**Waitakere Ranges Combined R&R Group**

**Monday 21 September 2015**

**Local Board office, Glen Eden**

**Present:** Kubi Witten-Hannah (Chair), Jean Berry (Preserve the Swanson Foothills), David Spriggs & Erik Bates (Henderson Valley Residents Assoc), Graeme Carrie & Jonathan Green (Piha R&R), Gary Ertel (Waiatarua R&R), Valera Koltsov (Laingholm District Citizens Assoc), Glen McConville (Huia-Cornwallis R&R), Mels Barton (Titirangi R&R), Sandra Coney, Greg Presland, Saffron Toms, Denise Yates, Neil Henderson (WRLB). In attendance: Christine Rose (Auckland Council).

**1. Introductions & welcomes** - welcome to new reps from Piha and Henderson Valley.

**2. Apologies** - John Edgar, Steve Tollestrup, Jennifer Conlon, Susie Vincent, Neil Henderson & Christine Rose for lateness.

**3. Minutes of 6 July 2015** - Corrections - 4b West Coast Plan - actually Heritage Area forum, spelling Sandra Coney, remove AGENDA.

Moved Kubi, 2nd Jean. Minutes as corrected are a true & correct record. Carried.

a. Matters arising - there were none.

**4. Plans**

a. Unitary Plan - meeting with Chairs of Local Boards feedback from Commissioners to Council is starting to happen. SEAs increased ability to remove vegetation associated with tracks, buildings, utility operators & roadworks. Rural & coastal settlement zone subdivision size reduced from 4000 to 3000m2 and increased impermeable area & building coverage. Need to follow that up re WRHAA - think precinct zoning supercedes base zoning so shouldn’t change in Heritage Area?

b. WRLB Plan - sustainable neighbourhoods funding regionally extended for 1 year then will be phased out. So WRLB has changed funding of projects & increased amount spent on weed bins. Plus $30k for community groups doing work to support weed strategy.

c. Long Term Plan - about to start on new one. Cost saving by spraying parks & edges rather than heat treating. Non negotiable. Saffron has requested background report. Also removing plants to replace with grass for less maintenance. This is all in Local Parks. If local groups are keen to take over maintenance of their local park to get in touch with Local Board.

Community Development team have been reorganised, so now will only be a regional team of experts plus "Community Brokers" in Local Board areas. Also Community Safety & Arts & Culture teams lots of job losses.

Many decisions being made by staff instead of by elected members.

d. Visitor Management Strategy - not being progressed. Event strategy not ready to go out for consultation yet - is an attempt to line up Heritage Area Act with event promotion. Issue of appropriateness for certain events for certain areas has never been addressed, eg Thundercats at Piha. This should be covered by Event Strategy.

e. West Coast Plan - staff not keen on reviving the Plan. The Plan predates the WRHAA. Formation of WRLB and this group could be argued to supersede the Liaison Group. Never was a statutory document or formally adopted by Waitakere City Council. Local Area Plans go into a lot of detail and have lots of actions.

**Action: Hard copies of the Plan to be circulated to the group if available. It is online. WRLB to provide Mels with link to circulate to group.**

WRLB have developed Design Guide for Foothills which is used by Planners. Also doing one for Bush Living. Also doing a pack for new residents.

f. Signs Bylaw Review - new rules come in on 1 Oct so signs must only be placed outside the property for sale not anywhere else.

**Action: All to police this in their community & complain to Council if real estate agents don't remove them when requested or keep putting them in wrong places.**

g. Unformed roads policy - **Action: Denise will send reply to Mels to circulate.**

**5. Heritage Area Issues**

a. Welcome to the WRHA signs - will have a workshop on this issue at the Forum on 15 Oct.

b. Foothills walkway / local connections - problems on Coulter Rd in Swanson.

**Action: Jean to put issues in writing to Sandra.**

c. Auckland Transport design guide for WRHA - Local Board met with senior Auckland Transport staff about Karekare tree. Less than 1% chance they will chop the tree down after what happened at St Luke's so looking at design of props. Took opportunity to ask about Design Guidelines, promised are almost ready for consultation. "Legal requirement" for the 4.25m height clearance turns out not to exist. Thanks to WRLB for pursuing this outcome, which is very important for the Heritage Area & the whole region.

d. Auckland Transport Consultation - Bus service needed for Piha - investigation being funded by WRLB into a small bus like that serving the Hibiscus Coast. Survey may also include making communities more resilient.

