

STAFF REPORT

TO: GB Community Board
FROM: Service Centres Manager
REFERENCE: E855
DATE: 1st February 2007
SUBJECT: February 2007 Report

Well, it's another new year again, so first of all, best wishes to Board members. Let's hope that the challenges for this year are all quality ones.

FROM LAST MONTH'S MEETING:

Kinsale Energy Descent Planning

Further to the Board's resolution for me to make enquiries on this matter, I have received an e-mail correspondence back from Rob Hopkins in Ireland who has recommended that we look at the following websites:

www.transitiontowns.org

The above web site shows how the various projects are working and unfolding.

Note that the reference to "transition towns" does imply discreet urban communities however there is one programme "Transition Penwith" which could be a more relatable example for Golden Bay.

<http://www.transitionpenwith.com>

Penwith is a district of Cornwall having an area of 30,356 hectares and population of 63,000. They are into the first step of the programme which is "raising awareness".

www.transitionculture.org

This site provides the 10 First Steps for a Transition Town initiative, which gives a feel for how the process is developing. Rob Hopkins has attempted to write these in a way that people can make and start.

I am attaching print-outs from some pages of the above websites.

Initial perusal indicates that if we are serious about getting involved with an energy descent/peak oil programme, that there will be a considerable amount of organization and work involved. The fact is that this is such a worthwhile initiative that the work involved should not be a detraction from initiating the programme. However, it would be clear that success must include buy-in and active participation from the wider Golden Bay community.

Apart from myself, other resources within Council to assist the Board are available and this would include Claire Webster, Environmental Education Officer. However, note that all Tasman District Council staff including Claire already have very busy schedules and their discretionary time is extremely limited.

I will be commenting further on possible strategy for this matter at the Board meeting.

One of the spin-offs regarding the above has been an e-mail received from Ro Piekarski, however his proposal which has been included in the Board information pack is more specific to civil defence issues in the Bay and I have referred the matter through to Jim Burrows, the Regional Emergency Management Officer.

Discretionary Funds

The Board's Discretionary Funds is a healthy \$4,536 dollars. As we are half way through the year some thoughts for projects to support may be worth considering.

Golden Bay A & P Show

Although I did not attend the Golden Bay A & P Show, it must have been extremely good as I received numerous comments, even in Motueka, about the event. There are a number of fantastic events happening throughout the District over the summer period and these provide a great showcase for both visitors and residents alike.

One of the things I have noticed at some events is the amount of waste and litter which often is created. Much of this is in the form of material that could be recycled, eg plastic bottles and aluminium cans. It may that the Board considers guidelines for event holders to minimise waste production and to maximise recycling.

Didymo

A particularly sad discovery has been finding Didymo in the Takaka River. This will have been the realization of a worst-case scenario for most people in the Bay and the need to exercise extreme caution to prevent transmission to other water sources in the Bay is now imperative. We all need to remind ourselves that even though we may not see any actual evidence of the “rock snot”, this does not mean to say that there might not be some of the cells in the water which are too small to see with the naked eye. Making sure that all gear, including vehicle wheels, animals, shoes, clothing is properly cleaned and treated before going to another water source must be adhered to if we are to have any chance at all of holding back the tide of this unwanted organism.

As of writing this report I have just been alerted to the news that the organism has been found as far down as the Kotinga Bridge.

Apparently one of the biggest concerns for spread is the use of felt soled waders as these are proven to be extremely difficult to treat for the organism because of the porosity of the felt material.

I have attached Council’s Guidelines for our own staff and contractors but they are just as relevant to all waterway users.

Holiday Helpers

Board Members may have read of my suggestion to the Motueka Community Board for some kind of initiative to encourage volunteer “ambassadors” to provide friendly assistance to visitors in the town during the busy holiday period. The suggestion has been welcomed and taken on board by Mark Chapman who is the Information Centre Manager in Motueka. The suggestion was made that a badge with the words “Ask me, I’m local” or something similar would be a very cost-effective way for those in the community who wish to provide a free friendship assistance service to visitors in the area.

Christmas Decorations

It has always been a slight amusement to see Christmas decorations that specifically include santas, trees, reindeer, bells and the like during the latter part of January and beyond. I would guess that most of the visitors that come for holidays to the District would also be bemused by this fact as Christmas is definitely a last year thing as of 1 January. However, the initiative to provide a festive, cheerful and colourful decoration to the town over the Christmas and holiday season is really great, but now that there is consideration being given to replace the current street decorations which have provided good service for Takaka over the years, perhaps the Board may wish to encourage an alternate non-specific form for holiday decorations. For example, a theme based on

rainbows and sunshine, where there would be plenty of colour and very positive energies that would not be centred round any particular date or event. Perhaps this is something that Golden Bay Promotions representatives who will be providing a briefing to the Board might want to consider for the future.

