

Environmental Reference Group Meeting
1 May 2006
Minutes

Present:

Councillor Celia Wade-Brown (Chair)
Gavin Bruce (for Ruth Paul)
Mike Ennis
Debbie Firestone
Jennie Francke
Chris Horne
Ian Hunter
Dave Kettell
Tushara Kodikara
Ian Shearer
Nicola Shorten (GWRC)
Jim Ebenhoh (WCC Strategic Advisor)
Jack Morris (WCC Treaty Relations)
Mike Oates (WCC Parks and Gardens)
Brian Hannah (WCC Planning, Performance and Research)
Maria Archer (WCC Infrastructure)
Stavros Michael (WCC Infrastructure)

Apologies:

Ralph Chapman
Andy Hollings
Charity Stuart

Draft Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP)

Brian Hannah (WCC Planning, Performance and Research) showed a video on the Draft LTCCP.

Comments from ERG members on the LTCCP video included:

- Chris said the proposed growth spine is a good idea, and that provisions of the Quality Partnership Agreement (QPA) with Stagecoach (e.g. bus lanes) should be mentioned as well.
- Tushara asked whether Wellington really is “zero-waste”. Councillor Wade-Brown said Council has an Implementation Plan for its Solid Waste Strategy that is due for review.
- Chris suggested that future videos should show images other than the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, including Otari-Wilton’s Bush, other reserves, and private protected land.
- Ian S. asked if WCC will be doing more voluntary water metering. Maria Archer (WCC Infrastructure) said the Wellington Water Management Plan which is under way regionally will address this issue.
- Tushara asked what WCC’s definition of “sustainability” is. Councillor Wade-Brown said this builds on Council’s adopted Sustainable Development framework, but that this definition could be the topic for a future meeting.

Brian said that the LTCCP will have a monitoring framework consisting of: performance measures for Council activities and city indicators for Council’s desired citywide outcomes. Zach Rissel (WCC Policy) said that the CCP-NZ goals for climate protection will be similarly divided into Council goals and community goals.

Biodiversity Action Plan

Amber Bill (WCC Open Space and Recreation Planning) gave a presentation on the background and process for developing a Biodiversity Action Plan. She outlined the legal and policy rationale for a WCC role, including the Local Government Act, the Resource Management Act, the Reserves Act, and the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy. She said it will consist of visions, goals and objectives, and prioritisation of specific projects (including filling gaps as well as prioritising existing projects like pest control, stream protection, and community greening). It will draw on existing Council plans and policies like Capital Spaces (Open Space Strategy), Wellington Wet & Wild (Bush & Streams Restoration Plan), and various reserves plans.

Amber outlined the timeline as follows:

- Steering Group to be set up
- Public discussion paper out in July-August.
- Ready for implementation in June 2007.

Amber said she would like ongoing involvement from the ERG and asked the group how it would like to participate.

Chris and Jennie volunteered to be on the Steering Group. The ERG as a whole would still like to see an early draft for comment and is free to give comments directly to Amber (amber.bill@wcc.govt.nz or 801-3655).

Other comments from ERG members included:

- Ian S. asked what timeline the Plan will cover (eg how long into the future). Amber said this has yet to be decided.
- Gavin said a lot of biodiversity protection is occurring on private land.
- Debbie pointed out cross-linkages to other Council efforts like stream protection.
- Chris asked whether this project will involve the QEII Trust, whether it will link to the review of the Regional Policy Statement, and whether it will reference international treaties. Amber replied affirmatively in every case.

Amber also briefly mentioned the review of the Otari-Wilton's Bush Management Plan and the draft Open Space Access Implementation Plan.

Report Back to Council

Jim said that ERG was scheduled to give a presentation to a Councillor "Elected Members Session" on 16 May, reporting back on ERG activity over the past year. Debbie and Ian H. agreed to help Jim with this presentation. Jim said he would circulate the draft presentation to all ERG members beforehand.

ERG members identified some highlights of the past year, including expansion and re-invigoration of the group, and incorporation of members' comments in the draft Environmental Strategy and LTCCP. Jennie pointed out the group's potentially important role in reviewing environmental aspects of transport issues, and Councillor Wade-Brown explained how there is no external "Urban Planning" or "Transport" reference groups akin to the ERG.

Planning ERG's Agenda and Meetings: Next Six Months

Jim highlighted the possible range of topics.

Councillor Wade-Brown suggested that topics for each meeting be grouped around a certain theme (such as waste), and the group agreed this would be helpful, in part to encourage attendance by those who are particularly interested in a theme.

The group agreed that meeting every 4 to 6 weeks is a good frequency.

Chris asked if the ERG could comment on non-WCC documents, such as those of the GWRC or the Department of Conservation. Councillor Wade-Brown said this would be most appropriate to inform WCC's own submission on those documents, and that there could be opportunities for information-sharing between these external agencies and the ERG.

Ian S. said it would be good to get the perspectives of Maori and other community groups. Jack Morris (WCC Treaty Relations) said the Otari-Wilton's Bush Management Plan has been incorporating Maori perspectives. He said that the Wellington Tenth Trust, in conjunction with Te Runanga O Te Upoko O Te Ika, is preparing an Iwi Management Plan which includes a statement on resource management matters. Ngati Toa is also in the initial phases of developing such a plan. Jack suggested that it would be good for the ERG to have a meeting with Liz Melish from Tenth Trust and Miria Pomare from Ngati Toa.

New Members

Jim mentioned that there are two vacancies due to the recent resignations of Victor Anderlini and Rex Gillman, and that there may be a third if Andy Hollings resigns due to his difficulty in attending meetings.

The group suggested that Jim and Councillor Wade-Brown look at the list of applicants from last year first and come up with a recommendation.

Ian S. said there is value in fixed term appointments, despite the current Terms of Reference which refer to indefinite terms, because a fixed term would provide an opportunity for periodic renewal of the group.

Next Meeting

The group agreed to meet on Monday, 12 June, from 5:30-7:30 pm at the WCC offices at 101 Wakefield Street (Committee Room Two, Ground Floor).