

Minutes of the 48th Annual General Meeting of the Mahurangi East Residents and Ratepayers Association Inc. held 10.30 am Sunday 30th April 2017 at Scott House

Present:

Chairman: Mark Croft
Treasurer: Susan Jelicich
Secretary (acting): Heather Mackay

In Attendance:

45 residents, ratepayers and MERRA committee members

Councillor: Greg Sayers
Local Board member: Beth Houlbrooke

Chairman Mark Croft welcomed all to the meeting and requested further apologies

Apologies:

Linda and Fraser MacFarlane	Chris and Helen Russell	Diana Eaton
Doug and Anne Hamilton	Mark and Lindsay Kirby	Sue Moore
Fleur and Tony Davis	Tim and Celia Sneddon	Janice Fanning
John and Linda Pinder	Megan and Sandy Rowe	John Webber
Tony and Vera Carroll	Nigel and Helen McLisky	Colin Harvey
Robyn and Lindsay Crocker	Philippa Walker and Martin Leak	Derek Light
David Millar and Karen Gray	Bruce and Judith Anderson	Malcolm Simpson
Garth and Dot Lamb	Andrew Topping	

Address by Elected Council Representatives

Councillor Greg Sayers addressed the meeting with an outline of his experience in his first 6 months on council. The structure has a Governing body which is composed of the Mayor and all the councillors. There are three major committees all councillors are on each and have one vote – Finance, Planning, and Environment & Community. Greg feels most impact can be with Finance which has two branches - Audit and Risk and Strategic Procurement. The Audit and Risk team comprises 6 members 3 politicians and 3 professionals. Expense items up to 21 million dollars can be signed off by the council CEO. Expense greater than 21 million needs to go through Strategic Procurement. Greg is a member of these finance sub committees. He is also the Deputy Chairman of the Rural Advisory Panel a group of 30 people who advise Council of rural happenings. He is involved also in the Treaty settlement issues around the Kaipara district.

He has met with the head of every department (e.g. Auckland Transport, Watercare) and fostered a relationship with Mark Mitchell (local MP) and Local Board members. Example of this relationship being effective is having secured \$3million from the Government to progress planning for the Hill St intersection.

Councillor Sayers focus is on a better deal for Rodney so to stop wastage/ overspending and rate increases. He is trying to look closely at operational costs and there has been development of a process to make these costs more transparent. The CEO doesn't believe there is a lot of fat in the system so progress is difficult. Figures have not been forthcoming for the rates and development contributions from Rodney versus the expenditure. The councillor believes that sealing some rural roads would be a way of becoming more effective in Rodney.

Other objectives are to

- clarify the responsibility of local and central government.
- spend local rates locally
- resolve traffic congestion issues at Hill St, Warkworth and SH16, Kumeu
- council streamlining of processes which may reduce cost and time in consent process

Dennis Wilde questioned the reduction in the use of local contractors. Tenders have been based on doing the complete job as compared to different contractors for parts of the job.

Bill Townson asked that an effective visual barrier be erected at the slip sight on Ridge Road.

Jared Jelicich spoke of the volume of roadside rubbish which the councillor said he's investigating the existence of a maintenance programme.

The Chair thanked Greg for his address.

Local Board Representative Beth Houlbrooke spoke of the role of the local board as being governors compared to managers of contracts. 20 councillors and the Mayor make up the governing body (Regional decisions) and there are 21 Local Boards (Local decisions inside the boundary). The Rodney Local board covers 46% of the geographical land mass from Taupaki to Te Arai and represents less than 4% of the population. The 9 members are subdivided 1 each Wellsford and Dairy Flat, 3 from Warkworth, 4 from Kumeu/ Huapai. The budget of 20 million per year has only 1 million for discretionary spending after maintenance, depreciation and debt servicing. The 1 million has been concentrated toward planting and cycles/walkways within the region after submissions are received from local groups/individuals.

The Local Board plan is a statutory requirement and produced every 3 years. Public submissions for the 2017 plan are due in May and the plan becomes effective 1/6/2018. Expenditure can only be made from items within this plan which is considered by the Local Board to be a mandate from the area.

