

HERBERT RIVER IMPROVEMENT TRUST

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY 5TH MARCH, 2009
AT 9.00 A.M.



A. ATTENDANCE –

Present were Mr. W.H. Pickering (Chairperson), Cr. G.P. Gianotti (Member), Cr. P. Lynch (Member), Mr. R.W. Clark (Trust Secretary), Mr. B.E. Leach (Trust Engineer), Mr. I. Baker (Invitee – DNR & W, Ingham Office) and Mr. S. Hall (Trust Works Manager).

B. MINUTES -

Confirmation of Minutes of the General Meeting held on 29th January, 2009.

Resolved – That the minutes of the General Meeting held on 29th January, 2009 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

(Crs. Gianotti and Lynch - Carried)

D. WORKS REPORT –

Consideration of Trust Engineer's January and February, 2009 report of works performed to date and activities in progress.

Resolved – That the Report be received and noted.

That the Trust schedule a Special Meeting for Friday 20th March, 2009 at 9.00 a.m. to consider the report on riverbank damage and conduct inspections of the Halifax area.

(Crs. Gianotti and Lynch - Carried)

That the manual pump operation modification at both Ripple and Catherina Creeks as recommended by the consultant be actioned.

(Crs. Lynch and Gianotti – Carried)

E. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. The Secretary submitted accounts for payment as hereunder and statements of receipts and disbursements for the period up to 5th March, 2009:-

<u>General Fund</u> -	Cheque	\$NIL
	EFT	\$10,679.28
		<u>\$10,679.28</u>

Resolved – That payment of accounts as submitted be approved and the statement of receipts and disbursements be received and noted.

(Crs. Gianotti and Lynch – Carried)

F. CORRESPONDENCE –

1. AUDITOR-GENERAL OF QUEENSLAND, Brisbane, 4th February, 2009, advising that the legislated timeframe for agencies to have annual financial statements prepared and audited was reduced from 3 months to 2 months. The Trust was granted an extension by the Treasurer in the 2007 / 2008 financial year until the 15th September, 2008, however advising that the Treasurer has indicated that extensions will not be granted for the 2008 / 2009 financial year. (101/0001)

Resolved – That the advice be received and noted.

(Crs. Lynch and Gianotti – Carried)

2. AUDITOR-GENERAL OF QUEENSLAND, Brisbane, 12th February, 2009, advising that under the new arrangements, the statutory deadline for audited signed financial statements is the 31st August, 2009. Given the shortened timeframe, QAO has instituted a practice of formally agreeing key milestones with the Chairman / CEO. In relation to the Water Boards and the River Improvement Trusts, the key date for the provision of final draft statements and supporting evidence is the 31st Jul, 2009. The 2008 / 2009 audit process is the same as adopted last year and the QAO will provide a document by the 31st March, 2009 to assist the Trust's understanding of the audit process and expectations. (101/0001)

Resolved – That the advice be received and noted.

(Crs. Gianotti and Lynch – Carried)

3. ANDREW CRIPPS MP, MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK, Ingham, forwarding copy of correspondence for the Trust's information forwarded to The Hon. Anna Bligh MP, Premier of Queensland dated 10th February, 2009 regarding the severe flood events in the Hinchinbrook Shire and seeking a commitment from the Queensland Government in relation to a number of issues in the nominated timeframes. (101/0002)

Resolved – That the advice be received and noted.

(Crs. Lynch and Gianotti – Carried)

4. VICTOR AMORY, Halifax, 16th February, 2009, advising the Trust that the recent record flood would have exceeded his levee at 15 River Avenue, Halifax but for an extra few inches that he placed on top of the levee by way of concrete sleepers. Commending the Trust on the levee in every other respect, however advising that it is at risk of overflow, especially on the side facing the river. Requesting the Trust not to read this correspondence as a complaint and advising that he does appreciate the security that the Trusts efforts have given.

Further advising that his immersible pump worked very well to its capacity during the flood event, however there are coils of excess wiring that need to be cut out as it is likely to perish on the outside of the curves. The green pilot light has also stopped working which suggests that the switch box is not waterproof.

Also advising that the excellent Honda pump supplied cannot serve his and the next door neighbours property as a pumping crisis occurs when heavy rain falls on both yards at the same time and to shift the pump when sinking in mud up to their knees is tough on two 70 year olds. (103/0001)

Resolved – That the electrical installation be checked by Lahtinen's Electrician and a second pump be purchased for use by the landowners during flood events.

(Crs. Lynch and Gianotti – Carried)

5. COLIN BIGWOOD, Halifax, 15th February, 2009, advising of problems encountered with his outboard pumping system at 17 River Avenue, Halifax during the recent flood event due to rock falling into the outlet restricting the non-return flap from closing. Advising that he and his neighbour had to five under 1.5m of floodwater to clear the stone away as the water flowed back into the yard as quickly as it had been pumped out, rendering the outboard unusable again. The rock fill around the pipe outlet was never completed during the levee construction as it was to have a concrete header to keep the flap free of restriction.
- Further advising that the wiring to the submerged pump is rotting from exposure to the sun and requires to be attended to together with the switch box which is not waterproof. An Electrician had to be called upon during the flood to bypass the trip out switch to enable the pump to be used and the petrol Honda 3" water pump supplied as a back up between himself and his neighbour Victor Amory proved to be not workable. Suggesting they both require a back up pump each and luck had it that the power did not go off.

Also advising that the water height reached and trickled over the brick walled levee which requires at least 1 more row of blocks along the top. There is also a low point half way along the north side dirt fill levee of 17 River Avenue which is visible to the eye which required sand bags to stop a washout.

