

# AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



**Minutes of a Meeting of Council**  
**held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton**  
**on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2022 commencing at 11:00am.**

**PRESENT:**

**Chairman:** N. Juby.

**Councillors:** D. du Preez, G. Dickey, M. Barker, C. Sherrard, P. Shaw, B. Barnes (by Zoom),  
G. Ralph (by Zoom).

**Staff:** B. Wilson.

**1. APOLOGIES:**

T. Clark, D. Cocks, G. Annan, D. Klee, A. Daniel, J. Dyer.

It was moved;

**that apologies be accepted.**

**du Preez/Dickey – CARRIED**

**2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:**

None declared.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF 26<sup>th</sup> February and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022:**

Councillor Barnes recommended that “Apologies” should be included in the minutes for the Public Excluded Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March.

Councillor Ralph suggested adding a paragraph at the end of the February minutes stating that Council subsequently went on a field trip to Lake Waikare and the Whangamarino Weir.

It was moved;

**that the minutes of the previous meetings of 26<sup>th</sup> February and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022 as amended be accepted as true and correct records.**

**Sherrard/Barker – CARRIED**

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

Nil.

## 5. COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Nil

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

Several Councillors commented that it had been a good breeding season and there appeared to be a lot of birds around. But Councillor Sherrard suggested that perhaps ducks were congregating in the comparatively few wetlands that still held water.

Councillor Ralph advised that there would be a huge increase in maize costs later in the year, but he was likely to have a surplus and could provide maize for the banding programme. The Chairman expressed his appreciation to Councillor Ralph for this offer.

Councillor Barnes reported that he had observed a car parked in front of the gate at the Stone Jug Road property and recommended that a sign be placed on the gate to warn people from parking there. Mr Wilson replied that signs had recently been purchased for this purpose.

Councillor Ralph highlighted the 400 new entries to the banding database, noting that these were captive-reared mallards, and thus the return rate for such releases had improved significantly.

Mr Wilson updated Councillors on the Waikato District Plan, advising that Council had joined the following appeals to the Environment Court.

- **Ward Demolition:** Oppose. The applicant is seeking to reverse the WDC decision to disallow the rezoning of 2 sites at Meremere, comprising approximately 56 hectares, from Rural Zone to Heavy Industrial Zone.
- **Middlemiss Farms:** Support. The applicant is seeking to reverse the WDC decision to remove conservation lot provisions for the protection, maintenance and enhancement of Significant Natural Areas, especially wetlands.
- **Department of Conservation:** Support. The applicant is seeking to reverse WDC decisions on conservation lots, biodiversity offsetting, and Significant Natural Areas.
- **Federated Farmers:** Support. The applicant is seeking to reverse the WDC decision to remove conservation lot provisions.
- **Federated Farmers:** Oppose: The applicant is seeking to remove all provisions for Significant Natural Areas except when verified by experts from field visits.

The Chairman thanked staff for their efforts on Healthy Rivers.

It was moved;

**that the Chief Executive's bimonthly report and Financial Statements be accepted.**

**Barker/Sherrard – CARRIED**

## **7. OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2022/23:**

Mr Wilson introduced the Operational Work Plan (OWP) and budget for 2022/23 advising that the Plan was used as the template for the Annual Report and thus the Auditor spent considerable effort auditing both the financials and the objectives/results. Mr Wilson advised that if additional projects were added then it was equally important to remove projects considered redundant.

Councillor Barnes advised that he often saw anglers fishing illegally in the Auckland lakes. Mr Wilson replied that they were probably fishing for koi, and that rangers had reported a high compliance rate for fishing licences in the Auckland area.

Several Councillors recommended that there should be more visible presence by Fish & Game in the field. Mr Wilson agreed but that there were issues with the training of new honorary rangers due to Covid and the extensive Health & Safety requirements, and consequently there hadn't been training courses for some time in the North Island.

Councillors raised their concerns that costs were rising rapidly; for example, we could expect to see large increases in maize, roundup and fuel over the next year.

The Chairman considered that there should be greater emphasis on access in the OWP.

It was moved;

**that OWP includes an objective that we secure one new permanent access point per year.**

**Barker/de Preez – CARRIED**

The Chairman also recommended that the OWP includes more emphasis on increasing duck numbers. Mr Wilson cautioned that such an objective alone could have unforeseen consequences, but that it was already a broad theme throughout the plan.

It was moved;

**that project 1.2.5 be amended to include the word “encouraged”.**

**Barker/Ralph – CARRIED**

Councillor Barnes questioned whether it was worthwhile continuing with “Both Barrels” and “Reel Life”. He suggested that efforts should concentrate on other forms of social media. Mr Wilson replied that these were national initiatives, part of the national publicity programme. He agreed to ask NZ Council for the readership data for both. Councillors agreed that more emphasis on social media was desirable.

Councillor Barnes asked whether Dr Daniel still intended to stock Quarry Lake twice a year and whether it was worth the expense given that he had rarely seen anglers fishing these waters. Mr Wilson replied that angler usage was currently being assessed as part of the National Angler Survey, but he understood that the fishery was successful.

