

MINUTES OF THE AGM FOR THE NORTHERN ACTION GROUP (NAG) held at Totara Park Hall, 5 Melwood Drive, Warkworth on Monday 20thth July, 2020 at 7.30 pm.

WELCOME: Twenty-six people were welcomed by the Chairman including guest speakers Greg Sayers and Colin Smith.

APOLOGIES: John Clement, Chris Thoroughgood, Peter Brennan, Angela Buckton. The apologies were moved by Mona Townson. Seconded: Peter Buckton. Carried.

MINUTES: Minutes of the previous AGM meeting on the 18th JUNE, 2019 were taken as read. Maury moved that they be accepted as a true and accurate record. Seconded: Bill Townson. Carried:

TREASURERS' REPORT:

Trisha Pieterse presented the Treasurer's report and then opened it up for discussion. Trisha moved that the report be accepted. Seconded: Les greenwood. Carried.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Bill Townson read the Chairman's report. (See attached report)
Bill moved that the report be approved.
Seconded: John Carried

Bill Townson thanked the outgoing committee of John Maltby, Barbara Maltby, Chris Thoroughgood, Trisha Pieterse, Lance Taylor, Mona Townson. He spoke of his appreciation of Jane Harris and her work with the website. On handing over the position of chair he nominated Bill Foster for that task as he had the knowledge and the skills that were necessary to deal with all the complex paperwork plus the enthusiasm to continue with the project of gaining democracy for North Rodney.

ELECTION OF OFFICIERS AND COMMITTEE:

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>PERSON</u>	<u>PROPOSER</u>	<u>SECONDED</u>
Chairman	Bill Foster	Bill Townson	Trisha Pieterse
Secretary	Hugh Briggs	Maury Purdy	Bill Foster
Treasurer	Maury Purdy	Bill Foster	Bill Townson
Committee	Lance Taylor	Maury Purdy	Trisha Pieterse
	Bill Townson	Bill Foster	Peter Buckton

Mona Townson moved that the committee be accepted as proposed:
Seconded: Trisha Pieterse. Carried.

Bill Foster thanked Bill Townson (Chairman) and Mona Townson (secretary) for their work during the past 11 years on behalf of the Northern Action Group. A

bouquet of flowers, a bottle of wine and a box of chocolates were presented. (And were appreciated by Bill and Mona.)

SPEAKER: GREG SAYERS. "Auckland Council Issues."

- Spoke about the emergency budget where a record number of submissions (35,000) wanted lower rates. 75% of Rodney submitters wanted 2.5 or less rates. They were not listened to. Residents will be paying a 4.5% rate increase, business 2.5%. Greg voted against this as a recession becomes deeper when costs are increased for people.
- While AC have the City Rail Link project there will always be a burden and AC will struggle with debt.
- There are 130 Councils in NZ who are paying a salary to their staff which is 30% higher than in the private sector. These Councils need to be brought into line with the Private Sector.
- An Independent Performance Auditor (as recommended by the Royal Commission) needs to be appointed to make sure that AC are providing high quality services in a cost effective manner.
- Although AC maintains that there are no extra funds available they were able to find \$224 million and another \$15 million from the operations fund for the Auckland water problem!
- Communication with the Local Board could be better to improve coordination in representing the area. Working as a team is better for the ratepayers and residents of Rodney.
- It is very important that the Councilor be invited to Local Board workshops and discussions so that a strategy can be developed particularly around budget time.
- If the Mayor wants to find the money he seems to be able to do this. This is an opportunity for Rodney to get finance and so it is important to get a motion requesting this from the LB as Greg feels that there is support from many of the Councilors in AC.
- AC get its revenue from rates (40%) and profits from the ports and shares and fees (60%). Covid 19 has impacted these funds and so prudent financial management is necessary. Capital projects will be cut or deferred. For example no new toilets and playgrounds. The discretionary spend from Local Boards will be less.
- The LB need to get Rodney's share of the interest paid to AC from these ports and shares in the airport. Rodney has 46% of the land area of AC.
- 600 jobs have gone and with the new budget another 500 will go. Only 0.3% of the higher paid staff cut their salaries voluntarily. Council staff are being paid the living wage.
- As AC is so constrained with the emergency budget there are big changes necessary across all of the Council. This could be the silver lining as to a solution of the budget and spending programs of AC.
- Under legislation the regional petrol tax (\$36million) needs to be used in the region where it is collected. It needs to be checked as to where these funds are being spent.
- Rodney has a population of 64,000 people and the combined urban area is only one third of the area. 67% of the people interviewed were dissatisfied with how the LB and AC administer it.

