



17 December 2008
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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, 15 December 2008, at 3.30pm.

Present:

Peter Gawith (Chairperson), Cr Ian Buchanan, Jamie Falloon, Emily Crofoot, Jenny Boyne, Michael Blundell

Officers Present:

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

Also Present:

Guest – John-Paul Praat (P A Handford & Associates)

The Chairperson welcomed John-Paul Praat from Peter Handford & Associates to the meeting.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting Dave Cameron introduced Wayne O'Donnell who was the newly appointed Divisional Manager, Catchment Management, replacing Geoff Dick who had resigned on 28 November 2008.

Members extended their congratulations to Wayne on his appointment.

(1) Apology

Resolved

(Peter Gawith/JennyBoyne)

That the apology from Andy Pottinger be accepted.

(2) Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved

(Cr Ian Buchanan/Jamie Falloon)

That the minutes of the meeting of the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee held on 4 November 2008 be confirmed.

(3) Carbon Farming – Sustainable Farming Fund Project

John-Paul Praat gave a Powerpoint presentation on carbon farming outlining the opportunities and issues for rural New Zealand with the aim of assisting farmers, agribusiness managers and farm foresters to better understand carbon farming.

The aim of the presentation was to seek opinions and feedback to ensure relevant issues were being addressed.

Key issues included:

(1) What information is needed –

- On-farm greenhouse gas
- Government and other mechanisms
- Point of obligation – farmers versus processor
- AGS and PFSI implemented, ETS on hold

Emily Crofoot arrived at 3.50pm.

- Risk analysis
- Interaction of forestry and landuse
- Carbon footprint

(2) How might we provide it –

- Press release through farming media
- Pamphlets/fact sheets – brief/2 A4 sheets
- Seminars/road shows and/or use existing forums
- One day seminar/conference at end of project

Peter Gawith made the suggestion of raising this with the Wairarapa Monitor Farm Committee who schedule meetings on a quarterly basis. The Ashby property was a prime example of plantation forestry and windbreaks that would be part of a carbon footprint.

Agreed: That Peter Gawith and Dave Cameron approach Chris Garland of Baker & Associates to pursue this.

- Potential meetings
 - Dairy action groups
 - Meat and Wool monitor farm field days
 - RC Land Forum (PN in March 09)
 - RC AGS liaison
 - NZFFA (Gisborne in April) case study, local farm
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Cr Buchanan indicated that the purpose of the emissions trading scheme was the reduction of emissions and if tax was to be added this was not going to be achieved. The only comment prior to the Government elections as to the decisions from the National Party was around the timing of bringing agriculture in. There were no signals around the point of obligation.

- Communication network
 - Federated Farmers
 - NZFFA
 - Ag Consultants
 - RC staff
- Suggested Fact Sheet
 - (1) NZ farmers and greenhouse gases
 - (2) Getting started with carbon farming
 - (3) Trading on farm carbon
 - (4) Sustainable landuse and carbon management
 - (5) Tree selection and carbon management
 - (6) Carbon management in the future
 - (7) Others
 - ETS being reviewed
 - MAF PFSI/AGS/ETS roadshow
 - NZ heads for the United Nations framework convention on Climate Change in Poland
 - Pastoral green house research coalition
 - There is considerable information resources in development (fact sheets, seminars). Co-ordinating with MAF who are the principal funders.
- What is missing?

Jamie Falloon considered there needed to be an explanation of the liability, how it is calculated, and clarification between the Kyoto 1990 emission levels. Also information at a farm level and forests with uniform descriptions in order to relate that back to one's own business.

Peter Gawith suggested that in relation to the Wairarapa Farm Monitor system the holding of an on-farm field day would get a lot of feedback with farmers gaining answers to many questions.

Cr Buchanan said that what is going to be critical for farmers is gaining access to the information required. A series of fact sheets would be a key to that

information for all rural landowners and involve liaising with Regional Council staff. Exploring that medium and placing it in all rural newsletters would reach every farmer in NZ.

Peter Gawith further added that farmers' accountants would be another contact point.

John-Paul Praat indicated that funding was available for the next six months.

Committee members thanked John-Paul Praat for his presentation.

Dave Cameron indicated that should answers be available and progress was being achieved, the Committee would appreciate the material being circulated or asking John-Paul back to address the Committee at a meeting in early 2009.

(4) Akura Nursery – Future Development

Members were previously circulated the report which had been considered by the Catchment Management Committee at its meeting on 20 November 2008. The recommendations had been adopted –

- “1. *Supports the Stage I development at an estimated capital cost of \$100,000 being included in the Akura business plan as part of preparing Council's 2009-2019 LTCCP.*
2. *Notes the Stage II development options and that a decision is not required on this investment until the 2012-22 LTCCP”.*

Dave Cameron indicated that the development of the Akura Nursery and the upgrade of the Mangapakeha Nursery would proceed commencing in 2009. The decision around the Stage II development has been delayed until 2012 and any requirements to meet demands being met with a short term contract by an external supplier. One of the reasons for the delay was to have a look at how WRECI had been implemented over the first two years. The next LTCCP 2012-22 was another opportunity for Stage II to come in rather than immediately.