Resolved – That advice be given that the Trust is checking flood heights and following receipt of that information the Trust will then assess the brick wall levee height and also that the Trust will check the electrical installation.

(Crs. Gianotti and Lynch – Carried)

6. ANDREW CRIPPS MP, MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK, Ingham, 18th February, 2009, making representation on behalf of Mr. L., Mrs. A. and Mr. C. Cristaldi and seeking an undertaking from the Trust regarding the automation of the Ripple Creek flood gates to be fully functional urgently.

Advising that the Trust acknowledged in July, 2009 that the gates were not automated in time for the 2008 wet season and the time consuming process to open these gates manually was pointed to by the Trust as contributing to the problems reported by the Cristaldi family.

Cristaldi's have now approached Mr. Cripps with their concerns regarding damage caused to their property during the flood events that have occurred so far in 2009 and the inadequate performance of the Trust's flood gates on Ripple Creek during those flood events. They have also expressed concern that the problems with the Trust's flood gates have not been addressed before the 2009 wet season to which the Trust replied in July 2008 that the flood gates would be fully functional prior to the 2009 wet season. The Cristaldi family are very disappointed that this issue has not been addressed, particularly in view of that damage that has been incurred on their property. (103/0016)

Resolved – That the Member for Hinchinbrook be advised that the gates were manually operated in accordance with river conditions except for during the power outage and that the automation of the gates is reaching finalisation stage.

(Crs. Lynch and Gianotti – Carried)

7. HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT CANE GROWERS, Ingham, 18th February, 2009, on behalf of the members of the Ripple Creek and Caterina Creek flood gate drainage areas, recording their grave concern that the flood gate system as provided to the Trust under the SIIP has not been completely installed to a fully operational state in the years since the SIIP program wound up. Advising that the failure of the system to operate has led to regular episodes of crop inundation, which in turn causes crop loss to affected growers over time and the question of dereliction of duty on the part of the Trust has therefore arisen.

Further advising that since the Trust is completely responsible for fully installing the flood gates and the actuation system for them, it follows that the Trust is responsible for the consequences of its actions or inaction which have resulted in economic losses by the growers whose crops have suffered from the aforesaid episodes of inundation from river flooding.

Also advising that the seriousness of the potential losses has prompted Canegrowers Directors to consider pursuing such further remedies should the installation and actuation of the flood gates not be addressed with urgency and requesting the Trust to advise within ten (10) working days of the actions proposed by the Trust and time lines for the satisfactory resolution of this issue. (103/0016)

Consideration was also given to a copy of correspondence provided by the Department of Natural Resources & Water from the Lower Herbert Water Management Authority to that Department dated the 20th February, 2009 concerning the Catherina and Ripple Creek floodgates.

Resolved – That Canegrowers and Lower Herbert Water Management Authority be advised that the Trust does not accept that the gates have not been fully operational, nor accept responsibility for alleged cane loss.

That Canegrowers and Lower Herbert Water Management Authority be advised of the current position with finalisation of the automation of the gates and the reasons for the delay, and that a meeting is planned with the relevant stakeholders in the near future to advise them of the automation and final commissioning and operation of the gates.

(Crs. Gianotti and Lynch – Carried)

8. JOHN CARRUTHERS, Halifax, 3rd March, 2009, advising that he is a War Veteran and due to medical reasons he is unable to maintain the area along the Halifax levee behind and down the river side of his property at 45 Mona Road, Halifax and requesting the Trust's undertaking to take over this responsibility.

Also requesting the Trust inspect the levee bank however the overgrown grass will need to be removed / eradicated prior to an inspection taking place. (101/0009)

Resolved – That the levee bank be inspected and the matter be further considered by the Trust, however advice be given that the Trust believes the area of the riverbank side of the levee should be allowed to remain in a natural vegetated state.

(Crs. Lynch and Gianotti – Carried)

9. ROBERT TENTO, Halifax, 3rd March, 2009, advising that prior to the construction of the Halifax levee he expressed his concerns regarding the detrimental affects that another levee in the Halifax area would have on his property at Halifax. WBM Oceanics indicated that in the event of a major flood, that a majority of his property would have a reduction in water levels and no increase on the remainder, however after the February flood of 2007 he again voiced his concern to Trust members regarding erosion and the marked increase in water levels. Remodelling presented on the 6th December, 2007 again assured Mr. Tento that the addition of the Halifax levee would not have a detrimental affect on his property, however the recent January / February flood was the largest ever recorded at his property by an eyewitness in 73 years. Requesting the Trust to once again review this matter as this evidence shows the modelling of the Lower Herbert floodplain to be inaccurate with regard to his property.

Resolved – That the Trust meet with Mr. Tento on Friday 20th March, 2009.

(Crs. Gianotti and Lynch – Carried)

10. DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER, Brisbane, 23rd February, 2009, requesting the Trust's proposed borrowing requirements and funding arrangements under the proposed 2009 / 2010 State Borrowings Program for the upcoming financial year by the 27th March, 2008.

Resolved – That consideration be deferred to the Special Meeting on Friday 20th March, 2009 at which the issue of riverbank damage will be considered.

(Crs. Lynch and Gianotti – Carried)

11. STATE COUNCIL OF RIVER TRUSTS' QLD INC., Figtree Pocket, 23rd February, 2009, forwarding minutes of the State Council of River Trusts' Qld Inc. Meeting held on the 13th February, 2009.

Resolved – That the Minutes be received and noted.

(Crs. Gianotti and Lynch – Carried)

- G. CONCLUSION – The meeting concluded at 1.00 p.m.

(Sgd) Mr. W.H. Pickering,
TRUST CHAIRPERSON.