

MURIWAI BEACH VEHICLE ACCESS PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES AND FEEDBACK

Thursday 27th April 2021

Muriwai Surf Club

Minutes		
Time	Topic	Presenter(s)
7:00pm	<p>Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>Rachel introduces herself and Council staff, Stephen Bell, Scott DeSilva, Reg Phillips and Josh Grigg. RK thanks the public for attending and goes through housekeeping.</p> <p>RK describes the purpose of the public meeting – to receive constructive feedback on the future management of vehicles on Muriwai Beach, as well as suggestions/solutions to current issues. Feedback and discussion at the public meeting will be captured and submitted as part of the feedback process. The consultation has been extended to the 14th of May. It is asked that attendees are respectful of others views and perspectives.</p> <p>RK runs through order of events including a short presentation. The floor will be opened for questions and suggestions following the presentation. It is mentioned that staff will be available after the meeting for members of the public to speak to if they prefer not to speak in front of the crowd. RK hands over to SB for the presentation. Staff have agreed to report back on when the item will go to the PACE committee for decision.</p>	<p>Rachel Kelleher (RK)</p> <p>Various members of the Public</p>
7:10pm	<p>Presentation</p> <p>SB begins presentation. Outlines current context – increasing number of vehicles on Muriwai beach, increased number of pedestrians, highlights conflicts that occur on beach by virtue of increasing visitation numbers, outlines Recreational values, Conservational Values and environmental damage, Public Safety, and risks to public, fire risk - 145 fire events occurred, access ways and percentage of use, high survey and feedback submission numbers.</p> <p>Feedback from last meeting: increased/improved enforcement as a strong feedback point, a desire for better education and signage, improved and strengthened permit system, drivers ensuring they are suitably skilled or have an endorsement before driving on the beach, desire to create greater separation between horses and vehicles, a desire to improve access ways, alternative provision for 4WD and dirt-</p>	<p>Stephen Bell (SB)</p>

7:20pm	<p>bikes (tracks). Options - seasonal closures, controlled access and flow on effects, permanent closure - strong feedback from Waimauku and South Head Golf Club meetings that permanent closure is not an option to be entertained.</p> <p>The floor is opened for questions and suggestions. Questions are answered by SB, RK.</p>	
7:20pm 8:30pm	<p>Verbal feedback received and meeting recorded</p> <p>Feedback and suggestions from members of the public was given verbally for the remainder of the meeting and notes were taken (refer to feedback table below).</p>	All
8:30pm 9:00pm	<p>Meeting Conclusion</p> <p>Auckland Council staff were available after the meeting to hear questions or feedback from those who did not have a chance to speak during the meeting.</p>	All

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Feedback and answers

Feedback from members of the Public

- A member of the public has asked where the vehicle counters are along Muriwai beach SB has explained that they are placed at each beach access. SB later clarified that the vehicle counters capture all vehicle access to the beach.
- SB and RK have mentioned the survey and consultation period has been extended to the 14th of May.
- Multiple members of the public have asked where the status quo option is in the survey. SB has explained that the Governing Body have asked that the status quo not be an option as current issues will continue.
- A member of the public has asked if there are any members of the Parks, Arts, Community and Events Committee (PACE) in attendance and has pointed out that the same question was asked at every meeting. RK answered no - the reason for this being that it is not a decision-making forum. (Greg Sayers arrived later in the meeting).
- A member asked who is in the PACE committee – RK explains that the PACE committee is made from all elected Councillors and the Mayor.
- A member of the Public asked if the steering/advisory group will have an opportunity to speak to the PACE committee – RK has answered yes. The decision on the future management of vehicles on Muriwai beach will be made in a public forum which the steering group may attend and present.
- A member has asked if there will be a change in the status quo management of vehicles on the beach from September 9th – RK has answered no. It was clarified that no decision has been made in relation to the option that will be implemented. RK mentioned that some lower-level suggestions are more easily implemented than others, such as signage and education.
- A member of the public asked how the 3 options will be quantified – and whether the free text beneath and email feedback will be quantified in the same way that the tick box options are quantified. RK has said that all feedback will be analysed and will need to be brought together including feedback from the public meeting.
- A member of the public asked if there was any previous consultation before the three survey options were released. RK has replied yes, but in a slightly different format – the regional parks management plan consultation feedback has helped to inform these options. RK mentioned there was close to 900 submission points related to Muriwai in the management plan feedback.
- A member of the public has said that Muriwai Beach belongs to the people of New Zealand and not one-body/Auckland Council.

- A member of the public has asked for the email address for email feedback submissions (muriwaibeach@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz).
- A member of the public has asked why Police are sitting in Huapai ticketing people going 54kmh when they should be patrolling what is said to be dangerous (referring to Muriwai Beach). He has asked how the Police can be all about road safety when they don't patrol the beach. Other members of the public have asked why the Police aren't available to answer their community. RK has mentioned that Police are actively involved in conversations around Muriwai Beach.
- A member of the public has asked if the minutes for each public meeting will be made public. SB answered yes.
- RK has clarified that the meeting is about vehicles on beaches not only 4WDs.
- A member of the public has asked what the cost of an annual permit would be. SB and RK have said that the permit system is yet to be investigated in detail. RK has mentioned that permits and pricing could be something discussed by the community steering/advisory group.
- A member of the public mentioned that other members were being very aggressive in voicing their opinions and would like to hear solutions discussed. Another member of the public responded and said if Councillors were in attendance maybe everyone would be more respectful.
- RK has clarified that the 9th September is the date that a report will be presented which contains the feedback received and options going forward.
- RK has mentioned that the steering/advisory group should be made from a range of interest groups within the community and not just one interest group. It was mentioned that staff are keen to hear thoughts on the make-up of the community group. A member of the public mentioned 4WD, fishermen, kite surfers and horse riders should be included.
- A member of the public has asked for a more distinguished boundary between the dune and the beach which the public can focus on and respond to in terms of driving on the beach.
- A member of the public has mentioned that he believes there is a private vested interest behind stopping vehicles accessing the beach as areas behind the dunes and around access ways are private property. He has mentioned that the defence force should fence off the bombing range or allow people access. RK mentioned that the 4WD community would like Auckland Council to have more dialogue with the ministry of defence around what might be possible in the area.
- RK mentioned it has been suggested at previous public meetings that a second dune cut-out or geographic separation between horses and vehicles should be investigated.
- A member of the public has mentioned that seabirds such as Dotterels are struggling to successfully nest due to vehicles driving on the beach over nesting areas. It was also mentioned that Toheroa mounds are being damaged/destroyed by vehicles.

