



CHAIR'S REPORT

TO: Environment & Planning Committee

FROM: Michael Higgins, Chair

REFERENCE: S611

SUBJECT: **CHAIR'S REPORT – REPORT EP08/08/10** - Report prepared for meeting of 28 August

I have found it interesting over the past six weeks, that as we have continued to build a draft Long Term Council Community Plan, the Environment & Planning Dept is coming through with a 'Business As Usual' result. It indicates to me that Council is comfortable with our direction and the pace of achievement, although I acknowledge that it's probably driven by finance rather than results. It confirms my opinion that the planning consultants who roundly criticized the Council for delaying the 'operative status' for the TRMP, were out of line. They know full well the issues, difficulties and advantages of the decisions we as a Council have taken. I understand that staff are proceeding to achieve 'operative status' and at the same time are working to advise Council on submissions to the Richmond West Plan Change. With regard to that hearing, proposed dates have been set and Mr Markham will advise on those dates at this meeting.

A significant issue of public interest has been the report on the process used to remediate the Fruit Growers Chemical site. I have been involved in this issue from before the time Council agreed to take ownership of the property with a view to resolving the chemical contamination. Looking back, I have no regrets from a Council point of view. We cleared the site and set out to contain the contamination by sealing it off and making the whole of the property available for public use. This was opposed by environmental lobbyists who drove through the remediation option. Establishing that process and carrying it out has been difficult and flavoured by political activists of different persuasions, seeking to make a name for themselves. I acknowledge the trust and tolerance of residents involved, who understood the issues and were willing to work towards the end goal. I observed the contractors, project managers and compliance monitors as they set about their work and have no regrets. In my opinion they made every effort to get it right. I was and am aware of two health issues, and observed the efforts made to avoid the difficulty. I am satisfied with those efforts and hope that with the benefit of hindsight, the operators are given credit for those efforts. I am concerned to see that the wellbeing of Mapua is not further damaged during the coming election process as politicians throughout NZ seek to score political points. I want to make it clear that I have confidence in the actions and endeavors of TDC staff involved in this issue.

I attended a briefing on the proposed 'Emissions Trading Scheme' at West Yates in Nelson. Advice from the Cawthron Institute was presented. There are some hard realities in this proposal. As I see it, advocates for the scheme are knowingly steering New Zealand and the world towards a vegetarian diet. There was also an admission that carbon credits for forestry were of limited significance. I cannot see any good coming out of this and am of the opinion that it will lead to 'control of supply and demand' throughout our economy.

Earlier this year, staff member Joseph Thomas attended a Water Resources conference in Korea. I count it as an honour to the TDC that he was able to do that, and at my request he has provided comment on his trip. It is appended to the report.

As usual, there are interesting issues on the agenda today. Lets enjoy working through them.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Michael Higgins
Chair, Environment & Planning Committee

Korean Trip – J Thomas

I represented the New Zealand Hydrological Society (NZHS) in May 2008 at the Korean Water Resources Conference in my capacity as Chair of the International Liaison and Secretary of the NZHS. The NZHS paid the travel cost with the Korean's hosting me there. The conference was held in Gyeongju which is about a 4 hr train ride and located South East of Seoul the capital. Seoul itself has 9 million people with South Korea having a population of 48 million. Caught the high speed train from Seoul to Gyeongju and it hit 298 km/hr! The transport and broadband system in Korea is highly efficient. The conference had over 800 delegates with three concurrent sessions. One of the first day sessions was the international session which was the only English session. I chaired the session with Prof. Jeong. International papers included those from New Zealand (including me; who did a paper on the Waimea Water Augmentation Project), Japan, China and the Philippines. They had good trade displays with lots of technical equipment. I learnt a lot about water in Korea. Water use for community supply and irrigation is huge. The Korea Water Resources Corporation (K-Water) is a national body which manages the water resources. It manages 14 large multipurpose dams and various water treatment plants. Multipurpose dams serve use for domestic/industrial, irrigation, hydroelectricity, environmental and flood protection use. K-water also delivers bulk water for regions who may choose to treat the water themselves and onsell it. Irrigation water is fed from the dams through canal systems which then are used for growing rice, vegetables and shade and glass house crops. Korea produces a significant amount of food for itself and water is critical. Under Korean law only K-Water, the regional government or approved power company are allowed to build large dams. Hydrologically Korea is a mountainous country with steep running rivers. Most water use is from surface water and storage with groundwater use being less than 10 %. Annual water usage in Korea is 33.1 billion cubic metres of this 48% is for irrigation, 31 % for domestic/industrial use and 21 % for environmental flows. K-water manages all water in an integrated an automated way. I visited the K-water operations centre in Daejon and was impressed with their integrated state of the art on-line water management system for all of Korea. Also visited the Daecheong multipurpose dam and was amazed apart from the dam size (1490 million cubic metres storage, 72 m high, concrete gravity dam) – the recreation opportunities created around the dam face. I thoroughly enjoyed the trip learnt a lot and equally departed some of the local knowledge on water and management in New Zealand. Whilst in Korea they are excellent at doing large scale projects, they have still some away to go at the farm scale level. They were amazed to hear that all water permits in the Waimea Plains are metered at a farm scale and we have our own regional water management plans. I would like to acknowledge the TDC for providing the time to attend this conference.

J Thomas
Resource Scientist Water/Special Projects