

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 30th October 2012 – 12.00 noon – 2.00 PM

Water Reuse Room – GE Money Building

ATTENDANCE: Cr Morgan (chair), Cr Jones
Lisa Kermode, Stuart Holley
Saskia von Fahland, Margaret Lane (proxy for Di
Williams), Rob Cocco
Presenters: Julie Cowley

APOLOGIES: Joan Fitzsimmons, Di Williams, Peter Cluff, Bruce Milles,
Peter Alden,

1. **CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held 29th August 2012 were accepted as a true and correct record (moved Margaret Lane, seconded Cr Morgan).

2. **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

1. **Natural Environment Plan**

The Natural Environment Plan has been approved by council and should go live this week. Council were very supportive of the plan.

2. **Environmental Ranger**

Cr Jones asked whether the purchase of surveillance cameras needed to be a recommendation of the committee. This is an operational matter, so doesn't need to be a recommendation. The committee's support for the purchase of the cameras was recorded for information purposes only. The committee discussed potential sites for placement of the cameras, which will be considered. Two cameras were purchased recently and are currently being trialled. Waste services also have cameras for use at waste dumping hot spots.

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

1. **Sustainable Futures Committee**

The committee noted that Hailey Bolland will speak at the December meeting.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Coasts and Communities project/coastal activities update

The committee received a detailed report on this item.

The activities at Bucasia and Eimeo on Saturday 27th October were well attended, with approximately 10 adults and 5 children at Bucasia and 10 adults and 2 children at Eimeo. Watering and weed control were the focus of the day's activities.

2. Land for Wildlife Program

The committee received an update on this project.

3. Sarina and Mirani Special Projects allocation

Detailed reports on this item were received.

Pioneer Catchment and Landcare Group currently has a vacancy for a Project Officer. One workshop is still to be delivered. The community nursery project has not had as many days allocated as planned, however additional works have happened as part of the Pioneer River project. The nursery project has now recommenced with the first volunteer morning being held this morning. Margaret Lane is currently coordinating the volunteers on a Tuesday morning.

Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association mentioned the coastal monitoring project which has been undertaken every 6 months since 2004 and includes plant surveys, dune profiles and photos. The report is currently being prepared and there is the potential to have a presentation of results to show the change over time.

Action: Both groups will submit a final report which covers all activities undertaken over the project period.

4. Special Projects funded projects (African Tulip and Sarina Community Native Gardens projects)

Detailed reports were received.

The African Tulip project is due to be completed at the end of the year.

The Sarina Community Native Gardens project will continue to be reported on, although the project has now moved beyond the original scope of the funding provided.

5. Update on the Midge Point SEMP

Update provided as per agenda

6. Significant tree register

Update provided as per agenda

The committee discussed how to promote the register and make people aware of the value of the significant trees once the register is complete. Suggestions included: tree of the month in council publications (e.g. council connect), signage adjacent to the trees, guided tours, self guided tours, making the link between a significant tree (e.g. a Leichardt tree) and where this tree occurs in nature. Consideration should be given to replacing the tree if it dies or potentially relocating trees if required although this would be expensive.

Rob Cocco mentioned the potential for Reef Catchments to become involved in Area Vegetation Management Plans.

7. Landcare group applications for funding from the NEL

Update provided as per agenda

8. Blacks Beach Spit

The committee received an update on this item.

The committee identified the following aspirations for the land:

- Vehicle access for maintenance/emergency vehicle access only. Site to be closed to all other vehicles including motorbikes and 4wds
- Car parking possibly off Pacific Drive
- Pedestrian walkways (informal) as appropriate across the site
- Interpretive signage to promote the values of the site.

5. FINANCIALS

Julie Cowley attended to discuss the financial statements.

Action: Check the Significant Tree Register budget.

Action: Create a separate account for Blacks Beach Spit and move the expenditure from the Various Projects number.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Rob Cocco spoke about Nutrient Offset Arrangements and the potential for a Reef Catchments/Mackay Regional Council pilot project. An example would be an offset for a sewage treatment plant that involved farming practice improvements. This could potentially be arranged through the water and waste section and reported back to this group for information. It is not envisaged that levy funds would be utilised for this purpose.
2. Stuart Holley mentioned the good work that had occurred at the Swayne st nursery site over the past couple of months. The new staff are very enthusiastic and the site is progressing well. This, together with the ongoing Coasts and Communities project and the finalisation of the Natural Environment Plan, are all having positive environmental outcomes.
3. The committee discussed the land acquisition policy and its stringency regarding the purchase of land. There may be opportunities other than purchase of land that may achieve similar outcomes, for instance facilitating covenants on strategic environmental land or paying 3rd parties to manage land. There may be opportunities for offsets, brokering, leveraging funding and identifying opportunities to work with other organisations. Could consider changing the working to reflect opportunities for both purchase or management arrangements for land, subject to achieving biodiversity outcomes. Reef Catchments will discuss potential partnerships with council as part of the regional plan review process.

4. Meetings for 2013

Meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of the month from 12.30 to 2.30pm in Council Chambers

February 5th

April 2nd (- note this follows Easter Monday on 1st April)

June 4th

August 6th

October 1st

December 3rd

Meeting closed 2pm

Next meeting: 18th December 2012 – Council Chambers 12-2pm

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7. UPDATED ACTION LIST

Actions arising from this meeting

Action: Both Landcare groups will submit a final report which covers all activities undertaken over the project period.

Financials

Action: Check the Significant Tree Register budget.

Action: Create a separate account for Blacks Beach Spit and move the expenditure from the Various Projects number.

Actions arising from previous meetings

Action: Cr Morgan, Jessica Renton, Stuart Holley and Peter Cluff to discuss the potential to increase penalty units (particularly for vegetation clearing) with local laws staff and report back to the committee

Action: Councillors to discuss with Stuart Holley and investigate how the Natural Environment Plan could inform development and report back to the committee.

Action: Cr Morgan to speak to Peter Alden about the process for weed declaration further prior to presenting these minutes to council for consideration. Action amended to allow minutes to be reviewed by council with a briefing to be organised if more information is required.

Action: Lisa to make the suggested changes to the Environment Levy brochure and present back to the committee for further comment.

In progress

Action: Committee to consider the Pest Management proposal at the August meeting.
To be considered by the committee