

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SECTION OF THE MEETING OF OTAGO FORWARD HELD IN DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL ON FRIDAY 5 DECEMBER 2008, COMMENCING AT 10.10 AM

PRESENT: Mayor Clive Geddes (Chair); Mayor Juno Hayes (Clutha District Council); Mayor Alex FAMILTON (Waitaki) Deputy Mayor Gary Kircher (Waitaki); Mayor Malcolm MacPherson (Central Otago DC); Stephen Cairns (ORC); Norman Evans; Jay Cassells; Russell Hendry; Peter Garvan

IN ATTENDANCE: Julie Pearse (Clutha District Council); Peter Harris (DCC); Jonathan Gadd (Central Otago DC); Damian O'Neill (NZTE); Shaz Clark (DCC); Charles Hackart;

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies have been received from Mayor Peter Chin and Paul Crack.

2. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Any additions must be approved by resolution with an explanation as to why they cannot be delayed until a future meeting.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was moved (Hayes/MacPherson):

"That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2008 be confirmed as a true and correct record."

Motion carried

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

4.1 Regional strategy funding – contract management agent

Mayor Geddes confirmed that Community Trust Otago had agreed in principle to act as the administrative agent for the regional strategy funding and this will be discussed at the Community Trust Board meeting on 16 December 2008. Damien O'Neill will meet with the trust to provide further clarification of this role. Mr O'Neill will advise the project promoters of the correct invoicing processes.

5. INSTITUTE OF DESIGN

Alistair Regan provided an update on the Otago Design Institute and formally thanked those who had attended the launch evening recently. Norman Evans commented that DFI were moving under the Otago Institute of Design umbrella, which will provide a new level of coherency.

Mr Regan also tabled the Sustainable Habitat Challenge (SHAC) 2009 report, which has been funded by the Ministry of Economic Environment.

It was moved (MacPherson/FAMILTON):

"That the report be received."

Motion carried

Stephen Cairns arrived at 10.25 am

6. OTAGO LABOUR MARKET STRATEGY

A report was supplied by Paul Crack for the Board's consideration on a proposed regional labour market strategy. Mayor Geddes commented that each part of the region has its own strategy and it may be of little benefit to pull these together due to the diversity of each district's labour market. However, it was important that Otago Forward be involved and Mayor Geddes would therefore respond to this report by letter, advising the Department of Labour that this would be supported by the region by supporting a governance group, but would not see Otago Forward as the active project manager.

Work permit renewability was discussed, particularly for the Queenstown Lakes and Central Otago districts. Mayors Geddes and MacPherson will monitor this and liaise accordingly.

It was moved (Familton/MacPherson):

"That Otago Forward responds to this report, stating that it views this item as a Department of Labour project. Otago Forward will also request that a draft be supplied to a future Otago Forward meeting, in order that members have the opportunity to comment. Otago Forward appreciates the request for support regarding the development of an Otago labour market strategy and Mayor Geddes will act as the liaison working closing with Mayor MacPherson."

Motion carried.

7. REGIONAL STRATEGY FUND APPROVAL – PRESS RELEASE

Peter Harris tabled a draft press release for discussion.

It was moved (Cassell/Geddes):

"That a press release be issued from Otago Forward providing information on all three projects with the amendments discussed."

Motion carried

8. INSIDE VICTORIAN OAMARU

The Inside Victorian Oamaru project proposal was discussed. The promoter, Scott Eliffe, was unable to attend but a number of Board members have met with Mr Eliffe regarding the project and were aware of the proposal.

Deputy Mayor Gary Kircher commented that this was an opportunity for a tourist attraction in the west of the district which would link to others in the region and potentially grow the tourist flow and expenditure. At present, Waitaki has one very successful tourist attraction, which is the blue penguin colony. Deputy Mayor Kircher confirmed that the project promoter was seeking endorsement from Otago Forward at this stage. Further discussion occurred regarding similarities between this project and an Australian attraction called Sovereign Hill. Stephen Cairns added his support and commented that this would build on Oamaru's tourist attractions.

The Board confirmed that circulation of tourism in the district was important and to promote further afield, and this project could use Oamaru as the heritage gateway for Otago. It was further reported that the Otago Chamber of Commerce and the Waitaki Development Board were very supportive of this project and that NZTE were assisting with their funding application. It was reconfirmed that the project was looking for a letter of endorsement from Otago Forward.

