

Minutes of the Floodplain Management Committee Meeting held Friday 15 June 2018

Venue:

Canvas and Kettle Room, Murwillumbah Civic Centre

Time:

9.00am

Present:

Cr James Owen, Danny Rose, Leon McLean, Stuart Russell, Doreen Harwood (Tweed Shire Council), Caroline Ortel (Office of Environment and Heritage), Mark Somers, Peter Mair (NSW State Emergency Service), Robert Quirk, Max Boyd, Dion Andrews, Mike Allen, Steven Smith

Apologies:

David Oxenham, Brenda Hannigan (Tweed Shire Council), Martin Rose, (Office of Environment and Heritage), Wayne Pettit (NSW State Emergency Service), Felicia Cecil.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Moved: Robert Quirk

Seconded: Steven Smith

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Floodplain Management Committee meeting held Friday 16 February 2018 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Business Arising:

From Meeting held 16 February 2018:

1. Discussions with ABC North Coast regarding Flood Coverage

Minutes of this meeting were circulated to the group and discussed. SES' moves towards integrating ABC North Coast within the Incident Control Centre were welcomed by the group. Bureau of Meteorology and SES have also strengthened their relationship during operations. Both agencies welcome real time information from local observers, and there are many ways this can be received.

2. Report on Recommendations from Independent Review of SES Operations, North Coast Floods 2017

As part of the discussions on the "Owens Report", the Committee recommended that:

"Council formally approaches the Murwillumbah Showground Trust requesting use of their land off Banner Street as an alternate site for SES Accommodation in Murwillumbah, and enlist the support of the Local Member Thomas George MP."

Doreen Harwood confirmed that in 2016 Council did approach the Showground Trust through Thomas George as a potential site, however the Trust was not supportive.

Council is currently investigating two alternate sites in Murwillumbah.

Accommodation for Tweed Heads SES was also discussed. There is a tenure issue on the current Crown Land site, with indications that the current lease arrangements will not be extended. SES is keen to remain on the site. There is some community opposition to this site. Negotiation with Crown Lands continues.

Agenda Items:

1. Murwillumbah CBD Flood Levee and Drainage Study Final Report adoption

Leon McLean explained to the Committee the changes made to the final report, which was tabled. These changes included:

- a) Amended flood mapping to remove shallow flow depths. These caused concern for residents in elevated areas.
- b) Amended recommendations concerning flood planning levels, specifically in the area behind the East Murwillumbah levee.
- c) Amended planning recommendations regarding the extent of medium density development that should be considered on the western side of Knox Park. While much of this land adjoins flood free land along Riverview Street, there are other zoned areas that are unsuitable from a flood risk perspective.

The Committee recommended adoption of the study, and endorsed the following preferred risk management options:

- Remediation of the Commercial Road Levee, including installation of a formalised spillway;
- Installation of a new pump system for the area behind the Dorothy Street levee;
- Temporary flood barriers for commercial properties (private measure);
- Modifications to existing planning documents;
- Local Flood Plan / flood intelligence updates;
- Flood warning system upgrades;
- Community education.

As the report constitutes a Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan under the NSW Floodplain Development Manual, rather than strictly a Flood Study as suggested by the title, OEH agreed that this should be incorporated into the recommendation to Council. This will assist in future flood grants for projects recommended by the study.

Moved: Mike Allen
Seconded: Max Boyd

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Murwillumbah CBD Levee and Drainage Study be adopted as a Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan of Council.

FOR VOTE: Unanimous

2. Voluntary House Purchase Scheme Update

Danny Rose provided a presentation (copy attached to the minutes) on the progress of the Voluntary House Purchase / Voluntary House Raising (VHP/VHR) Schemes that were approved for funding by OEH prior to Christmas 2017, and were reported to the Committee and Council in February 2018. The schemes present many challenges, but the first offers under VHP for high priority properties are being reported to the June 2018 Council meeting.

The second half of the presentation related to options before Council in dealing with future flood risk, specifically new development applications in the high flood hazard areas being targeted by VHP.

The Committee considered that given recent flood experience, the community and Councillors should be supportive of changes to planning schemes to limit residential development in high hazard areas, and opportunities as outlined should be pursued.

