

Minutes of an open community meeting held in Concert Chamber Whanganui Memorial Centre District Council, at 5:00pm on Tuesday 20th December 2016.

Present: Phil Wardale, Marine Consultant, Henry Crothers (LandLab Ltd), Rowan McGregor (WDC), Bill Carswell (WDC), John Jarvis (Vapour Consultants), Bill McDonald (Vapour Consultants), Trevor Gibson, Richard Hamblet, Gail Imhoff, Norm Crowe, Caryl Blomkvist, Barry Edwards, Leighton Toy (WDC) Adrian Dixon (W & P), Marianne Archibald, Dick Erni, Pat Dillon, Cr Josh Chandulay-Mackay, Neville Hudson, Jeff Walsh, Ian Stone, Christine Stone, Rod Martin, John Henderson, Eric Parker, Brian Tapa, Darrell Healey, Paul Laugesen, Terry Coxon, Ken Bradshaw, Cr Hadleigh Reid, Cr Jenny Duncan, Dave Kerwin, Trent Williamson, Jenny Harrison, Josh Penn, Brian Smith, Christopher Cape, Mayor Hamish McDouall, Cr Rob Vinsen, Merle Benson (Minute Taker)

Apologies were received from: Raewyn Overton-Smith, Allan MacGibbon, Waaka Watene, Cr Charlie Anderson, Haig Elgar,

Phil Wardale welcomed everyone to the meeting and referred to the previous community meetings held in October at UCOL and the War Memorial Centre. Phil spoke of the various reference groups that had been formed since those initial meetings and the meetings held with each of those reference groups to gain the ideas and aspirations to form part of the Masterplan for the Port Revitalisation project.

Phil welcomed the Mayor, Councillors, Whanganui and Partners and WDC Property officers to the meeting saying that this is the first time the Councillors and Council Officers have seen this presentation. Phil expressed the importance of bringing this presentation to the community for consultation.

Referring to the various focus groups formed, the Marine Reference Group have had three meetings, the Recreation and Community Group two meetings, the Ferry Reference group one meeting and the Education and Training group two meetings. Phil added that the education and training reference group are very aware that to make this project successful the group needs to make sure there is a good flow of trained employees to support the port businesses.

Phil advised that what people will see in the presentation is a working draft and he asked people to have discussions with their neighbours, friends and colleagues about the working draft to stimulate feedback to the project by the end of January 2017. From there a Masterplan will be developed. Phil made it quite clear that this plan is not the work of WDC staff as this is the first time many WDC staff and Councillors have seen these draft designs.

Phil added that there are few constraints to the project apart from perhaps the aged infrastructure, but commented that timing and staging will be very important. Decisions will need to be made as to what goes first, what will be done in five years' time or ten years' time. The Masterplan is an aspirational document, but it is also a document that needs to last 5 – 10 years or longer that Council can reference to. For this process to be successful we need good public discussion and participation including discussions with Iwi.

Phil advised that Rt Hon Steven Joyce travelled to Whanganui earlier in the year and visited the port area. In order to obtain government support and funding, Steven Joyce wanted two things; a Masterplan and a Business Case. The Masterplan will be developed first then components of that will

be used to develop a business case to present to government. Phil said that this is where the information, ideas and aspirations provided by the various reference groups will be brought into the Masterplan.

Phil gave the meeting over to Henry Crothers (LandLab) who commenced his power point presentation.

Henry began by saying this is an iterative process, with value coming from everyone's input into the designs.

Henry referred to the Vision:

“where creativity, commerce, education and recreation are woven together to create an authentic and memorable destination that builds on the maritime traditions, economic vitality and sense of place of Whanganui and its river”.

Henry added “making places” for people is also about prioritising the needs and requirements of people, to create employment and economic success on all levels. The “blue and green” is about the connection of bringing the land and sea together, the “public” is about providing access to the waters edge and creating new open spaces on the wharves and land for the community. The development must be “sustainable” with a need to retain “authenticity and history” of the existing wharf structures but also allowing for new economic business developments to be “complementary” to existing businesses. Henry said the whole port project cannot be looked at on its own, it must be seen as “complimentary” to the Castlecliff rejuvenation project, the town centre regeneration project and the M2C cycle trail development. The port needs to be an area of “mixed use” that allows for visitors, productivity, recreation and social interaction. The “heritage” of the port needs to be retained, but how this happens can evolve over time. There needs to be “flexibility” on how the existing land and building areas are used or re-used and developed.

The Port forms part of the Whanganui river system and the economic development of the area. Henry suggested that perhaps we need to think beyond just the “Port” and think about a “strategic plan” for the whole town.

Several slides were presented of the various “zones” which included the “river, rail and road connections” a slide of the “city to sea stitches” which highlighted the possibility of opening up linkages between some of the side streets along Heads Road to the river and water's edge. A further slide displayed the “Port Basin” showing the reinstatement of the “training wall” and a potential “recreational park”. Henry added that the basin would require dredging to achieve deep water and the dredging's could be used to create the park. The current buildings on the wharves including the Victory shed and the Red Shed were shown on a slide with Henry suggesting the need to retain and reuse these heritage buildings to maintain the history and authenticity of the port. In the next slide an aerial view of the whole of the existing site was displayed which clearly showed all the green space available in the area.

