

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton,
on Saturday 8th April 2017 commencing at 11.00am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: D. Cocks

Councillors: G. Annan, C. Carey, W. Howard, N. Juby, P. Shaw, C. Sherrard, B. Smith, S. Smith.

Staff: B. Wilson, A. Sintenie, J. Dyer (1.30pm).

Visitors: P. Hardy (DoC), P. Dawson (1.30pm), T. Mills (1.30pm).

1. APOLOGIES

A. Kerr, M. Young, E. Williamson, D. Klee, A. Daniel, M. Davis, R. Tyson.

It was moved;

that the apologies be accepted.

S. Smith/Annan CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 11 FEBRUARY 2017:

Mr Wilson informed Councillors that Katie Gibb was still analysing the blood samples taken from mallard ducks and that the research report would not be available for about 12 months.

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of 11 February 2017 be accepted as a true and correct record.

B. Smith/Juby CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

None.

5 CORRESPONDENCE:

A letter was tabled from the Waikato Regional Council to the Department of Conservation regarding the regional council serving notice of its intention to formally review all conditions of the resource consent for the Whangamarino Weir. The consent for the weir was held jointly by the Department and Fish & Game.

Councillors expressed their disappointment that the regional council was initiating a review during the Healthy Rivers Plan Change and at a time when both Fish & Game and DoC were actively working with the regional council and local landowners to produce a catchment management plan for the Whangamarino Wetland.

The potential costs involved with the review was discussed by the meeting and it was moved;

that \$50,000 be allocated from restricted funds for the Whangamarino Weir Review.

B. Smith/S. Smith CARRIED

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

Mr Wilson expressed his concerns with the current system of temporary paper tags and especially the presence of an expiry date, which had led to a large number of maimai disputes. He suggested that with the trend towards electronic licenses, tags could be replaced with a registration system.

Councillors discussed the use of electronic licenses and noted potential difficulties due to:

- Lack of reception for mobile phones in many areas
- Privacy issues
- Inability to charge mobile phones in the field.

Councillors congratulated staff on producing an excellent preseason game newsletter.

Mr Wilson updated Councillors on the financial situation to date. Initial game licence sales were encouraging but fish licence sales would be down by about 2.5% - 3%, which was not unexpected given the appalling weather over summer.

Councillor Sherrard informed that the application to the Fish & Game National Legal Fund for \$175,000 to fund the Healthy Rivers campaign had been approved by the NZF&G Council.

It was moved;

that the CE Bimonthly report and Financial Statements be accepted.

Annan/S. Smith CARRIED

7. HAURAKI MARINE SPATIAL PLAN:

Mr Wilson emphasised to Councillors the potential benefits arising from this non statutory plan including a commitment by regional authorities to build a large number of wetlands over the next ten years.

8. WAIKATO HEALTHY RIVERS:

Mr Wilson introduced Council's submission on the Healthy Rivers Plan change noting that similar submissions had been lodged by other environmental agencies and also by some primary sector groups.

Several Councillors expressed their bewilderment over the recent news release by Federated Farmers criticising Fish & Game for not being more involved in the management of Canada geese and koi carp.

It was moved;

that the Healthy Rivers report be received.

Juby/S. Smith CARRIED

9. COUNCILLOR FIELD TRIP:

Two changes were suggested to the itinerary:

- Visit Cathcart wetland rather than the Dean Wetland
- A packed lunch rather than a sit down meal.

10. DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2017/18 BUDGET AND OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN:

Mr Wilson introduced the 2017/18 Budget and Operational Work Plan. After discussion it was moved;

that the 2017/18 Budget and Operational Work Plan of \$777,319 (not including applications of \$45,000) be approved.

Annan/Shaw CARRIED

11. OSH REPORT:

Mr Wilson presented the OSH Report noting that two bridges in the Aka Aka Wetland had been repaired, and timber had been purchased for a new bridge in the Blythen Wetland.

It was moved;

that the OSH Report for April 2017 be accepted.

12. NZF&GC MEETING 24 - 26 MARCH 2017:

Councillor Sherrard reviewed the NZF&GC meeting of 24-26 March 2017.

