

Tuesday 3 June 2014

Meeting commenced at 5.33pm with Judy MacFarlane as designated Chair at this Mataranka Local Authority Meeting.

1. Present:

1.1. Elected Members:

Deputy Mayor Judy MacFarlane

1.2 Local Authority Members:

Veronica Russo
Di Angel
Tracey-Anne Wilson
Alan Ekert
Michael Cowen
Leah Niehus

1.3 RGRC Staff:

Jo Nichol – Local Authority Support Officer
Stephen Roper – Governance Communications Officer
Bruce Ross – A/CSM

1.4 Visitors/Guests:

Willy Rosas – Dept of Local Government
Jen Reynard

2. Apologies:

Biddy Hamilton (Member)
Sue Edwards (Member)
Sharon Hillen – DITS
Nathanial Knapp (DLG)

7.10 Rates

Ten local residents attended the meeting to specifically discuss rates so this Agenda Item was brought forward for their convenience.

Residents in Attendance: Alicia Wright, Judy Kutschki, Rod Clark, Jody Hocking, Alan Chapman, Marg Minnett, Toni Kutschki, Troy Williams, Dave Cornish, Geoff Christensen.

Greg Arnott – Director of Corporate Services (RGRC), Willy Rosas (DLG) and former CSM Virginia Boon were also in attendance.

A question and answer session then proceeded with lively discussion on the current rating policy as it relates to the situation in Mataranka.

The concerns of residents related to:

- Charging residential rates on rural land

- Multiple rating of a single title lot.

- What is considered to be a dwelling? Eg. Caravan? Shipping Container?

- Rapid increases in rates

- Lack of consultation regarding proposed rates charges

Residents also wished to highlight the shortage of accommodation in Mataranka and advise Council that the multiple dwelling arrangements have grown out of necessity for welfare of staff and other community workers.

Responses to these issues were as follows:

- Rates are a tax on land and relate to the primary use of the land.

- Residents can object if they feel they are being unjustly rated.

- Normally a mobile dwelling such as a caravan wouldn't be rated unless it is plumbed in to services and has a permanent fabricated annex

- Rate notices are published in the Katherine Times, on the Council website and in the draft Regional Plan on display at the Council Office. Ratepayers are invited to comment during this display period.

- In the early years of Roper Gulf Council's operations, Rates were kept artificially low because of NT Government policy. The policy has changed and there has been a catch up period.

The discussion on rates closed with the Local Authority undertaking to pass resident's concerns on to Council and resident's accepting the need to present their individual concerns to the CEO of Council.

Session closed and interval at 6.10pm.

Meeting reconvened at 6.20pm with the formal opening of the Local Authority meeting and a thank you to Greg Arnott for his attendance. Greg Left the meeting.

Action: Letter to Mayor re rating policy

3. Reading of Pledge

Members were advised that it is now Council policy to read a pledge at the commencement of meetings. Members then read the following pledge:

"We pledge to work as one towards a better future through effective use of all resources. We have identified these key values and principles of Honesty, Equality, Accountability, Respect, and Trust as being integral in the achievement of our vision that the Roper Gulf Regional Council is Sustainable, Viable and Vibrant".

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1 April 2014 are a true and accurate record of that meeting with the following amendments:
Delete "incoming" from item 5.2 regarding presentation of correspondence at meetings.

Moved: Di Angel/Veronica Russo
Carried

5. Business Arising/Action List;

5.1. Previous minutes action List

Item 3. Ginty Airstrip. New sign now erected, this item can be deleted.
Item 7. CSM to purchase No Camping signs for placement at hotspots throughout township
Item 9. Julie Kartinyeri still to chase up YMCA
Item 10. Land Release. Leave this item to monitor progress.

Virginya Boon left the meeting

6. Correspondence

6.1. Outgoing Correspondence:

That 7 items of outgoing correspondence be noted

Moved: Alan Ekert/Michael Cowan
Carried

6.2. Incoming Correspondence:

That 4 items of incoming correspondence be noted

Moved: Di Angel/Leah Niehus
Carried

7. General Business

7.1. *Elected Member's Report:

A verbal report by Judy MacFarlane was received and noted with the following actions:

7.1.1 The meeting nominated Leah Niehus to represent the Local Authority at discussions between Council and the Better Half Club regarding the MOU on the use of the Community Hall.