Phil continued the meeting advising that some suggestions had been made to re-engineer the river mouth so the river passed the airport to South Beach. Phil advised that the idea to re-route the river arose in the 1980's with a report being prepared at that time. The matter had also been raised recently at a public meeting. However, Phil said at no time did this project feasibility study look at this option as the project team would need to realistically justify this option to government who are not in a position to wait for months for a decision. A determination was therefore made early on in this project to consider the re-routing to be out of scope of this project.

Phil added that re-routing the river would create two exists for the river and could add further complexity at this stage but that is not to say that Council could look at this as a separate project at a later date if justified, but there is nothing at this stage for this project to support or justify re-routing the river.

Henry continued with his presentation showing his last slides of a draft concept plan of the proposed future development of the port identifying and listing each business or proposed business in the area and what it could look like. Henry explained how the various zones interact with one another allowing different opportunities to exist such as a marina, heritage buildings, boat parking, boat building, a ferry service and other boat/marine business opportunities.

Henry concluded his presentation with draft waterfront perspectives from different angles of the wharf, the proposed new park, the wharf towards Q-Wests new premises and around Shed 2 and Marine precinct area. Henry added he is seeking feedback from the public with more information and ideas forms being available on www.whanganui.govt.co.nz/port

Phil thanked Henry for his presentation and provided the group with information around the Mid-West Ferry proposal from Mr Neville Johnson. Phil advised that to date and despite requesting information from Mr Johnson, the project team have received no further details or business case details from Mr Johnson. Phil added that having said that, it does not preclude Mr Johnson from the opportunity to operate a ferry service from Whanganui to the South Island. The Masterplan does however, preclude Mr Johnson's suggestion for a four ship ferry berthage requirement at the Port.

Phil moved on indicating the inclusion within the working draft masterplan to extend the training wall to direct debris and flow away from Wharf 1. He then pointed towards the Morgan Street area on the aerial slide and indicated where parking could be made available for a ferry staging area to operate with no need for further reclamation of the river.

He also indicated where additional wharf space could be built directly alongside wharf 1 in the future if it was needed.

The only constraint to a ferry operating from the port is the depth of water. At this time the draft of the vessels is unknown and what draft requirements are although Mid-West Ferries have mentioned a draft of 6-7m may be required.

A question and answer session opened up with the following being noted:

Q: Could a Ferry Service not include car travel. Have rental cars left in Whanganui rather than take just cars and trucks and pick up another rental car in Motueka.

Q: Have log timber exports been thought of out of Whanganui?

A: In response, Phil advised that a rail terminus, inland port operators, containers, logs, and dry goods, all of these products integrate nicely with businesses away from the Port. There is no suggestion of logs exporting from the Whanganui Port.

A: In response to a question regarding how much dredging will be required, Phil advised the dredging will come down to the staging of the use of the Port which will be contained within the consent requirements.

Q: Concern was expressed at the proposal to stop the railway line on Heads Road on the town side of the port and suggested this may not future proof the Port?

A: In response Phil said that the Whanganui Port could never accommodate container ships or ships using rail. Moving logs out of Whanganui would be difficult enough. He added that there is not enough space at the Port for modern log loaders to operate. The present Q-West location makes for an attractive site for a container or log staging area.

Q: If there is a change of government and a decision is made to increase coastal shipping, has this been taken into account?

A: Phil responded to this question advising that Wharf 1 can accommodate such loaded and unloading but no crane of the type seen loading containers in Auckland or Tauranga is proposed.

A: In response to a question regarding the location of the Marina and the fact that strong westerly winds may cause problems, Phil advised of the possibility of installing a floating wave attenuator to reduce any wave action as boats in a marina must be kept safe. Phil added that medium sized vessels such as tourism operators, charter boats, fishing boats would be the type of operators using the marina berths which would free up Wharf 2 for other commercial uses.

Q: A question was asked regarding the viability of the project?

A: In reply Phil informed the group that the project is fortunate to have Q-West as a catalyst for the project. If the timing is right, the business case is approved on time, then Q-West customers will come and this will create further opportunities for businesses and employment. Marine associated support businesses are already coming forward and some have expressed publicly their eagerness for this project to progress.

The next step is to prioritise the project as Rt Hon Steven Joyce is no longer the Minister. We are also aware that the earthquake in Kaikoura will cost in excess of \$2b and there is only so much money to go around. However, if the project is supported by businesses and the community and the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) allow for employment growth then it is expected that government will partner with WDC and local businesses that are willing to fund the further development or expansion of their business if it is creating more employment. Rt Hon Steven Joyce has previously expressed his support for the Port Revitalisation.

Q: How willing is Council to see this project succeed.

A: In response to this question, Phil said he had not seen anything about this project that Council was not keen to support.

Q: Mars pet food company area large employer in the port area has the size of their business formed part of the equation?

A: Phil responded by saying the project team area aware that both Mars and The Tannery do play a big part in the existing port area and are large employers for the town. Their needs are being considered and there is space within the commercial zones for them to expand if required.

Q: Will local suppliers be used for the development of the port?

A: All work will be through a tender process, but WDC does have a procurement process to locals.

In conclusion, Phil thanked everyone for their attendance and looked forward to receiving feedback.

The meeting closed the meeting at 6:26 pm.