There have been a lot of comments received about the wonderful hanging baskets in the town and this is a tremendous credit to those involved in this initiative as it really has brought the street alive.

Kirsty Barr - Bikewise Week

Bikewise week starts on Mon 19th February and runs through to Sunday 4th March 2007. I have discussed with Kirsty ways to not only get the staff involved, but Board members also.

Kirsty is looking at options for TDC councilors/board members to set up as a team and also suggested that board members may want to get involved in some of the "Fun Ride" events.

Takaka - Saturday 3rd March 10am -12.30pm from the Village Green to Bencarri return (easier option included for those that want to park and ride from Long Plain Road - car park site = RDA/Pony Club)

Motueka - Saturday 24th February 10am -12.00 noon skate park, Old Wharf Road. This is also a mayoral event.

There is also a 'Go by Bike' day in both centres (as per last year) on Wednesday 28th February 7am - 9am at the following sites:

Takaka - Village Green
Motueka - outside Museum

In all cases, Kirsty will be sending flyers/posters to councillors and board members so they can participate as well as spread the word.

I did also check and all these events are ones where you do wear clothes!

Bikes on Footpaths

An issue that hasn't been resolve and won't go away! In discussion with Kirsty a suggestion for some footpath signage (stenciled) that was positive and didn't target those who have a legitimate right to have wheeled vehicles on the footpath (eg mobility scooters). A suggestion for the words "walk friendly zone" would not exclude the likes of mobility scooters and would cover all the other wheeled objects and implies sense of courtesy/respect. In addition to the words visual signage such as footprints and/or a bike symbol in a crossed circle.

The signage needs to convey the message without being an eyesore.

The Board may have some ideas/suggestions that I can take back to Kirsty?

Meihana Street/Commercial Street/Waitapu Road Intersection

Kirsty has asked that I put the draft information sheet for any final comments. Note that there has already been a lot of consultation undertaken to this point.

Neil Jackson

Neil was scheduled to address the Board this month on an update regarding aquaculture.

In discussion with Neil he advises that there is not a great deal of progress on the issue and he was happy for his 'spot' to be used by Golden Bay Promotions.

Neil has however provided the following written update notes for the Board in the meantime.

Aquaculture

There are three things going on with plan provisions about aquaculture:

1. The "new" aquaculture management areas (AMAs) set by the Environment Court hearing are currently being assessed by Ministry of Fisheries, for any "undue adverse effect" on customary, recreational or commercial fisheries. We lodged that request with the Ministry in January 06. The Ministry decided they needed more information before making a decision. The last advice we had late last year was that the Ministry expected to have that additional information by the end of the year. They would then start consultation with potentially affected parties. We have heard nothing since December.
2. Several marine farming interests attempted to lodge applications for marine farming on 5 January 2005, the first working day after new legislation came into effect. Council's view was that the new legislation imposed additional steps for confirmation of the AMAs set by the Environment Court, including the MFish assessment referred to in 1. above, before Council could receive applications for those sites. The applicants are seeking a High Court declaration about whether or not Council should receive and process these applications.
3. The new legislation requires 20% of aquaculture space to be set aside for iwi. Some of the marine farming interests claim that none of the Golden Bay or Tasman Bay AMAs fall within the definition of space that qualifies for allocation to iwi. They have sought a High Court declaration on this issue.

Vehicles on beaches

The Board has also asked for some further information on the matter of vehicles on beaches. It is noted that this is an issue that is universal and that there were reports in Auckland of problems with vehicles on beaches.

Neil has commented as follows:

1. Council has not scheduled an investigation about vehicles on beaches.
2. Dennis had a brief item in his report to the E & P Sub-committee 25 October last year, in response to a request from GBCB for a speed limit on beaches. The item sought direction from Council. (Report EP01/10/16) The unconfirmed minutes simply record that the report was received.

Neil has attached some notes he put together about 18 months ago (these are in the Board's info pack). Neil says he is aware that Northland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty have also looked at this issue, but has not heard of any 'magic solutions'. He believes that information and education may still be the best ways to address the situation in the absence of any statutory provisions.

Takaka Office Staffing

We have started the New Year with a new staff member who replaced Becky who left last year. Lynley McConnon will be a familiar face to Council customers having been with the Council since the Golden Bay County days up until 8 years ago.

We welcome Lynley to our great little team in Takaka.

Bob Askew