

Minutes of the Taharoa Domain Governance Committee

Monday 18 May 2009

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Taharoa Domain Governance Committee Meeting

Monday 18 May 2009

1 Karakia

1.1 Present

Messrs R Parore (Chair), T Birch, Councillors B Burnett, J Geange

1.2 In Attendance

Community Spaces Manager, Governance Manager

1.3 Acknowledgement of Public

The Chairperson acknowledged those members of the public present.

2 Confirmation of Minutes

2.1 Minutes of Meeting 23 February 2009

A copy of the minutes was circulated.

Resolved Birch/Geange

That the minutes of the Taharoa Domain Governance Committee meeting of 23 February 2009, as circulated, be confirmed.

2.2 Matters Arising

2.2.1 Selected Removal of Old Trees

The Community Spaces Manager was asked if this process had commenced and he advised that he had yet to look at the trees and compile a costed programme identifying worst areas first. Mr Birch asked that he be involved in the process.

3 General

3.1 Kumara Triathlon 2009

The 24th Kumara Triathlon was held at Taharoa Domain on 4 April 2009. The annual event saw approximately 180 contestants swim, bike and run in and around the Domain. The event was a great success, with weather conditions ideal.

Sport Northland thanked the Taharoa Domain Governance Committee for the use of the Domain and the help of the Domain Camp Ground Manager in ensuring the day went without any problems. Numbers this year for the Triathlon were down on last year however Sport Northland was committed to continue to run the event with next year being a milestone year. The event will celebrate 25 years. Sport Northland would like to continue to use the Domain for this event and sought support from the Committee for next year's event in April 2010. The format would be the same as had been held the last two years.

Resolved Geange/Birch

That the Taharoa Domain Governance Committee permits Sport Northland to run the Kumara Triathlon in its current form in April 2010.

Reason for the decision

This will enable Sport Northland to plan ahead for the event.

3.2 Water Pump Pine Beach

The water pump at Pine Beach Camp Ground broke down two days before the running of the Kumara Triathlon on 4 April 2009. This pump had been identified in a report by Duffill Watts and received by the Committee as needing to be upgraded because of its age.

This meant that the pump had to be replaced with an electric pump which ensured the continued supply of water to both the toilet and shower block along with camp ground taps. At this stage no accounts had been received for this work which included the wiring in of the pump and its pumping in. Costs associated with this work were expected to be mileage, wiring and placement with a temporary pump. This did not include the removal of the old pump and investigation into its repair. Initial discussions had indicated however that repairs to the old pump may be expensive and not be a long term fix. The Camp Ground Manager indicated that problems had been ongoing with the old pump which had required him to get the fire brigade in to fill the tank on more than one occasion.

The Community Spaces Manager was asked to obtain costs in respect of an automated electric pump.

Resolved Birch/Geange

That the Taharoa Domain Governance Committee receives the information regarding the water pump at Pine Beach and that final costs are brought back to the Committee once these are known.

3.3 Camp Ground Fees

Currently camping fees for Taharoa Domain were \$10.00 per adult and \$5.00 per child, per night. Children under three years were free. There was also a booking fee of \$3.00 per person on top of the camping fee (this being a one off payment). This fee had been in place for several years and reflected the wish for it to remain a wilderness type camping experience and affordable to families. There was no fee structure in place for self-contained motor home / campervans that visited the area. They paid the same fee per person per night but had no need to use the facilities provided. The sites at both camp grounds had only the bare minimum with no hot water showers provided or power to any of the campsites. Despite the lack of these services, the camp grounds continued to be popular with visitors to the Domain and available to everyone. Day trippers to the Domain were on the increase and the camping season was longer because of it. It was timely to review the current fee structure now that the summer season was over as any change can be put in place well before the 2009/2010 season.

Pine Beach and Promenade Point Camp Grounds continued to be the only source of income for works both within and outside the camp grounds. The Committee needed to look at increasing camping fees to continue to provide a good camping experience to those who stayed at the camp grounds. Any increase in camp ground fees going back into the camp grounds itself with improvements needed in the form of more picnic tables, upgrading the children's play area, camp ground drainage, water supply, tree planting and tree removal. Both camp ground areas were also open to day visitors who were able to use the facilities whilst not contributing to the payment of them. This had an impact on maintenance costs. The Pine Beach Camp Ground had seen major improvements to the toilet facility with the installation and commissioning of a new wastewater treatment plant and power to the toilet block and Camp Ground Manager's office. However, Promenade Point Camp Ground had not been improved at all. The current toilet block was in need of replacing because of its age and condition and the camp ground itself had nothing else to offer the camper that improved their experience, apart from its location and environment.

