

REPORT

TO: GB Community Board
FROM: Chairperson
REFERENCE: E855
DATE: 26th February 2009
SUBJECT: Monthly Report (2009/03/04) for 10th March Board Meeting

Activities, events and meetings attended during the past month have included:

30 January: Placement of Sculpture in Milnthorpe Park.

31 January: Opening of Public event in Milnthorpe Park.

3 February: Takaka meeting with Katie and Bjarne Vanderskog regarding Golden Bay facilities project together with other representatives of various community organisations. The key issue is to define any gaps in current and projected needs and then determine the best way for these to be met. Golden Bay currently has in excess of 40 halls and other meeting facilities available largely as a result of community efforts.

6 February: HANDS Market, Takaka. Another very successful and well attended market.

7 February: Mardi Gras, Takaka. Another wonderful community event of street theatre, music and other performances.

10 February: Board meeting, Takaka.

10 February: Community Board workshop with TDC Planner Sonja Leusink regarding the Heritage development policies for the Tasman Resource Management Plan.

11 February: Presented Community Board submission on Regional Arts Strategy together with Board member Karen Brookes to the hearing held in Takaka.

12 February: Meeting with former West Coast/Tasman MP Damien O'Connor. It is clear that Mr O'Connor is maintaining a continuing interest in issues which he was dealing with as a long serving MP.

12 February: Fresh FM Takaka. Interview with Paddy Brennan regarding road safety issues particularly the setting of appropriate speed limits.

13 February: Takaka meeting with current West Coast/Tasman MP Chris Auchinvole and his Motueka secretary - Mr Auchinvole is the Chair of Environment and Local Government Select Committee.

15 February: Collingwood Hall Committee meeting. Accounts passed for payment. Disintegrating drapes to be replaced.

17 February: Takaka JP training with John Dearing and Elva Harwood.

18 February: Takaka launch of Cliff Turley's book 'Rocks and Hard Places'. This is a most interesting read about the Takaka Hill. There are many fine photographs highlighting the historical changes which have occurred from the first days of European settlement.

21 February: Takaka Market. This was operating on a reduced scale due to an inclement weather forecast. Adequate parking was observed in the vicinity.

21 February: Discussion with Onekaka residents Lisa and Jeff Williams regarding the forthcoming community meeting with NZ Transport Agency about SH60.

22 February: Family Bike Ride Event Takaka. Attended the start at the request of Community Recreation Worker Dave Myall in case assistance was required. A very well supported event with full credit to the organizers.

25 February: Fonterra Visit. An interesting and informative presentation about the current operation of the Takaka factory site and environmental reporting to the community.

26 February: Agenda Setting for the March 10 Board meeting.

26 February: Global Students Visit Takaka. Briefing provided about the history of local government in Golden Bay and we in turn learnt about local governance in the various areas the participants came from.

ISSUES

Recession

With the national and global recession deepening we must be mindful of changing circumstances for people in our community. Few will be unaffected and reduced incomes from investments and commodities have already had an impact. Real inflation is also much higher than that claimed with food and fuel prices increasing. There is a net loss of the value of savings due to inflation exceeding post-tax interest. As a community we need to be alert to the needs of individuals and agencies who may be struggling. It is therefore recommended:

“That the Golden Bay Community Board remains alert to individuals and agencies who are finding difficulty at this time of recession and brings matters of concern to the attention of authorities as they become apparent.”

Board Agenda Setting

During the November 2008 meeting the Board resolved to trial early Agenda setting for three months. This is now up and the resolution required referral back to this meeting. Setting the Agenda early has raised several issues.

- More correspondence and agenda items now arriving ‘late’.
- No sooner finishing one meeting than preparing for the next.
- Providing the opportunity for more staff charges for unexplained purposes being made against the Board budget.
- The Agenda papers are not being received any earlier.

It is therefore recommended:

“That the Golden Bay Community Board returns to the former agenda setting time of a week and a day prior to Board meetings except for when a public holiday falls on the relevant Monday in which case the Agenda will be set the Thursday prior.”

Unexplained Council Charges

Deductions have continued to be made for staff time from the Community Board budget without the requested details of the staff person, date, time and work done being provided. We have been advised that all staff time is recorded in ¼ hour segments and therefore there should be no difficulty in providing this information. The record shows we have requested this information nine times since 8 December 2008. It is therefore recommended:

“That the Golden Bay Community Board takes the matter of the withholding of details explaining staff charges being levied against the Community Board budget up with government agencies responsible for over-viewing such matters including the Commerce Commission, Office of the Ombudsmen and the Office of Auditor General.”

Takaka River Oxbow

Keep Golden Bay Beautiful members have been working along with over 50 other community volunteers on a riparian vegetation project beside the spring-fed Takaka River Oxbow and flood channel since 2005.

Plants have been donated and purchased and funding has been obtained from various sources including the Cobb Dam mitigation fund for fencing. KGBB has worked closely with Crown agencies and TDC staff and holds a formal lease for the area to be planted next.

From a letter recently received by KGBB it is apparent that another limb of TDC is proposing to privatise land in the vicinity.

The Golden Bay Community Board has been delegated the role as an advisor for all TDC property sales and purchases within the Ward. It is therefore recommended:

“That the Golden Bay Community Board requests that any transaction concerning the privatization of public land under the jurisdiction of Tasman District Council in the vicinity of the Takaka Oxbow be subject to an open and transparent process and that public access, and all other riparian cultural, environmental and economic values are fully and fairly considered as integral parts of any proposal.”

Elected Member Mileage

It has been reported in the media that the Remuneration Authority Chairman has written to Local Authorities proposing that mileage reimbursement be abolished. We are yet to receive the letter. If the reports are correct rural councillors and community board members would have cause to be greatly concerned. Mileage reimbursement is a rural equity issue. Long distances and a lack of suitable public transport would make it difficult for many to stand for office and to fulfil the requirements of the job without it. Over the past thirteen years service as a Board member I have not claimed expenses for the operation of my vehicle. Until reading the article I was unaware that this could be done. The mileage reimbursement is insufficient to cover actual vehicle ‘operating costs’ as defined by the AA.

Our mileage reimbursement is also taxed as ‘income’ at the time of payment.

It is therefore recommended:

“That the Golden Bay Community Board makes a submission to the Remuneration Authority setting out reasons why removal of mileage

reimbursement would seriously disadvantage rural community representation and compromise rural equity.”

Abbeyfield Loan

Loan monies allocated by Tasman District Council to Abbeyfield were paid temporarily from the Golden Bay DILs account. We have had this matter on our action list for some time. It is therefore recommended:

“That the Golden Bay Community Board requests that the loan monies advanced to the Abbeyfield project from the GB DILs account be reimbursed to that account from other Council funds as originally agreed.”

Joe Bell