Minutes of the 2016 AGM

The Chair moved that the minutes of the 2016 AGM circulated with the notice of meeting were taken as read. Mark Croft / Peter Seers Carried

Chairperson's Report: Mark Croft

The previous 12 months have been an active time for the MERRA committee who have met approximately every 2 months to work in the interests of our community. The report that follows, summarises the activities we have been involved throughout the year.

Auckland Council and the Election

A new Council was elected in the year just ended. As a result Rodney had a near complete change of representation. With the exception of Beth Houlbrooke who returned as Chairperson of the Rodney Board, all other elected representatives were dispatched. There was clearly a mood for change with ongoing issues like Hill St and general dissatisfaction of Auckland Council at play.

MERRA conducted a survey of residents early last year to test their resolve to stay with Auckland Council in light of the success NAG had in advancing a split from Auckland Council. A majority

favoured a split however it was clear that residents did not want MERRA to be involve in the political process of advancing that change.

MERRA met with Auckland City Chief Executive Stephen Town soon after the election in an effort to understand the issues of the other. The meeting was very successful in that regard.

MERRA will shortly host Councillor Greg Sayers and the Local Board for a similar meeting where we hope to build a better working relationship.

Broadband speeds

We were all very pleased when a fibre connection was made to the green box near the corner of the Ridge Rd and Charlies Street intersection. That box feeds the majority of residents south of the box but not residents north of 107 Ridge Rd who still receive their broadband connection from a box located at the top of Ridge Rd.

We were hopeful that a significant submission from MERRA to various decision makers and our constant lobbying of those same players, would have allowed our district to be included in a new funding round to bring a rural fibre connection to everyone's door.

MERRA's approach was multi-pronged with the hope that one of the strategies would be successful so that there was a universal connection speed for all residents and not just those south of 107 Ridge Rd.

We received a setback earlier this year when the announcement was made on which areas would be included and we discovered that Scotts Landing would not be one of them.

MERRA has made further urgent representations to those who contribute to the decision making process and while there is still some hope, the project is not one that will bear fruit in any hurry.

We will continue to keep this project ongoing as long as we see options to explore in bringing speed parity to all residents or fibre to the door.

The MERRA committee expresses its gratitude to and admiration of Stuart Windross whose determination and persistence continue to push this project forward.

Cell Phone Coverage

MERRA undertook a survey of residents to try and establish how much of a problem cell phone coverage was on the peninsular. To our surprise, while there were some pockets where cell phone coverage was non-existent, the majority of residents responded that they had acceptable coverage from their service provider.

MERRA did not have the ammunition to take this matter further and so the project was officially closed.

Defibrillator

After the generous donation of a defibrillator to MERRA by Auckland Council, we have been working on finding a location that was central to the most residents and also working further with Auckland Council on plugging the device into the national 111 system so it could be as secure as possible yet accessible in a public place.

The Committee chose the notice board on the corner of Ridge Rd and Charles St as the best location and we are no awaiting a secure cabinet to be delivered so that it can be commissioned.

We intend to run a training session on access to it and its use once the unit has been installed. We will communicate with everyone prior to the training.

Health & Safety

With changes to the Health and Safety At Work Act, the MERRA Committee identified the need to concern itself with the health and safety of our community when involved in activities during the year.

MERRA engages in some activities that have been identified as having risk such as the annual road clean-up as well as animal and plant pest control.

MERRA have spent time this year carefully developing a manual for health and safety across many of the things we do and once completed, will be posted to the MERRA web site for all to see.

The Committee thanks Heather Mackay for her work on this project throughout the year.

National's Marine Reserve policy

MERRA continues to enquire about progress on National's 2014's election pledge to create a marine reserve in the Hauraki Gulf for the protection of marine species from commercial fishing and to allow fishing from recreational fishers only.

Noticeboard

The noticeboard on the corner of Ridge Rd & Charles Street has been identified as a focal point for our community and in addition to being the home of the defibrillator, will also be getting a makeover during May this year.