It was moved;

**that the following funding increases be applied for:**

Salaries (CPI only)	\$34,778
Fish releases	\$9,000
Council land	\$10,500
Office equipment	\$1,000
General equipment	\$1,000
Vehicle fuel	\$5,000
Insurance	\$1,000

**Barker/Ralph – CARRIED**

#### **8. STRUCTURAL REVIEW UPDATE:**

The Chairman expressed his concerns over the Regional Structural Review and recommended that Council commissions an independent review.

Councillor Ralph emphasised that a national conference was required so that governors could discuss the issues and move forward.

Councillor Barnes considered the Structural Review just one step in a particular journey and that Council should step up and make it work nationally. He emphasised that licence holders didn't care what region they fished in.

Councillor du Preez opposed any change to the regional boundaries for Auckland/Waikato, as we could manage the upper Whanganui better than anyone else.

The Chairman reminded Councillors that they had only three weeks to consider the new recommendations. He believed a much longer period to consider the report was required and more information on the potential options and impacts.

It was moved;

**that Council allocated \$15,000 for an external consultant to peer review the report on the Regional Structural Review.**

**Dickey/Sherrard – CARRIED**

The Chairman agreed to talk to the other Chairs about joint funding.

Councillor Sherrard strongly opposed the changes recommended in the Report due to the loss of local representation and servicing to licence holders. Councillor du Preez agreed and emphasized that a sense of belonging was important. Councillor Barker also agreed that local representation was important.

## **9. PRESSURE SENSITIVE FISHERIES:**

The NZ Council report on Pressure Sensitive Fisheries was discussed. The Chairman observed that there were no fisheries in the Auckland/Waikato region that met the definition of a pressure sensitive fisheries; however, he suggested that the scope of 'controlled access fishery' could be expended to allow for controlled management of a range of waters for objectives other than maximizing fishing satisfaction. An example would be controlling access across private land to reduce the inconvenience to a landowner that could occur with unfettered public access.

Councillor Barnes reminded councilors that he had already submitted written comments on the report.

It was moved;

**that the written comments by Councillor Barnes on the Pressure Sensitive Fisheries report be supported by Council.**

**Sherrard/Barnes – CARRIED**

## **10. ACCESS TO TROUT RIVERS:**

It was agreed that this issue had already been extensively discussed under previous agenda items.

It was moved;

**that in proposed district plan proceedings, and where possible elsewhere, Council advocates for the right of landowners to receive an additional title for placing covenants across private land to allow public access to rivers, lakes and wetlands.**

**du Preez/Sherrard – CARRIED**

## **11. OSH UPDATES:**

It was moved;

**that the Osh report to be accepted.**

**Shaw/Dickey – CARRIED**

## **12. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

The letter from John Sumich, Habitat Te Henga Project co-ordinator, was tabled. He was requesting whether Council could assist with the project by funding predator traps.

Councillor Barker questioned why Council continues ownership of this wetland given that it doesn't have any public access and is too far from any major hunting area to contribute large number of ducks. Councillor Ralph disagreed noting that the extensive wetlands on the north Manukau Heads produced large numbers of Grey Ducks that dispersed widely. Mr Wilson emphasised that there were significant advantages for Council in owning part of the most important wetland in the Auckland City region.

General discussion followed over predator traps and how such activities should be encouraged by landowners and licence holders.

It was moved;

**that Council provide funding to the Habitat Te Henga project for two AT220 traps.**

**Dickey/Shaw – CARRIED**

Correspondence was tabled from Troy Downs, Piggott Wetland President, and Grant Mackey, President Franklin Acclimatisation Society regarding tenure of ponds 1 and 5 in the Piggott Wetland.

The ponds were balloted out every 3 years by the Society, but Troy Downs considered that the ponds were in a “pretty disgusting state” as the hunters who had been successful in the ballot did not put any effort into maintaining their ponds in the final year of tenure. Mr Downs recommended that the ponds are reballoted and had ongoing tenure.

Grant Mackay agreed that pond 1 is overgrown but considered that there was nothing wrong with pond 5. He stated that the ponds were up for ballot again for 2023 season. He agreed for the need to make changes to tenure and enforce its guidelines, and they were considering that would be a bond of say \$1500-2000. Then if there is a breach of tenure there is money to pay a contractor to put things right. At moment all that is needed is spraying and they can ensure that this is done. In terms of attending working bees, they would be happy to replace the ballot holders if they did not attend 2 block working bees in a row without a valid reason.

Councillors agreed to support Mr Mackay’s recommendations and expected the work on pond 1 to be carried out soon.

It was moved;

**that the issue with the Piggott Wetland is tabled for the June meeting.**

**Sherrard/Shaw – CARRIED**

Councillor Dickey suggested that there were similar issues with all Council’s wetlands.

It was moved;

**that the Chairman of each wetland association be asked whether they had issues/problems arising from tenure and pondholders not maintaining and/or marking up ponds.**

**Sherrard/Shaw – CARRIED**

Mr Wilson noted that John Dyer regularly audited Council’s wetlands. Mr Dyer was currently carrying out an audit of the lower Waikato Islands. He was also investigating unauthorised earthworks in the Aka Aka wetland.

Councillor Ralph thanked John Dyer and David Klee for their assistance with the recent issues he had arising from Harrier Hawks predated on domestic waterfowl.

Councillor Ralph expressed his concern that the current Regional Structural Review process could result in the sale of Council's properties and thus licence holders losing access. He suggested that some form of covenant should be imposed on the titles

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 3:13pm.

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