

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton,
on Saturday October 13, 2018 commencing at 11.00am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: M. Young

Councillors: G. Annan, C. Carey, D. Cocks, W. Howard, N. Judy, A. Kerr, C. Sherrard,
B. Smith, E. Williamson.

Staff: B. Wilson, J. Dyer, D. Klee.

Visitors: P. Hardy (DoC), M. O'Donnell, B. Moore, G. Avery

1. APOLOGIES

P. Shaw, S. Smith, N. Judy (lateness).

It was moved;

that the apologies be accepted.

Howard/Annan CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

Councillor Kerr stated that he would have a conflict of interest in any discussion regarding the proposed property purchase.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 18 AUGUST 2018:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of 18 August be accepted as a true and correct record.

Smith/Annan CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Councillor Annan asked whether the NZ Council had approved the salary increase for the RMA staff. Mr Wilson replied that the request had been declined and no reason had been given.

Discussion ensued over the lack of communication between NZ Council and the regions, and the increasing intrusion of the NZ Council on regional decision making.

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

Nil

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

Mr Wilson summarised the Fish & Game submission on the proposed Waikato District Plan noting that Mischa Davis had put a huge effort into the submission which concentrated on minimising the restrictions on wetland restoration work, but also on other issues such as getting hunting permitted as a rural activity and Fish & Game signage.

Mr Wilson spoke on the recent meeting between DoC, F&G, and Kiwi Rail to discuss the proposed double tracking of the railway line through the Whangamarino Wetland, 7km of which would be bordering F&G wetlands. There were numerous issues with the proposal including impacts on hydrology and water quality. In the medium term, 10-15 years, the introduction of fast express trains on this route would make the three railway crossings that provide access to F&G wetlands no longer viable in their present form. Discussion took place on the alternatives to the existing crossings with it noted that an underpass at the McKenzie wetland would have issues with the high groundwater level. An alternative access, constructing a bridge across the Mangatawhiri River, could cost some \$200,000.

Councillor Juby arrived at 11.30am.

In reply to a question, Mr Klee stated that the water levels in the Flax block had been reinstated to 1.7m.

Mr Klee updated the meeting on his recent discussions with DoC concerning proposed concessions for storage sheds in the Kopuatai wetland and Flax Block. This was considered by Councillors to be a revenue gathering exercise and concern was expressed that the fees were excessive, and the funds would not be spent on the wetland. Councillors also emphasised that hunters ran predator control programmes and controlled invasive weeds. Doubt was expressed that DoC knew the extent of or appreciated these hunter activities. The Conservation Act stated that the fees had to be reasonable. Mr Hardy provided a DoC perspective that they had a statutory mandate to collect concessions for structures on the DoC estate and exceptions were rarely granted. Mr Klee had contacted the legal advisers in other F&G regions to obtain a national perspective and to determine whether they had similar issues. It appeared that this was an issue currently restricted to the Waikato, but which could act as a precedent elsewhere.

Mr Klee spoke on the Te Kauwhata Waste Water Treatment Plant consents and expressed his disappointment at the lack of consultation with the public consultative group set up as part of the consent process. A land option appears to have been excluded from further consideration, but no explanation had been given as to why.

It was moved;

that further to section 48 of the local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely discussion on the purchase of land

General subject of each matter to be considered:

Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter:

Grounds under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution

Land purchase

Good reason to withhold exists under Section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982

Section 48(1)(a)(i)

Smith/Cocks CARRIED

It was moved;

that Council moves out of public excluded meeting.

Annan/Cocks CARRIED

Council rose for lunch at 12.30pm and resumed at 1.30pm.

Mr Wilson spoke on the financial statements, informing Councillors that the surplus for the year would be some \$560,000 mainly due to the mitigation agreement with NZTA negotiated by Mr Klee, and that Council had operated within its overall budget constraints.

Councillor Annan asked whether, as stated in the accounts, Mr Flower had been offered reparation for a game offence. Mr Wilson replied that reparation is no longer being offered and thus Mr Flower had been offered diversion.

It was moved;

that the CE Bimonthly report and Financial Statements be accepted.

Annan/Cocks CARRIED

7. OSH REPORT:

The OSH report for October 2018 was tabled.

8. GOVERNANCE POLICY REVIEW:

The Governance Policy Review was tabled.

It was moved;

that all existing policies be reaffirmed.

Smith/Annan CARRIED

9. NZF&GC MEETING 21-22 SEPTEMBER 2018:

Councillor Sherrard summarised the draft minutes of the recent NZF&GC meeting.

Discussion ensued on the current audits being carried out on the North Canterbury, Central South Island and Hawkes Bay Councils.

Ben Moore left the meeting at 1.40pm.

Discussion followed on the role of the NZ Council. Concerns raised by Councillors included:

- The lack of transparency due to the overuse of Public Excluded sessions
- The lack of communication from the NZ Council; for example, no explanation had been provided as to why Council's funding application had been refused.
- Martin Taylor's comments that structural changes were required to the entire Fish and Game organisation.

After extensive discussion, Councillors agreed that the basis of any such review should be the autonomy of the regions as stated in the Conservation Act. Councillors supported a review of the levy system, and of current regional and national staffing levels.

It was moved;

that the NZ Council be informed of the concerns of the Auckland/Waikato Council over the lack of transparency, poor communications with regions, and the proposed structural review.

Cocks/Williams CARRIED

10. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Mr Dyer updated Councillors on the enhancement project on the North Emmett wetland which is being funded by Synlait.

Councillor Kerr advised that the Te Kauwhata F&G club had gone into abeyance with some \$22,000 in funds that were currently managed by Mr D. Teklenberg on behalf of the club. Councillors agreed that the funds could be transferred to the Land & Water Habitat Trust to be spent on wetlands in the Te Kauwhata area.

Councillor Howard spoke on the threat of trout farming and Councillors agreed that momentum was growing for another push for it to be legalised.

Mr Klee on behalf of the field staff thanked retiring Councillors, Brendon Smith and Craig Carey for their support over the last three years.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 2.30pm.