As well as a general spruce up and paint job, we will be incorporating a bench seat to rest and a 'Little Library' where residents can take a book and leave a book. Susan Beer saw this concept on her travels and has had one made.

Scotts Landing Sign

MERRA was successful in obtaining a \$2000 grant from the Rodney Local Board to help with the cost of creating a sign to mark the start of the Scotts Landing settlement.

MERRA advertised for interested residents to meet and form a working group to design, locate and erect the sign. After numerous meetings both internally and with Auckland Transport, a site was identified and a design finalized. The site and design are now being circulated to the meeting.

Careful budgeting and the donation of services and materials from residents and those of others connected to them, means that the cost of the sign will come in very close to the \$2,000 grant.

The final design is very much in keeping with our marine environment and the materials and look of it will be a very good first impression on visitors to Scotts Landing.

Animal and Plant Pests

In conjunction with Auckland Council bio-security office in Wenderholm, MERRA maintains controls to mitigate issues from bio-pests in the district.

Animal pests are controlled by the supply of targeted poisons and traps which a band of volunteers regularly check and refresh. MERRA maintains a supply of poisons for residents with specific animal pest issues. Contact us through the web site to discuss your animal pest issues.

Plant Pests are monitored by another working group who take on an educational and hands on roll as the situation required. All households were delivered an excellent publication on pest weeds last year in the hope that individual landowners might identify and deal with pest weeds on their property. Contact us through the web site to discuss plant pests on your land.

MERRA has started work on clearing weeds around Ngaio Bay. A group of volunteers meets regularly to arrest weed populations and clear bush of invasive species.

Roading and Walkways

Ridge Road has been subject to many slips this year due to unusual volumes of rainfall. In addition, Auckland Transport continue to upgrade and strengthen vulnerable parts of the road that present a danger. While slips are dealt with quite efficiently, potential future hazardous issues on the road do not receive the attention they should until they fail.

Water discharge from the road onto private property has recently been identified as an issue MERRA needs to work with Auckland Transport on in the future. This discharge not only creates land issues for residents, it also has an impact on erosion of the foreshore and sediment making its way into the harbour.

MERRA is endeavouring to look at vehicle speeds south of the 50km sign, particularly on the straight portion of Ridge Road between the 50Km sign and the Ridge Rd and Charles St intersection. With many residents walking and no footpaths to speak of, vehicle speeds are of concern. We ask residents and their guests to take the painless option and observe the speed limits before facing the possibility of the introduction of more significant measures to control speed.

MERRA clarified Auckland Council's role in mowing berms and discovered that where the speed limit is 50km/h or less, then the responsibility to look after the berms in front of your property is that of the residents. Council contracts only look after berms where the speed limit is over 50km/hr.

The Fire Team

A group of residents continue to prepare to be first responders to a local fire using the MERRA fire trailer. The group practices every two months and have recently been practicing against the clock in an effort to improve response times and procedures.

The group continues to look for a permanent leader to take over from Bill Townson who has been leading the team on a temporary basis while to search goes on.

We remain very grateful to Bill for his time and expertise training the fire team.

Neighbourhood Support

It's no secret that this past Christmas and New Year period was one of the worst on record for reported theft of private property, particularly items on the foreshore. MERRA emailed all residents early on in January to alert them to the increased criminal activity and to urge residents to keep items secure.

Security is an ongoing issue for residents who ultimately have to take responsibility for their own house and land. MERRA have extensively investigated options in the past including a street security camera but concluded its effectiveness would be limited and its cost prohibitive in our area.

MERRA's focus is therefore to encourage individual responsibility, provide timely alerts and to keep the Neighbourhood Watch programme where neighbours look out for each other all the time.

Civil Defence and Community Response

MERRA continues to maintain some preparedness in the event of a natural disaster that might affect our community. Fergusson House is the headquarters where radios, a generator and trailer are stored and where operations would be conducted in an event.

Recently, Auckland Council announced a new model for Civil Defence which changes the relationship we have with them. The exact nature of these changes is still unclear at this time but MERRA continues to work on preparedness regardless until a city wide emergency plan can be identified and customised for our area.