- A member of the public has mentioned that the permit needs to be scrapped, police should patrol the beach as they once did, and people should be free to drive on the beach and live how they have always lived.
- A member of the public mentioned that the carpark needs to have substantial upgrades and more spaces if the beach is to be closed/gated. The gates will lead to concentration of vehicles and pedestrians as well as recreational users such as kite surfers and fishermen – leading to increased risk of injury for swimmers, and pedestrians in carparks.
- A member of the public asked what engagement has been had with the police and what measures have been put in place by Auckland Council to increase enforcement. SB answers that a policeman is stationed at Muriwai every Christmas season. SB mentions that the Police are the only organisation who can issue infringement notices. There have been several police operations in the past and there will continue to be operations in the future. SB has mentioned that Auckland Council are speaking with the Police currently to increase Police presence on Muriwai throughout the summer. RK mentions that a formed road network is easier to monitor in terms of infrastructural solutions than Muriwai beach.
- A member of the public asked if vehicles are able to stop if a pedestrian is in the way – she has been told by vehicle drivers that they are unable to stop as they will get stuck. This has made her feel unsafe. A member of the 4WD community said yes, it is possible to stop and start again in a vehicle, provided vehicles are driving in the correct margin (on the wet sand and not close to the dunes) and if tyres are at the correct pressure.
- A member of the public has mentioned that she and her family visit Muriwai beach to kite surf, swim and walk their dogs. It was mentioned that she has been abused by dirt bike riders and 4WD drivers in unwarranted and unregistered vehicles. It was mentioned that her property was damaged, and she has been threatened. She has called the police multiple times and was told nothing could be done – something needs to happen.
- A member of the public asked if the intention to charge for permits is a revenue gathering exercise for Auckland Council. RK explains that no decisions have been made.
- A member of the public has asked if there is any budget for advertisement of rules over radio, media increased signage and education. RK answers it is a solution that has been heard loud and clear – more information more education.
- A member of the public has asked why Auckland Council is targeting 4WD vehicles. It was also asked whether Auckland Council has thought of dangers caused by users other than 4WDs – an example raised was a pedestrian walking in the middle of a 70kmh road. The pedestrian would be a hazard if they were walking in the middle of a road – has any thought gone towards managing pedestrians on the beach? SB and RK reply that conflict between user groups does exist on the beach and the goal is for different user groups to exist safely on the beach. SB mentions that the dialogue is not only targeted at 4WD drivers but every vehicle that is capable of off-roading (dirt-bikes, ATV's, quadbikes etc). The advisory group would be an opportunity to discuss co-existence of various user groups on the beach.
- A member of the public has mentioned that the advisory group would have feedback to give on infrastructure such as signage. He mentioned the advisory group would likely need to have input on practical aspects such as placement of signs and the messages on them.

- A member of the public asked who to put pressure on to increase Police presence on Muriwai Beach. SB has mentioned lobbying local MP's and your elected Councillor representatives. SB mentions that many incidents are seen and not reported – reporting problems and calling the police should not be overlooked as the reports add up statistically and will help provide evidence to increase police presence.
- Education and advice type function rather than a licence.
- A member of the public has asked what statistics Auckland Council have to support claims that there is actual conflict between users on the beach. SB answers that Auckland Council must go off the best information that is available. Information is mostly anecdotal however there are reports that have gone to the police detailing conflicts between user groups – though unable to provide a statistical breakdown.
- Local MP is available for contact and will pass on feedback to the Police that the community wants an increased presence.
- A member of the public has asked how the beach will be closed with poor enforcement and poor maintenance of the fences along the dunes. It was mentioned that he knows many people who got past the previous beach closure barriers. SB has mentioned that the concrete blocks used to create the barrier decreased the volume of vehicles on the beach significantly but were not 100% effective.
- A member of the public has asked how the advisory group make-up will be a fair and proportional representation of every interest group. RK mentions that members from areas along the beach would be elected as representatives as discussed at previous public meetings by members of the public.
- A member of the public has mentioned that a local Councillor said in the media that police were issuing hundreds of infringement notices every week which is not true. It was mentioned that media should accurately portray realities of policing on Muriwai beach – RK agreed and stated that all information passed on by Auckland Council should be as accurate as possible.
- Local Councillor Greg Sayers spoke and described the process the PACE committee takes. It is mentioned that his mandate will come from what the Muriwai Community want. He supports the idea of the steering/advisory group made of the Muriwai community.
- The President of the OHV 4WD club has mentioned that if the community stand against rules being broken there will be no issues. It was mentioned that he is in support of the steering/advisory group – members of the advisory group need to be voted in by their interest group or be well backed. If sensible people come together sensible, mutual solutions will be found.
- A member of the public suggested there should at least be a time frame that Auckland Council should implement – for users to tidy up their acts and pick up their rubbish etc. This would prove that the community is capable of solving the issues before any action is taken regarding gated access to the beach.