The camp grounds had gone from strength to strength since being taken back under Council's control and with the appointment of a full time Camp Ground Manager and another person to undertake bookings directly and help with camp ground maintenance, however, both camp grounds continued to struggle to improve and receive upgrades where needed. A look at other wilderness camp grounds of a similar type throughout Northland had highlighted the following:

- Department of Conservation Camp Grounds in Northland range from \$7.50 - \$10.00 per adult per night and \$3.50 - \$5.00 per child up to fifteen years per night, no booking fee. Most sites provided basics only with composting toilets and were generally more remote.
- The Mangawhai Heads Camp Ground, also a Kaipara District Council camp ground, charged \$14 per adult per night for powered sites, \$12 per adult per night for non powered sites and children under 14 years \$6, per night (no booking fee).

The Taharoa Domain Camp Ground sites continued to be a very popular site for visitors to the area and with the current economic climate was a very cheap way to holiday. A small increase in camping fees and the removal of the booking fee would not reduce the popularity of the Domain and still remain in line with other camp grounds of this type throughout the country.

There was a general discussion centring around the existing situation at the Domain which was that the camp ground fees collected were expected to fund all works in the Domain. This was not practical and did not take into account that two thirds of the users were day trippers who paid nothing. The Committee did not believe that day trippers should pay but did believe that the Council should contribute extra funding to meet the Domain's needs particularly given the high use the site received.

A letter received from Ms Libby Jones was tabled for consideration. It was to be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee in June together with this item for the Committee's consideration.

Resolution One Geange/Burnett

That the item "Camp Ground Fees" lie on the table pending the outcome of Council's deliberations in respect of the document Kaipara's Future - Working Together 2009/2019 and the submissions received.

Mr Parore (Chairperson) voted against the resolution.

Reason for the decision

The Committee wished to see if Council allocated any funds to the Taharoa Domain as part of the Council's deliberation process and submissions received in respect of *Kaipara's Future Working Together 2009/2019 (Long Term Council Community Plan)*, as this could impact on the Committee's decision.

Resolution Two Burnett/Birch

That Councillor Burnett prepares a report for the next meeting of the Taharoa Domain Governance Committee on a sliding scale fee for large groups wishing to use the Domain at off peak times and for a minimum of two days.

Reason for the decision

Councillor Burnett believed such groups were disadvantaged by the administration fee and as they were supervised by parents and/or teachers caused no problems for the Camp Manager. He also believed that the Committee could use such a tool as this to encourage large group off peak bookings.

3.4 Financial Reports 31 December 2008 and 31 March 2009

The Financial Reports to 31 December 2008 and 31 March 2009 were circulated.

It was noted the report of 31 December 2008 was tabled at the February 2009 meeting, however due to time constraints the Committee decided to have this report placed on the April 2009 agenda for discussion.

Note: April 2009 meeting rescheduled to 18 May 2009.

Resolved Birch/Geange

That the Taharoa Domain Financial Reports 31 December 2008 and 31 March 2009 be received.

3.5 Funding Opportunities

There was a general discussion centring around funding opportunities and the best way in which to access them. Of particular interest was the opportunity to support a community group in its efforts to obtaining funding through the Department of Conservation's Community Conservation Fund.

Resolved Burnett/Birch

That the Taharoa Governance Committee provides a Letter of Support to Kai Iwi Lakes Community Group (Friends of the Lakes) supporting it's application to the Department of Conservation's Community Conservation Fund for funding to enhance the native re-vegetation of Lake Kai Iwi within the Taharoa Domain.

3.6 Next Meeting : Monday 29 June 2009

The next meeting of the Taharoa Domain Governance Committee has been set for **Monday 29 June 2009 1pm** in the Committee room, Station Road, Dargaville.

Closure

The meeting closed at 1.50 pm.