SPEAKER: COLIN SMITH (represents Wellsford in the Local Board.)

- Colin is an independent representative for the rural area and has had major difficulties and challenges in representing the people because of the politics of the Local Board. Because of this he does need the support of local groups such as NAG so that the LB know that he is representing them. It was a compliment that he was put back without anyone standing against him for the LB – a compliment of the quality of his work for the people in his district.
- There are 670kilometres of rural roads to be maintained. He has been working with a roading engineer to advocate ‘Fit for Purpose Roothing’ for the unsealed network. This would mean that roads could be sealed in a staged process. By using Opex money it would cost \$36,000 a kilometer if the base is worked properly. At the moment it costs \$1million for every 1 kilometer of roading.
- The Targeted rates is not going into roading but is being used to create parking facilities, and a walking track but the \$5 million needs to be used to benefit the whole community.
- Water rates a concern – no support for the rural area when the drought occurred and yet rates are paid!
- Colin feels that the local boundaries for the LB need to be set up in a different manner to reflect the rural nature and needs of those communities. At the moment there are structural issues where the representatives for rural areas are not getting the support for the people they represent.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

BILL FOSTER: (Chairman of NAG)

Bill believes that it is necessary for the LB to have more devolution, more responsibility and more of its own money if there is going to be a difference to North Rodney. At the moment there is an unfairness in the process and a dysfunctional council for us. AC is so large that departments need to communicate with each other for even a simple decision to be made. There is no overall area-based management responsibility.

NAG is an ideas group and an independent organization and as such wants to propose initiatives to solve problems. Bill opened the floor for discussion and for people to put forward ideas.

- Julie Cotton wants the rural representation issue investigated. The rural area pay 50% of AC rates but only get 20% of it back in their area. An inequality issue. Need to get Government support for a change in boundaries.
- A person wants carbon credits to be researched. At the moment you only get a ‘reward’ for new planting and not for existing bush or fruit trees.
- Money being spent on planting beside riverbanks to try and control sediment in waterways – not a sensible project as it is a natural drainage area – all water brown after rain or a flood and so it is not doing the job!
- Elizabeth Foster said that the Local Government Act needs to be changed so that we can get out of Auckland. Need a private members Bill in order to achieve this.

- Lance Taylor went through a long list of people in politics or other Government organisations with the comments made about NAG's fight to regain democracy in the North Rodney area. All negative.
- Grant McLachlan shared his experiences with local politics. Feels that you can only sort out Local Government via Central Government. Perhaps North Rodney needs to be with Northland in order to move away from Auckland. Important to make your vote count in the National Elections. There are many issues that can be raised.
- Brian Mason (Chair Landowners, Contractors Protection Society) is very concerned with the lack of fair and equitable representation that Colin Smith is getting with the LB. His group is going to ask for an interview with the Chief Democracy advisor to try and resolve this issue. Wants to work with NAG.

Bill Foster spoke about the importance of the community working together in order to monitor what is going on in the local district. If change is to be achieved we need to be involved with local groups and move forward with the issues that concern the local community to create solutions. Expert advice will be needed on many occasions. There needs to be a new local government structure in order to have a better system of local governance.

People were invited to send into NAG any more ideas that they would like to be considered by the committee.

NAG's email address is northernactiongroup@gmail.com

Our website is <http://nag.org.nz/>

Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/NorthernActionGroup/>

Meeting closed at: 9.30pm