Liquor Licenses

MERRA objected to a liquor license being granted for the old Video Ezy store in Snells Beach. It noted yet another application was also lodged for the old Bayley's Real Estate store in the shops next to the fire station. MERRA continues to take an interest in the number of liquor outlets in the area.

Website

The MERRA website goes from strength to strength in no small way due to the efforts of John Waugh who runs it. Visitor numbers have steadily increased over the year as people discover the wealth of helpful information on the site.

John is likely to step down from the role in the coming year and so we continue our search for someone with an interest in maintaining the web site for MERRA so we can continue to build on John's good work.

Events

MERRA ran a number of successful events during the year including our annual clean-up day, the BBQ which this year had a Mexican theme, a morning tea for new residents which was very well attended and the New Year's day cricket match where 50 or so players lined up.

MERRA would like to acknowledge the generous support of New World Warkworth and their assistance with this year's BBQ.

Thank you

While not all of the Committee are named in this report, I would like to extend my personal thanks and that of the residents to all of them for their hard work and dedication. Their efforts improve Scotts Landing in so many ways both big and small.

I'd like to make special mention of Colin Harvey who has filled the Secretary role for the past two years and is now stepping down from the role due to a heavy travel schedule in the coming year. We thank Colin for his care and attention over the past two years in this role.

Discussion followed the Chairman's Report

David Stevens asked whether there may be more Pedestrian or 50 km speed signs on Ridge Road or improved lines of visibility for pedestrians.

Joy Paxton asked MERRA to consider providing a school bus shelter as there are increasing numbers of children in the area who are driven to school in inclement weather

Bill Townson replied that the noticeboard was originally intended to have a roof to provide shelter

The Chairman asked the Treasurer Susan Jelicich to present the audited financial accounts.

MAHURANGI EAST RESIDENT AND RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2017

Income		2016	2017
	Subscriptions	1337	1726
	Interest	179	183
	Sundry	19	0
		1535	1909
Expenditure			
	Maintenance	381	46
	Barbecue – net	368	611
	Sundry Expenses	248	142
	Pest Control	188	0
	Fire Trailer Maintenance	46	
		1231	799
	Cash Surplus this year	304	1110
	Current Year Asset Write-Off	288	159
	Net Profit	16	951
Balance Sheet			
	Value of MERRA as at March 2016	8509	8505
	Add profit this year	16	951
	New Value	8525	9456
	Represented By		
	Bank Accounts	7006	10095
	Other Assets (see below)	1519	1360
	Less prepay Local Board Grant		(2000)
	Net Equity of MERRA	8525	9455
Depreciation	Other Assets	Write Off	Book Value
	Fire Trailer	73	659
	Community Notice Board	16	132
	2 Folding Gazebos	10	0
	SKVA Stanley Generator	52	407
	Road Trailer	8	162
		159	1360

Auditors Report

I have carried out an examination of the computerised records together with the Bank Statements and supporting documentation. I am satisfied that accurate records of the receipts and payments of MERRA for the year ended 31 March 2017 have been maintained.

Roger Harvey
19th April 2017

Accept Annual Accounts Mark Croft / Mark Topping

Carried

Subscriptions 2017/2018

Proposed that the annual subscription be held at the current rate of \$12 per household per annum. Mark Croft / Stuart Windross Carried

Election of Officers

As nominations matched the number of available positions the following are elected with affirmation for 2017/2018 with ability to co-opt as required.

Chairperson	Stuart Windross
Honorary Secretary	Heather Mackay
Honorary Treasurer	Susan Jelichich

MERRA Executive Committee

Susan Beer
Mark Croft
Colin Harvey
David Legg
Chris Russell
Peter Seers
Mark Topping

General Business

Mona Townson advised residents that there was to be a Liquor Licensing Commission hearing at 10.00am 1/5/17 in the Warkworth Town Hall for the liquor license application for the (ex)Bayleys Office. Only people who had made submissions would be heard but community support would help.

Thanks, from the Committee and the residents for the leadership and work done by the outgoing Chairman Mark Croft was offered by Stuart Windross and approved by acclamation.

The meeting closed at 11.46am

