

Minutes

**Environmental Reference Group
Wellington City Council, 101 Wakefield Street
Room: Committee Room 2 - Korimako
Monday, 9th December 2013, 5:30-7:30 pm**

Howard Markland - Chairing

Present

Howard Markland (Chair)
Alina Siegfried
Matt Barclay
Peter Gilberd
Charles Barrie
Claire Graeme
Paula Warren
Sea Rotmann
Alex Hannant

City Councillors

Iona Pannett

Apologies

Nick Crocker
Jane O'Loughlin
Bev Abbott
Sophie Mormede
Phil Hancock

WCC Liaison Officers

Graeme Shimmin

WCC Presenters

Nigel Taptiklis - Policy Advisor

1. Minutes of the last meeting were adopted.

2. Introductions between group & new councillors / dates for 2014

Cllr Iona Pannett introduced herself to the group and explained that she would be alternating with Cllr Ritchie to attend meetings. Cllr Ritchie continues as the lead Councillor appointed to the group. Cllr Pannett explained her interest in the group and is keen to see them look at issues from a wider perspective (than just the natural environment), including the built environment.

2. Feedback from meet and greet

Howard provided an overview of the recent Meet & Greet between the advisory groups and Councillors. Most attendees found the conversations useful with other advisory groups members and it was interesting to see their presentations and hear what they do.

It was commented that ERG came across as the poor relation with regards to number of meetings a year etc. A discussion was held around this and it was felt this limited the scope of the group and what could be achieved. The group felt that the frequency of meetings should be increased if Council is serious about the group.

Action: Cllr Pannett will raise this issue with the Mayor and the Governance, Finance and Planning committee to see if meeting frequency can be increased.

This is likely to be looked at once the ToR for advisory groups are reviewed, although the timescale for this is unclear. An update has been requested.

It was noted that there seemed to be some consistent challenges with all the groups, even with more meeting time.

A suggestion was made around a workshop between advisory group members, **Action:** Graeme will feed this back to other group liaison officers and see if there is appetite for something.

It was suggested that the group could create stronger linkages with Youth Council (YC), e.g. if they are doing a piece of work, could ask YC for its perspective.

It was commented on that it was disappointing not many Councillors or ELT members lasted long into the session.

3. Co-Chair election

Bev was nominated as co-chair for the group and will be asked if she wishes to accept the role.

4. New committee structure & ERG effectiveness

Cllr Pannett gave a brief overview of the new committee structure and commented that as chair of the Environment Committee she can request that officers engage with ERG. A forward programme for the committee is being developed, which ERG could feed into.

Action: Cllr Pannett to suggest/ask officers to organise a workshop to help develop the Environment Committee forward programme. Bev and Paula were nominated to represent ERG interests.

It was suggested that the standard template could be used by officers reporting or presenting to Advisory Groups, to save time and improve consistency.

Action: Paula Warren provide example of DOC sheet? Howard to look at a draft briefing sheet for officers reporting to ERG.

There was a discussion around how effective members felt ERG currently was. Members ranked their personal opinion of the groups effectiveness on a scale of 1-10 (10 being v effective). Average result was 5.7 (votes were 7,7,7,6,7,6,4,3/4, and 4).

Reasons for this included the small number of meetings a year, i.e. not enough time allocated to get involved with issues properly, concerns over process and timings of meetings, officers not using ERG meetings to best effect, and lack of pro-active approaches to the group.

The majority of members felt there had been a shift in how the group was perceived and there were less officers showing up to just present/talk to the group, and more were coming wanting feedback and input from the group. It is hoped that the Terms of Reference review will allow for some of these issues to be addressed.

It was raised that if the number of meetings a year are increased, support/resource for the group will also need to be increased accordingly. It was also noted that frequent changes of the liaison officer attached to ERG is affecting continuity (Four changes of people in 2 years).

5. Climate Change / Sea Level Rise workshop/exercise

Chris Cameron gave his apologies but is keen to hear the groups views.

Update: Chris left Council at the end of 2013.

See feedback attached.

6. Transport Update – Dec 2013

Projects

National War Memorial Park and Buckle Street Tunnel

The trench for the new road is complete and construction of the side walls for the underpass has commenced. Completion date is still forecast for mid to late 2014. The design of the National War Memorial Park has been completed and has been costed. Details surrounding a memorial funded by the Australian Government are being finalised.

Basin Reserve Flyover

NZTA has lodged applications for consent through the EPA Board of Inquiry. The Board of Inquiry is currently going through pre hearing process with the hearing to commence early in February 2014. WCC resolved to “support in part” and will be asking the Board to grant consents but with conditions over mitigation.

Strategy & Planning

Passenger Transport Spine Study

The report focussing on light rail, bus rapid transit and bus priority has been released and submissions have been heard by a sub committee of the Regional Land Transport Committee. A report back recommending spine and mode preferences will be considered by the Regional Land Transport Committee on 3 March 2014.

Transport Strategy

A refresh of the current Transport Strategy 2006 is continuing. As intended this will be run in parallel with a refresh of the Urban Growth Strategy pulling both documents together under the umbrella of a Spatial

Plan. To be able to give effect to the objectives and outcomes in the 2015/18 Long Term Plan this process needs to be completed by June/July 2014.

7. Next Meeting

Date to be advised.