

## DRAFT MINUTES

### WBSA BOARD MEETING 5:00 PM 1 DECEMBER 2009 – BRIDGETOWN

- 1. Present:** Elizabeth Dennis (for Tim Clynch), Terry Ginnane, Louise Kingston, Brian Moore, Shane Collie, Paul Omodei, Shirley Broadhurst, Tony Pratico, Barbara Dunnet (Acting Chair), Robin Mellema, Tony Goode.
- 2. Apologies:** Wade DeCampo, Don Punch, Graeme Baesjou, Jeremy Hubble Wilson Tuckey M.P, Alan Lamb, Tim Clynch.
- 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting:**  
Motion: That the minutes of the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2009 (held in Boyup Brook) are accepted as a correct record.

Moved – Louise Kingston      Seconded – Brian Moore      Carried

#### **Report on Business Arising:**

Matter: The Board asked that the CEO arrange a meeting with Eric Lumsden (Director General Dept of Planning), outside of scheduled WBSA meeting dates, possibly in the New Year. This has been accomplished with a meeting scheduled for Tuesday February 9<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Manjimup.

Matter: It was agreed that the CEO should contact the Water Corporation and express our concerns about their savings in terms of disproportionate regional impacts through easy targeting of in-fill sewerage and the Pemberton to Northcliffe pipeline being delayed. A meeting took place on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009. Subsequently, a revised regional water/sewerage in-fill program was issued to members.

#### **4. Correspondence (as circulated):**

Motion: That the Correspondence in was noted and the Correspondence out was approved.

Moved – Tony Pratico      Seconded – Brian Moore      Carried

#### **5. Member Elections/Resignations:**

Nannup Community member – Robin Mellema

Boyup Brook Municipal member – Terry Ginnane

Resignation – Louise Kingston (Community Representative – Manjimup)

Motion: That the above nominations/appointments and resignations be accepted.

Moved – Shirley Broadhurst      Seconded – Brian Moore      Carried

## **6. Guest Speaker – Wilson Tuckey (Federal Member for O'Connor)**

This item was cancelled due to urgent Parliamentary commitments.

## **7. Discussion/Status of Other Key Regional Identified/Possible Issues inc:**

- **Recreation Trails Project**

The Project Officer (Carola McKay) appointed to implement the recreational Trails Project provided an extensive summation of the progress to date and outlined future activities. Carola explained what was entailed in formulating a Master Trails Plan. This included collecting information from most of the towns in our region and so far more than fifty trails of varying lengths and characteristics had been identified. Her research had shown that there was a high level of information available from the DEC. The Master Plan would also be used as a vehicle for additional project funding.

Another key focus area was about creating a master web portal to promote our trails. Printed and web based information would include maps, condition of trails, trail length, facilities, access points and nearby features. There would be linkage with other sites such as Top Trails, shire home pages, Munda Biddi and Bibbulmun Tracks.

The other main focus was in regard to canoeing trails, especially along the Blackwood River and in that regard we were close to using the data gathered recently by Canoe WA. Other river systems canoe trails such as the Warren, the Deep and Walpole inlets would also be researched. Carola concluded by tabling a status report and draft web Home Page.

Members mentioned the following people as good local contacts for the project: Gary Muir (Walpole), Johnny Mack (Northcliffe) and Kevin & Jo Henderson (Nannup horse trails). The inclusion of GPS or Way Points to facilitate electronic guidance systems was also mentioned.

- **Red Meat Precinct (Barbara Dunnet)**

Barbara Dunnet and Mike Introvigne presented a Concept Plan for the Red Meat Precinct. The Red Meat Action Group consisted of four people who have been working very hard on this idea for a couple of years and it is now starting to come to fruition culminating in the Concept Plan displayed. Potential sites were about 400 hectares and met a broad criteria including access to transport (road and rail), distance to markets, distance to stock, proximity of worker population and so forth.

The concept was based around being able to sell and process the whole animal and to that end it made provision for an abattoir, tallow factory, hide processing, pet food, saleyards, holding area, effluent treatment, power generation etc. There is nothing like it in WA and if successfully built, the Precinct was expected to improve profitability for the beef (and possibly sheep) industry. Co-location was the key to improving efficiency and to passing profits back to producers.

This was being done against the backdrop of declining processing facilities, which have gone from about sixteen to five today and these existing facilities are out of date and are being encroached upon by urban growth. The Agriculture Minister was very supportive to the extent that funds from the sale of Midland had been earmarked to cover costs such as site purchase and headworks. This project is potentially of immense benefit to the whole of the South West; for example the Precinct might employ around 800 people once established. The project is hopeful of being fast tracked with the support of the Government.

This project will send a strong signal to the whole industry that there is confidence in the future of the industry and it is hoped that this will help to retain active producers. The Alliance is urged to provide as much support as possible and it was consequently agreed that the CEO will work with the Red Meat Action Group to assist in bringing the project to completion.

Motion: That the Warren Blackwood Strategic Alliance fully supports the establishment of the Meat Precinct as a project vital to our region.

Moved – Paul Omodei

Seconded – Tony Pratico

Carried

- **Royalties for Regions**

The CEO gave an update commencing with the status of the guidelines, which were originally expected to issue in September. The guidelines are being finalised in consultation with the Department of Regional Development and Lands. They are currently awaiting Ministerial approval. Once the Ministers have announced the commencement of Stage 2 of the CLGF, the guidelines plus other information will be released.