Councillor Sherrard was asked whether he thought that the large amount of time that the NZ Council spent in committee was justified. Councillor Sherrard replied that the issues discussed in committee could not be discussed in public due to their confidential nature involving privacy issues.

13. LICENCE SALES YTD AND LICENCE ANALYSIS.

Mr Robert Sowman's report on licence sales was discussed with Councillors considering the following recommendations, after Mr Wilson had read out Dr Daniel's written comments.

1. That the March 2017 licence sales tables and licence system update be received for information.
Agreed
2. That the licence categories and fee ratios remain unchanged for the 2017/18 financial year.
Opposed because the fee ratios needed to be adjusted to compensate for the reduction in licence revenue
3. Regional Fish and Game Councils be consulted on support for:
 - a. Imposing a limit on the number of consecutive days that a day licence can be issued for, with the proposed limit being three-days and not renewable for a further five working days.
Agreed
 - b. Broadening the use of designated fisheries as a useful management tool in the promotion of more whole season (including non-resident) licenses.
Opposed
 - c. Changing the name of the "Adult whole season" licence to "Premium" licence with an expiry date of September 30.
Opposed because the whole season is not the most expensive licence, and thus it was confusing.
 - d. Permitting all named people to use the family licence, i.e. primary, secondary and named children, as a fish-alone licence.
Agreed
 - e. Change the name from Day or 24 Hour licence to "Have-a-go" licence.
Opposed

4. That ways to grow participation rates become part of a proposed marketing strategy.
Opposed because it failed to take into consideration the decline in rural population and the shift from Europeans to Asian immigrants.

Concern was expressed by Councillor Juby that many trout fisheries were already heavily fished by anglers and he questioned whether we needed to increase the promotion of our river fisheries.

Councillor S. Smith requested that Mr Sowman be asked to produce graphs in future reports that are decipherable when photocopied in black & white.

It was moved;

that Mr Robert Sowman's report on licence sales be received, and Mr Sowman be informed on whether his recommendations are approved or opposed by Council.

S. Smith/Juby CARRIED

Council rose for lunch at 1.00pm and resumed at 1.40pm.

Anna Sintenie left the meeting. Mr Tom Mills and Mr Phil Dawson joined the meeting.

14. OSPRI 1080 PRESENTATION:

Mr Phil Dawson (OSPRI) gave a presentation on the use of 1080 in NZ and their proposed programme for the use of 1080 in the Williamson Wetland. He noted that the programme in the Whangamarino Wetland should eliminate the threat of TB from the area. The proposal included the use of bait stations along the existing tracks in the Williamson Wetland, including an increased in the number of existing bait stations. However away from the tracks the wetland was inaccessible by foot and thus it was impractical to carry out a ground based programme. Therefore Mr Dawson stated that only aerial control could be used away (100m) from the tracks. Both Mr Dyer and Councillor Cocks agreed that access away from the tracks was impractical and possibly dangerous.

Mr Dawson stated that the advantages of the 1080 programme would be:

1. Removal of predators
2. Probably the last time that control would be needed to stop TB in the Whangamarino.
3. Waikato could move to a TB free state
4. Possible contribution by OSPRI to the existing F&G bait station and trapping programme.

The Chairman reminded Councillors of Council's existing policy to oppose the aerial application of 1080. Any change to this policy could not be implemented at the current meeting but would need to be agended for another council meeting.

It was agreed that Council's policy on the aerial use of 1080 in areas where foot access is impractical be agended for the June 2017 meeting.

15. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Councillor Shaw asked whether cats kill stoats and ferrets. There was general agreement that cats would kill stoats and ferrets but they were not preferred prey.

Mr Wilson reported that he has been contacted by Mr Stuart Muir about the Franklin Acclimatisation Society purchasing the bait stations currently supplied by TB Free NZ in the Waikato Delta and continuing the predator control programme. Mr Wilson suggested that Council could contribute towards the cost of the baits.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 2.50pm and wished Councillors all the best for the upcoming game season.