If this project succeeded, there are possibilities that the model can be layered across the region. Deputy Mayor Kircher advised the Board that this project would be community owned, which Waitaki District Council felt was important. Mayor MacPherson commented that this would link well with other upcoming projects, eg Central Stories, Lawrence and the Chinese Heritage Trail.

In conclusion, the Board well supported this project.

It was moved (Geddes/Cassells):

"That the project be endorsed with a letter of support and endorsement."

Motion carried

9. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Peter Harris updated the Board with progress and the following items were discussed:

6. China Summit

Mayor Geddes has been developing this and will report to the next meeting. Having discussed this with other colleagues, Mayor Geddes suggested that this is a wider initiative and should include the Shanghai EXPO 2009, and that other activities may be considered.

7. Growers Mega Co-operative

Mayor Malcolm MacPherson and Jonathan Gadd advised that this activity is progressing and an update report will be provided at the next meeting. They further commented that this project is focussing on horticulture and does not have to be inland Otago. Mr Gadd advised that it should keep a regional applicability. Waitaki board members confirmed that there would be good interest in their district. The meeting was further advised that Apple Futures is in its second year and are now leading the world in organic apple produce and other fruit sectors are looking at their model. Mayor Geddes commented that there is an opportunity to expand the horticulture export market initiative overseas. He commented that when this project had advanced, better connectivity could be obtained between this and the visitor industry. A simple example would be a free bowl of fruit in every hotel room with a card, providing details off how to order from the source.

Rugby World Cup

Mayor Geddes provided the Board with an update on the Rugby World Cup 2011 bid and Otago's bid for a reasonable share of the activity. Mayor Geddes will provide the mayors of the region with executive summaries and DVDs by the end of 2008, with further information.

There was further discussion regarding a heritage strategy and the importance of how heritage tourist attractions in the region, eg Chinese Garden and Inside Victorian Oamaru could work together on such items as data circulation, product development and connectivity.

It was moved:

"That the implementation plan be updated to include the relevant strategy categories with further project explanation and that this is reviewed at each meeting to ensure progress is maintained."

Motion carried

10. OTAGO FORWARD COMMUNICATION TO MEMBERS' ORGANISATIONS

Shaz Clark presented a draft communication which members could use within their own organisations to communicate and promote the work of Otago Forward.

It was moved (Familton/Cairns):

"That the communication format be accepted in order that Otago Forward's successes and progress can be reported to a wider audience."

Motion carried

11. CHINESE FORUM

See item 9.

12. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNIT UPDATES

Reports were received from Clutha District Council, Central Otago District Council and Dunedin City Council.

Members discussed commercial and residential construction, building consents and accommodation trends, together with concerns regarding the long haul tourism industry.

Mayor Familton provided an update on the Meridian tunnel and Mayor Hayes updated the meeting on a proposed wind farm project in Central.

Stephen Cairns advised that Bill English, Minister of Finance would be speaking at a forum in Christchurch on 20 December 2008 to provide an update on the south island's water structure.

Jonathan Gadd advised that broadband central government funding was on hold awaiting the new government update. Mr Gadd would provide further updates as soon as they were available.

Julie Pearse would also provide a broadband update at the next Otago Forward meeting.

It was moved (Geddes/Hayes):

"That the reports be received."

Motion carried

13. 2009 MEETING DATES AND AGENDA ITEMS

Peter Harris and Shaz Clark proposed the 2009 Otago Forward Meeting dates and agenda schedule, for consideration. The dates have been scheduled to align with the district's council meeting, with a view to accessing Council meetings once a year to personally provide an Otago Forward update. It was agreed in principal and individuals would confirm to the secretariat.

Mayor Hayes recorded his appreciation of Mayor Geddes' work as Chair of Otago Forward and that his recent presentation to Clutha Council proved very useful.

It was moved (Geddes/Familton):

“That the dates and venues are adopted subject to individual input.”

Motion carried

14. GENERAL BUSINESS

ORC would be chairing a Civil Defence meeting, which Board members would be attending during the afternoon of Friday 5 December 2008. Discussions regarding the weather radar and the potential economic development implications took place. Stephen Cairns advised that he would report back to the next Otago Forward meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.10 pm.