Jamie Falloon believed that the costs for Council to increase Akura and Mangapakeha Nurseries' future pole production were insignificant in the scheme of things.

Cr Buchanan considered that the best option was to contract from 2011-2016 with the Shannon nursery and to then make a decision on known reality as to whether a further piece of land was required or not.

Resolved

(Jamie Falloon/Jenny Boyne)

That the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee forward a submission to the Council's LTCCP process on the Stage II Akura nursery developments.

It was agreed that this would be an item for the February 2009 Committee agenda.

(5) Bovine Tb and Possum Predator Programmes

Wayne updated the Committee on two successful outcomes from the Council's draft LTCCP process –

1. Bovine Tb Programme

Cr Buchanan has been successful in securing \$600,000 per annum in the draft 2009-2019 LTCCP. This is subject to negotiating a good outcome with AHB in terms of having a good relationship and retaining local knowledge. The second part of the agreement relates to vector management services which has not yet been finalised with the AHB.

2. Possum Predator Programme

The possum predator programme has been accepted in principle to begin in the third year of the 2009 - 2019 LTCCP which means that work for the next 8-9 years will be in the roll back areas. The programme will be carried out as funds become available.

Wayne reported that the NPMS Review Steering Group had recently met with the AHB. The group had reviewed the current position to determine whether there were any alternative options. Currently there are now five options on the table

- containment option – contains vector risk areas to 2010 boundaries. Maintains acceptable levels of infected herds.
- rollback option – maintain infected herd prevalence to current 0.2% target and eventually rolls back vector risk areas.
- three eradication options – medium, short term, and rapid – progress would be determined by the level of funding agreed.

Stakeholders have asked for one model to cover all five options with costings attached.

There was now a need to reach agreement with all stakeholders by the end of March 2009 and prepare papers to go to all the industries for consultation. A proposed NPMS must be lodged with the Minister by September 2009 and commencing in April 2010. A July 2010 start could then be achievable.

(6) LTCCP Update from Councillors LTCCP Workshop

Members were advised that the WRECI programme was now in the 2009/10 LTCCP.

Members gave support to a submission going forward on the Akura Nursery, Bovine Tb and Possum Predator Programme to the LTCCP.

This item will be placed on the February Committee agenda.

(7) Combined District Plan – Soil Disturbance Rule – Coastal Environment Management Area

The Committee discussed the Proposed Wairarapa District Plan as amended by decisions relating to earthworks of more than 50m³ within any twelve month period with the Coastal Environment Management Area and Foreshore Protection Area.

Dave Cameron informed members that this related to the inland area and its inclusion is as a result of landscape and natural character. The major issue for landowners was the Coastal Strategy where people had submitted in good faith believing that no regulations would emanate. Circumstances would be different had they known the eventual outcome. 50m³ is highly restrictive.

Members needed to be aware of the regulation changes to normal farming and forestry operations in the NZ Coastal Environment Management Area.

The Committee expressed their dissatisfaction with the proposed regulations for farming practices.

The matter was now to be reviewed by the Environment Court. Mediation was to commence on 16 December 2008.

Resolved

(Peter Gawith/Emily Crofoot)

That the Committee supports the efforts of Wairarapa Federated Farmers to pass on their concerns to the proposed regulations.

Michael Blundell declared an interest and did not vote.

Cr Buchanan abstained from voting.

(8) Climate Information

Dave Cameron went through GW's website on the laptop to let members view how they can access the rainfall and hydrological sites. Dave asked for feedback as to whether it would be worthwhile putting additional information for landowners around the sites in terms of pre-empting or assisting decision-making particularly when soil moistures were approaching the wilting point of pasture.

Members noted the links from the Home page through to Information Services, Environmental Monitoring, Environmental Reporting, Monthly Hydrological Summaries, Monthly Rainfall and River Flow Summaries. A quick link to Soil and Moisture and the ability to put more than one graph on one page a

description about soil moisture and what it means for a particular site would assist landowners.

(9) Communications

Jim Flack referred to the Afforestation Grant Scheme and the outcome of the statement prepared jointly by Crs Buchanan and Wilde announcing the signing of the AGS documents and the availability of forestry projects in the Wairarapa.

(10) General Business

In answer to a question from Emily Crofoot concerning statutory obligations surrounding rural matters and the new Council Committee structure:-

Members were informed that there was an original requirement under the transitional legislation in 1989 to consider rural services and Wairarapa matters. GW has incorporated Wairarapa interests into the Catchment Management and all legal obligations have been met.

(11) Date of next meeting

Tentatively set for Monday, 9 February 2009, 3.30pm.

The meeting closed at 6.10pm