7.1.2 **Action:** CSM to ensure that Sport and Rec observe proper protocols in conducting the School Holidays Program, particularly in regard to bus travel to Pool.

7.1.3 **Action:** CSM to draft a letter to CEO expressing concern in the delay in recruitment at Mataranka SDC.

7.2. * Council Service Manager's Report:

A verbal report by Bruce Ross was received and noted

7.3. *Town Priorities:

Members were given a copy of the Draft Regional Plan and asked to provide the CSM with comments by close of business on Wednesday 11/6/14.

7.4. *Governance Updates:

Each member was provided with a current copy of the Local Government Act and Guideline 8 for Regional Councils and Local Authorities.

Members reported that the Finance Training they had recently been provided with was excellent value.

7.5. Complaints Register

Members noted that the 2 complaints received were regarding dogs and had been resolved.

7.6. *RJCP- Remote Jobs and Communities Program:

A Cert. 2 course in Community Services is being conducted in the Hall for 10 weeks with 8 RJCP participants.

7.7. *Alcohol Management Plan:

No update available.

Action: CEO to be asked to seek a response to his letter of 3/4/2014 to Attorney General and Minister for Justice.

7.8. *Policy Updates:

Members were provided with a copy of the new Local Authority Policy passed by Council at its meeting on 28/5/2014

7.9. *Work health and Safety:

Action: Members requested that a risk assessment be performed on the steel framed fence adjacent to the Dog Pound at the Sport and Rec Grounds which evidently had rusted out at the base.

7.10 Rates

Refer to prior section of minutes.

7.11 Solar Lights

Action: CSM to contact DIPI re lighting at rear of truck parking bays in Roper Tce.

Action: CSM to obtain specifications on volume of light provided by solar lights.

Action: Members to suggest locations for new solar lights.

7.12 Surveys Library/Animal Management

No results of general surveys of customer satisfaction available.

7.13 Dog By-Laws

The meetings attention was drawn to ongoing problems with dogs in the community.

Members noted that dog complaints should be reported to the Council Office and that if local staff were unable to act then the matter would be referred to the Council Animal Welfare Officer.

Action: CSM to ask Animal Welfare Officer to have a concentrated session on controlling roaming dogs in Carew Road and the Parks in Roper Tce.

Members were asked to encourage the public to make formal complaints to the Council Office when they had issues with dogs.

7.14. Other Animal By-Laws

Members' attention was drawn to the dangerous situation with regard to donkeys that had been roaming the community in recent weeks.

Members noted that there were no Council By-Laws to deal with animals other than dogs.

Animal issues are not a high priority for local Police.

Council staff had responded to the donkey problem and would continue to respond to formal complaints.

Members noted that there is a growing problem with dingoes/wild dogs encroaching into the Community area.

7.15. Sport and Rec Grounds

Map of proposed location of multi-purpose sports centre is inaccurate. **Action:** Jo Nicol to talk to Sharon Hillen about improving this.

Although applications have been submitted over the years, no funding is available to commence this project.

The NT government is providing an allocation to Local Government Authorities to be spent on Community Infrastructure. When this allocation is finalised, members will consider dedicating this funding to commencement of construction of this multi-purpose centre.

8. Other Business

8.1. Security Cameras

Action: Members requested the CSM to ascertain whether CCTV type cameras had been received for use at the rubbish dump.

8.2. Racism in the Community

Members were disgusted to learn of the occurrence of some extremely offensive racist graffiti at the rubbish tip. Members pledged to promote harmony within the community and agreed to report racist behaviour to the Police.

8.3. Vet Visits

Members noted that the visiting vets would no longer treat unregistered dogs.

9. Next Meeting

Action: Members asked that the next meeting be rescheduled from July 1 to 2 July 2014 because of Territory Day celebrations.

10. Meeting Closed at 8.25pm

To be signed once minutes are confirmed on the <2 July 2014>:

As the Chair at the Mataranka Local Authority Meeting held on the 3 June 2014, I certify these minutes to be a true and correct record of this meeting.

Chairperson

* Denotes permanent items