.

## **9. Divisional Manager's report**

Mr Kennedy highlighted the item that covered the small hydro-electricity initiative proposed at Wainuiomata Water Treatment Plant. With energy prices anticipated to rise in the immediate future, the initiative provides an economic and sustainable resource which will make that treatment plant self-sufficient. In addition, the Council's carbon-footprint will be reduced significantly.

Mr Teri Puketapu was pleased to endorse the proposal. Councillor Wilson inquired about the amount of investment required. Mr Kennedy responded that the initiative was relatively modest at around \$2.0 to \$4.0M.

Mr Laidlow, in response to Councillor Burke question about the repairs to the tower at Te Marua Lakes, advised that repair work has taken longer than envisaged because of the engineering design, the special grouting required, and a wetter than usual winter. These repair works are expected to be completed soon, and by, at the latest, mid-November, to meet the summer demands for water.

Councillor Wilson queried whether bollards installed at Te Marua were treated (tanalised). Mr Kennedy advised that these posts were treated for rot because they were not usually exposed to any direct human contact. By comparison, picnic tables are made from untreated macaracarpa.

Mr Leonard, advised that a recent review of the rural fire had been completed by National Fire service did not seek any contribution from the Local Rural Fire Board District.

Councillor Baber commented that the public meeting for the energy development proposal at Stoney Creek was well received by those who attended from the local community.

## 10. Wainuiomata mini hydro power generation

Mr Shaw explained how the power generating plant would operate to produce a constant source of power for the treatment plant throughout the year. The economic return and investment payback period were feasible and realistic. Any surplus power generated would be made available to the local network. Carbon emission credits were valuable and estimated at around 400 tonnes pa – a significant step in meeting the Council’s targets.

The general discussion that followed was directed at other opportunities for generating hydro power e.g. some reservoirs could be candidate for in line generators that produce around 4-5 kw.

## 11. Exclusion of the Public

The Committee then discussed and considered:

1. Rimutuka Summit toilet block and tearooms
2. East Harbour Regional Park – Proposal to exchange land

## 12. Unconfirmed minutes

The unconfirmed minutes of the Committee’s meeting are attached as Attachment 1.

## 13. Recommendations

*That the Council:*

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***

Report prepared by:



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Chair, Parks, Forests and  
Utilities Committee

Report prepared by:

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**Attachment:**

Public minutes of the Parks, Forests and Utilities Committee meeting