

Environmental Reference Group Meeting
12 February 2007
Committee Room One, Wellington City Council
Minutes

Present:

Councillor Celia Wade-Brown (Chair)
Mike Ennis
Debbie Firestone
Liz Hibbs
Ian Hunter
Murray McLea (GWRC)
Stephen Sargent
Ian Shearer

WCC Officers:

Gavin Armstrong (Planning, Performance and Research)
Michael Oates (Parks and Gardens)

Apologies:

Ralph Chapman
Jennie Francke
Graeme Hastilow (Ngati Toa)
Chris Horne
Dave Kettell
Tushara Kodikara
Fiona McNamara (Youth Council)
Ruth Paul
Charity Stuart
Jim Ebenhoh (Strategic Advisor)

Other Guests:

Kirsten Gendall and Rachel Davies (Sustainable Business Network)
Hilary Campbell (Sustainability Trust)

Information-Sharing and Announcements

Members shared details of various upcoming events, including the Otari-Wilton's Bush BioBlitz.

Sustainable Business Network

Kirsten Gendall and Rachel Davies, from the Central Region of the Sustainable Business Network, gave a presentation on their work nationally and in the Wellington region. They are a member-based organisation with a national office and five regional offices, supporting businesses which want to be socially and environmentally responsible. They have over 400 members nationally and around 80 Wellington-area members. Their work includes the annual Get Sustainable Challenge, sponsored locally by Wellington City Council among others, and various seminars and workshops on sustainability topics. Their website is www.sustainable.org.nz.

Sustainability Trust

Hilary Campbell from Wellington-based Sustainability Trust talked about the work that the Trust does in the region to encourage sustainable outcomes in areas like energy, waste, housing and transport. The Trust's website is www.sustaintrust.org.nz.

Community Outcome Indicators

Gavin Armstrong from the Council's Planning, Performance and Research unit presented some potential draft community outcome indicators for the environment. These indicators are intended to measure progress against the community's long-term desired outcomes for Wellington, as identified through the 2006/16 Long-Term Council Community Plan. They are meant to influence individuals and decision makers in the wider community, not just within Council. The goal is for indicators to be outcome-related, time-related, cost-effective, and comprehensive to the general public. A whole-of-government approach is being taken to use similar indicators (where possible) to central government agencies and other local governments.

Gavin asked for feedback before July, but stated that the development and monitoring of these indicators will be an iterative process that evolves over time.

Suggestions from the group included to move civil emergency indicators to the Social area, and to move CCP emission targets to the outcome statement on decreasing non-renewable energy use.

Other Issues

Councillor Wade-Brown mentioned that the Council is looking to ramp up its communication with the public on climate change—both on the Council's current and planned actions and what the wider community can do to help. Comments included:

- Actions speak louder than words.
- The Council has influence through regulatory processes for renewable energy projects.
- A NIWA report is coming out for local government, with scenarios for 2030 and 2080.
- MfE documents on climate change should be available in WCC libraries.
- Co-ordination between central and local government is needed.
- Get the Council's house in order, and make what Council's doing more visible.
- Make it relevant to individuals at the local level, not at the macro-level.

Councillor Wade-Brown also mentioned the upcoming Council workshop to inform its Sustainable Building Guidelines. Comments were made on the following:

- Need to identify barriers.
- Work of the NZ Green Building Council.
- Current review of the Building Code.
- Potential partnerships with organisations like BRANZ and the Department of Building and Housing to make things happen.
- Importance of having builders and plumbers involved.
- Potential for Council to trial some sustainability techniques in a new subdivision or infill housing.
- Value on case study examples of what has happened in Wellington so far.

Next Meeting

The ERG tentatively agreed to meet again in late March or early April [note: subsequently arranged for 16 April].