3. Gauge Project Update

Leon McLean gave an update on the grant funded projects at Tumbulgum and Burringbar / Crabbes Creek. Council is working closely with the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) in scoping these projects and they should be implemented by early 2019.

4. Performance of M1 during 2017 Flood (Tumbulgum Community Association)

Steven Smith tabled a submission to NSW Roads and Maritime, and a Ministerial response, regarding community concerns from Tumbulgum regarding the potential for the Pacific Highway to have adversely impacted on the village during the 2017 floods. The Committee noted that similar concerns had also been raised by the Burringbar community.

Steve referred to photos taken after the peak that were published in the Tweed Link that he said demonstrated some differentiation in flood behaviour either side of the highway, and that the community could correlate these with various impacts such as silt deposition in the village. While not all Committee members agreed with these conclusions, Council officers will pursue RMS and OEH to confirm whether or not there are any studies being conducted into this issue on behalf of the two community groups, and to ensure that in similar major events in the future that RMS collects relevant data to confirm the efficacy of the highway drainage structures.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

Council officers will contact Roads and Maritime Services and Office of Environment and Heritage to ascertain whether any studies are being conducted into the hydraulic operation of the Pacific Highway during the 2017 flood and any measures in place to collect flood data from future events.

General Business:

5. South Murwillumbah Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan

Leon gave a brief overview of the study, to which Catchment Simulation Solutions (who conducted the Murwillumbah CBD study) has been appointed. The Technical Sub-Committee will hold a start-up meeting with the consultant in the coming weeks to commence the project, with an update to be provided to the next full Committee meeting.

This study will inform both the VHP and Industrial Land swap projects in South Murwillumbah, and therefore is on a shortened timeframe, aiming for results prior to Christmas 2018.

6. Floodplain Management Australia National Conference, Gold Coast 29 May – 1 June 2018

Robert Quirk gave a brief summary of his experience at the recent conference, which was also attended by Danny, Leon and Cr Owen.

Robert provided the following commentary on the event:

"I would like to thank Tweed Shire Council and in particular the Flood risk management team for allowing me to join them at the FMA conference on the Gold Coast for three days of the four day National Conference.

Papers

There were many interesting papers as engineers reported on Cyclone Debbie and its impacts in the QLD and Northern NSW regions.

I asked if I could attend the conference to catch up on the latest work on climate change, and while there were some interesting papers on CC and the predictions I was a little disappointed that there were not more papers on the topic.

Highlights

It was highlighted that in Europe and the USA there are massive amounts of money being spent to reduce the impacts not only of climate change but also of the major events. Many will recall the storm two years ago which devastated the east coast of the USA (in particular New York City). The USA government has allocated US\$14billion to reduce the impacts should a similar event occur in the future. The Netherlands spends 97% of its flood budget on reducing the impacts of major events and only 3% on recovery. The Australian budget for flood preparedness is around \$53 million. While our recovery and damage bill is in the billions of dollars.

Mara Bun

Mara one of the key note speakers took us on a trip through millennia from the antarctic forest trees in the Gold Coast hinterland to the storm of 1967, seems I was the only person at the conference who could recall the storm. After she spoke I also told her I could recall the 1954 event. Wow I must be getting old.

Field trip

The Tweed has many people at risk on the floodplain. When we compare ours to the problems of the Gold Coast and developers wishing to put even more people at risk. One developer has the solution and that is that all houses would have trapdoors in the roof so helicopters could evacuate the people at a time of flooding. Oh well what can one say when there are people like that about.

Award

Danny Rose was up for the floodplain manager of the year award. Speaking to delegates prior to the conference dinner, we were pretty confident going to the presentation that Danny may have taken out this prestigious award, it was not to be. Danny congratulation you were in the mix and you most certainly have the respect of all the delegates I spoke to.

Thanks again to Council for allowing me to attend as part of your team, it was a pleasure.

Robert"

7. March 2017 Flood Report

Max Boyd commended Council officers on the summary report for the 2017 flood event. It provides a useful record of the event and its impacts, and similar reports should be prepared for each flood event as they occur. Danny agreed that this was the approach now taken to record these events for Council and the community.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Floodplain Management Committee will be held next quarter, with a date to be determined.

The meeting closed at 12:30pm.