AT still not using Engagement Guidelines, but Karekare tree has made them realise they need to do so. All to pull them up if they see work being done that has not been consulted on.

e. Fireworks - Sandra has drafted a letter to John Key.

**Action: Sandra send electronic copy to Mels to circulate. All to take back to groups for endorsement within a week. Aim to send it before Guy Fawkes when the issue will be back in the media.**

f. Kakamatua Fire - lot of work done by volunteers via Weedfree Trust. Stage 2 due in Nov. Facebook page.

g. Karekare Tree - see above.

h. ACPL Property Disposal Titirangi - Corner site of South Titirangi / Titirangi Rd (carpark and toilet block) being sold to Mrs Rotondo (owns adjacent strip of shops to Pharmacy) without consultation with Local Board. WRLB have been requesting information on this property for last 5 years & have been ignored. Prior to amalgamation on 1 Oct 2010 agreement was made to sell property, but no sale price or contract was drawn up. AC had not entered into sale agreement in April 2013. Risk to Council was extremely low, but this is being used as excuse for continuing with the sale. Issue is lack of respect for requests by WRLB for information & continuing with sale in secret.

**6. Weeds & Pests**

a. Weed Plan update - implementing plan in Piha & Huia, broken up into target areas. First 3 areas been door knocked & properties surveyed. Holly Cox working with Ecomatters & targeting regional park work adjacent to the private land targeted by this project. Karekare next area, but need to complete Piha & Huia first.

Waitakere Ranges Conservation Network hosted a workshop on the Weed Plan.

**7. Kauri Dieback update** - Christine Rose

Media promotion been happening, compliance assessment showing it is low. Signage not up to scratch, especially advance warning re closed tracks.

Community work going well - Building up kauri advocates network getting small army of people reporting pig damage, trigene etc. Private property visits to kauri in ill health. People buying houses with sick trees don't realise the liability. Presentations to tramping clubs from elsewhere in the region. Henderson Valley Primary Green Day, Laingholm Primary School, Titirangi Primary School kids. Also some R&R groups. Christine happy to come to regular meetings, public meetings etc.

Public meeting in Laingholm 29 Oct, Forest & Bird on 19 Nov, workshop for kauri advocates on 24 Nov at Arataki at 6.30pm.

However, Council budget has been cut, staff under threat, despite political decision not to cut budget. Morale is rock bottom, no work is being done, project is essentially at a stop.

Waikato has abolished their staff position. National programme are cutting the resource budget.

**Action: WRLB will ask Council why budget is being cut when it was decided not to do so. Mels will ask Phil Twyford to ask questions of Govt about the $26m budget spending. Good to get media attention on what is really happening.**

**8. Water Quality & Wastewater**

WRLB put $50k towards septic tank subsidy. Public meeting at Arataki. At least one upgrade application in already.

Reports all showing that stopping pollution at source is one part of problem & the other part is getting the lagoons & streams flushed & flowing by moving sand 3x per year. No one doing anything about this. Perhaps some enforcement required to encourage more uptake of the subsidy to upgrade systems later down the track. Want to let people do it voluntarily first.

Trying to get loan scheme for retrofitting systems in as well as consents being streamlined & in some instances free.

**9. General Business**

a. Rural Rates - proposal to get small landowners to subsidise large landowners. So less than 6ha will pay more, over 50ha pay less, between 6-50ha pay same. Federated Farmers are behind it. Public meeting on 30 Sept 6pm at Local Board offices.

b. Vehicles on Beaches - Time to take action to ban all vehicles other than emergency, surf patrol & boat launchers from the region’s beaches following another fatality. Denise thinks Muriwai beach is not a legal road. Friends of Regional Parks have written to Mayor, CEO & NZ Herald requesting this. Group happy to support.

**Action: Mels circulate FOR Parks letter plus draft letter of support for groups to agree.**

c. Civil Defence - community response plans no longer in force. Neighbourhood group plans are the new thing. Problem is due to restructure & removal of Community Safety team.

d. Dog Bylaws - WRLB passed the proposed changes for Local Parks.

**10. Next meeting** - aim for late Nov.