All the Warren Blackwood projects have been worked into a common format and informally passed on the Department for preliminary assessment. Definition of infrastructure within the guidelines will be broadened to include some Plant and Equipment and this will provide greater flexibility in determining appropriate projects. The Department has now issued a ruling that; **if any single shire has not acquitted their shire funding from 2008/2009, then our regional 2009/2010 funding will be delayed.**

On the positive side, the Department has advised that regional funds will be allocated directly to the regional entity rather than being housed in Treasury accounts and this will benefit our funding. In addition, there remains the possibility that the \$2.5 million set aside within the CLGF might be available to regional bodies to offset administrative/project management costs.

Our focus into the New Year will be selecting projects for outgoing years (2010/2011) – it was really important to therefore identify good regional projects. At the moment we have a couple of ideas including; switching over street lighting from mercury vapour to compact fluores, which reduces operating costs by two thirds. The CEO hoped to bring a process to the Board at our next meeting that will enable us to develop ideas for future years.

Tony pointed out that, in relation to selecting projects for CLGF monies (Country Local Government Fund), each Board member who was a Shire Councillor was eligible to vote. Several Board members raised concerns about this process in terms of disadvantaging shires whose Community representative was not a Shire Councillor. The CEO undertook to verify this ruling with the Department.

#### **8. Executive Officers Work Report:**

In summary, the CEO reported that the main focus areas over the preceding period included; reviewing the Strategic Plan; acquitting and processing paperwork associated with grants funding; and, marketing the region through various media such as print and radio.

#### **9. Finance Report:**

Firstly, the CEO addressed the state of the Local Government Reform grant funds and advised that, following a wash-up of costs which included an indicative amount of \$1,000 to cover an audit that will be conducted next week, a net amount of \$10,806 would be returned to the Department of Local Government. This was after allowing for reimbursement of incidental shire costs and substantial Alliance professional support costs. It should be stressed that this is our provisional status and our final position will be determined by the Department. A brief report on the Local Government Reform Grant funding will be issued to CEO's shortly.

There was no avoiding the return of some funds given the fact that our Scope of Works for the project was reduced due to the timeframe limitations that we operated under. For example, the component of the report relating to the state of the road network was cut back significantly.

The status of the overall Alliance Budget has not changed over the past few months and our ongoing costs are in line with budget projections. Our vulnerability remains that our Budget was framed around the expectation that Royalties for Regions would be able to generate offset funds. This expectation has diminished over time and although looking at our end of year projection we have a possible surplus of around \$20,000 – if the R for R is withdrawn, we would actually reach a deficit (worst case scenario) of about \$26,000. However, if you look at the detail of anticipated expenditure, because we have been frugal so far, there should be cost savings in areas such as fees for specialist services and our contingency funds. This could amount to some \$8,000 which would then reduce our possible deficit to \$18,000.

It is reasonable to assume that other options would emerge in the near future to alleviate our situation such as interest from R for R funds and utilising grant funds to recompense the Alliance for the Trails Project costs. The potential deficit issue was then discussed generally and it was agreed that the matter will have to be tackled by the Board after the release of the R for R guidelines. The CEO advised that this would be included in the post Christmas Budget Review and addressed at our next meeting.

The review of the Alliance Corporate Plan did highlight the fact that there is considerable overlap, in terms of regional vision, between the Alliance and the SWDC. Accordingly, there may well be potential for funding by the SWDC to achieve common objectives. The CEO then read out a paragraph from a letter from the Minister for Regional Development, Brendon Grylls which stated: "I suggest that you may like to explore other Royalties for Regions sources including the Regional Grant Scheme administered by the Regional Development Commissions. In the first instance it is suggested that you discuss the strategic interests of the Alliance with your region's Commission to assess prospective activities of common interest." A discussion following on from consideration of this statement resulted in the following motion.

Motion: That the CEO investigates, at some future point, the possibility of establishing a formal relationship between the Alliance and the SWDC and that this formalisation includes a funding commitment by the Commission.

Moved – Tony Pratico

Seconded – Barbara Dunnet

Carried

## **10. General Business:**

The CEO raised the matter of establishing a more substantial regional airport. He explained that the current Manjimup Airstrip was a low category strip and a major upgrade was required to make it suitable for larger aircraft. In this case, the strip would need to be lengthened by about six hundred metres and this would require extensive earthworks on the existing site. In view of the strategic nature of this matter, the length of time it would take to implement and the possibly large funding level required, the CEO sort members' opinions about whether it was appropriate for him to continue to investigate.

The CEO went on to say that it might be irrelevant due to the proximity to Bunbury and Busselton airfields but from a horticulture perspective it may be attractive in order to exploit longer term export opportunities (in the Eastern States and South East Asia markets). The likely candidates for export would be based on premium quality, high price, short shelf life products such as marron, truffles, organic apples etc. Members raised aspects such as identifying the best site, potential users including fly in fly out, other markets, tourism, DEC usage, perceived benefits and so forth. Considering the bigger picture, what do we need in the region to help us develop and in that context, is a regional airport important? It was agreed that the CEO invest a limited amount of time to

produce a 1-2 page Discussion Paper on the issue of a regional airport for consideration at the next Board meeting.

The meeting concluded with a few comments from our outgoing Board Member, Louise Kingston. Louise thanked the Board for providing an opportunity to be involved in making our region a better place and she expressed her enjoyment from working with many talented and committed people.

Louise then talked about the hurdles that had to be overcome to establish a major event in our region such as an International Round of the Speedway. On this matter she spoke of her frustration at the bureaucratic difficulties she had recently experienced in regard to complying with the Clearing of Native Vegetation regulations. For example, Louise noted that the request to clear vegetation was required to go through about nine different officer's hands in the Department of Water and the DEC. Consequently, approval permits were not processed in time for the Speedway event to be run this year.

**11. Next Meeting – Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2010 at Manjimup at 5:00pm**