



Rangitikei District Council

Council Meeting

Minutes – Thursday 15 April 2010 – 1:45 p.m.

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Present: His Worship the Mayor, Chalky Leary
Cr Andy Watson
Cr Don Brown
Cr Ed Cherry
Cr Mike Jones
Cr Soraya Peke-Mason
Cr Lynne Sheridan

Apologies: Cr Jan Byford
Cr Grant Collie
Cr Sarah Harris
Cr Jill Strugnell

In attendance: Mrs C Hadley, Chief Executive
Mr M Hodder, Community Services Group Manager
Mr R Kirby, Asset Group Manager
Ms D Servante, Senior Policy Analyst
Ms A Coleman, Executive Officer

1 Council Prayer

His Worship The Mayor read the Council prayer and Councillors remembered Jim Bull who died on 8 April 2010.

2 Apologies / Leave of absence

That the apologies from Crs Strugnell, Harris, Byford and Collie be received.

Crs Jones/Cherry. Carried

3 Confirmation of Order of Business

There were no changes to the order of business.

4 Submissions to the Draft Annual Plan

5 Oral submissions to the Draft Annual Plan

Gill Duncan and Rita Batley, Rangitikei Guardians

This group is concerned about the lack of understanding about wind farms moving into the district, that information is slow to filter down and the implications are unknown. They recommended that the RDC do a landscape inventory as outlined in their submission, before making a decision about how many windfarms we are prepared to have in our district and where they may be situated. Cost to local community is significant ie Rangitikei Guardians have spent \$100,000 to keep track of Meridian, and this should be an RDC responsibility, rather than relying on individuals.

Cr Watson asked how much money should to be set aside for an inventory as part of District Plan review. The Guardians suggested about \$100,000 and as Council would benefit from additional rates from windfarms, the costs of an inventory should come from that. Cr Cherry asked if Council should have a horizons policy in the matter and the Guardians embraced a ruling that would have some teeth. This group will be providing a detailed submission to the district plan, but had not currently been approached by Council officers to do so. His Worship The Mayor advised that this is a serious issue facing all districts in NZ. Is a great cost and will be a hard one to address, but useful for this group to help us make the right decision.

Bob Buchanan

Mr Buchanan quoted from various sources around New Zealand that ratepayers are worried about council spending and increasing rates, and little consideration being given to affordability for ratepayers. He was concerned about the three waters capping, the way that Council is making policy, and particularly concerned for low income ratepayers. Mr Buchanan supports water metering throughout the whole region, so that caps may be removed entirely and there will no longer be any need for some towns to subsidise others' water.

Michelle Bisset and supporters re Community Garden

Ms Bisset presented on the option of a community garden at the old campground site at Marton Park. Cr Jones asked about any market research about the popularity of community garden in Marton as many people already have large sections. Ms Bisset referred to the large number of signatures collected in 4 hours in support of the proposal which were included with her written submission.

Cr Peke-Mason asked about policing/security of the project, especially in evening. International evidence says theft from gardens is usually from middle class people, who don't need food and Ms Bisset has discussed this with local Maori Wardens who may be able to help.

Cr Brown offered congratulations on the initiative and asked if the RDC as owner of land, would need to offer any other assistance. Nothing further was required, just agreement in principle to give it a try. A trust would be formed to manage the garden.

Cr Watson asked if any other sites had been considered. Most sites are contaminated and therefore unsuitable for a garden, while this is ideal due to accessibility and facilities on it including water.

Cr Sheridan asked about the sustainability of the project and how to keep it going. This was recognised as a big problem. But the best option is to start a trust, have good leadership and ask other groups to come aboard. Proposal has timeline to get additional support from locals. Not set in stone – give it 3-5 years, see if it works. If not, can return in current condition back to RDC.

His Worship The Mayor thanked Ms Bisset for the gift of a kowhai and acknowledged the number of supporters present at the meeting.

Ann Billings for Jennifer Kerr, Sustainable Living Education Trust

Anne Billings made presentation on behalf of Sustainable Living as Jennifer Kerr could not make this meeting. Anne works for the Palmerston North City Council and has run full programmes in Palmerston North as well as components of the Sustainable Living Education Trust (SLET), including two sessions for the Marton Pilot programme. The presentation included information about the success of the pilot programme already run in Marton and the value to Council of this national education programme. There was no time available for additional questions. A copy of Ms Billings presentation is available in the Council's committee room.

Murray Robinson

Mr Robinson explained that he was on town water, even though he lives in a rural area. The decision dates from 1983 when Council contracted with malting company, and he was encouraged to join up to Marton water. He understands the need for a water cap, but is being very adversely affected. Mr Robinson had received a good hearing from Mr S Rostron, Strategy Finance Leader, and considered that any accommodation of his personal circumstances would have a minimal impact on urban ratepayers.

Cr Watson wondered if a cap on rural properties connected to Marton water would be appropriate. This was seen as appropriate and if his property was considered the equivalent of a \$350,000 house in town, his bill would be \$80, instead of the \$850 he faces.

Cr Brown asked how many other ratepayers were affected. This was not known and Mr Robinson had made a conscious decision to deal directly with the Council, rather than starting an outcry by trying to locate any others in a similar position.

Andrea O'Connor for Virginia Travers, Rangitikei Tourism

Rangitikei Tourism advised that it is very happy to be given the task of managing the three billboards and sees this as a fantastic opportunity for the region.

Bronwyn Meads, Bulls Town Co-ordinator

Ms Meads spoke to her submission regarding the painting of the milk churns that are used in Bulls as rubbish bins. The goal is to make the town look vibrant, consistent and with new Bulls logo. Consultation with the community showed that 80% supported a red colour, rather than black and white. They also supported the Bulls red rose and the matador connection.

Crs Sheridan and Brown addressed the cleaning of the bins and it was noted that the contract currently includes emptying only, not cleaning. It was suggested that it would cost an additional \$6,000 to paint the seats as well. Cr Sheridan asked if the variety of the Bulls red rose was known and is the colour going to be the correct one. The actual rose is in the garden of Hilary Haylock and paint would be matched to that.

Steve Fouhy, Turakina Community Committee

Mr Fouhy apologised for his absence and Council noted the tabled document from the Turakina Community Committee.

Tim Matthews, Federated Farmers

Mr Matthews presented detailed statistics regarding the falling income for sheep and beef farmers, and sheep and beef on-farm inflation. Local body rates are contributing to inflation. It is clear from the income statistics that rural ratepayers are in no position to pay additional rates. Federated Farmers appreciate the caps from last year, but are concerned that costs are still creeping up. They ask Council when reviewing policies to look closely at who is paying and who is receiving benefit.

Cr Watson noted the general theme of the Federated Farmers submission which is to let charges fall where they lay. He noted that roading is a huge Council cost and urban people don't always feel responsible. Mr Matthews replied that they are not farmers roads, but are the district's network that supports many individuals and businesses. Not exclusively for farmer's use.

6 Late items

There were no late items.

7 Next meeting

29 April 2010

8 Meeting closed – 3.15pm