

National Conservation Council

General Meeting
(Cayman Brac Government Administration Building Conference Room,
4 December 2019)

Minutes

1. Call to Order
 - a. There being a quorum present (See Appendixes) the meeting came to order at 12:53pm.
 - b. No interested were declared.
 - c. The Chair welcomed members, and the observing public, noting Council's pleasure that they were able to hold this meeting outside of Grand Cayman for the first time.
2. Minutes of 11 September 2019
 - a. The Minutes were noted and approved unanimously. (Moved by Lisa Hurlston-McKenzie, seconded by Patricia Bradley.)
3. Matters Arising From Previous Meetings – no matters were raised.
4. Reports
 - a. Consultations & Licencing Report – Was presented by the DoE and accepted without discussion.
 - b. DoE Public Education & Outreach – DoE noted that the Council's website and Logo should be in use in early 2020.
 - c. Climate Change Committee
 - i. Chair met with a group of local students and the National Trust's Education Programmes Manager prior to the group attending UNFCCC COP25 in Madrid. The group was provided with the status of climate change policy and action in the Cayman Islands, what to expect at the meetings and advice on which side events and pavilions to visit, including seeking a meeting with the UK delegation and other Overseas Territories, and liaising with other youth organisations. Plaudits to the Cayman Islands National Trust for getting the group to COP25 via the International National Trust Organization (INTO).
 - ii. Council noted the need for Council and national proactivity on climate change.
 - iii. Council further discussed climate change and the need for national action, in relation to the proposed Seven Mile Beach study (7a, below).
 - d. EABs Reports
 - i. DoE presented the reports.
 - ii. No update has been received from the Port consortium. DoE continues to press for the scoping opinion from the consortium in order to move the process along.

5. New Matters

a. Sea Turtle Conservation Plan

- i. DoE submitted the Draft Plan, with accompanying Public Consultation report (including all input received), for Council's consideration for submittal to Cabinet.
- ii. Council noted the CTC had sent a letter to Council regarding the Plan and report, for Council's consideration. When the Agenda and documents for a general meeting are published there is an opportunity for the public to write to Council about any of the items on the Agenda. CTC did so in this case. The letter was forwarded to all members of Council for their consideration before the meeting.
- iii. Council was disturbed that the Director of the Department of Environment would be subjected to such unprofessional, vitriolic and mistaken personal attacks as contained in the CTC letter. The issue of independent assessment of release health protocols, raised by the CTC, made Council consider delaying consideration of the report. However, upon reflection, members of the Council noted that the draft Plan does not speak to the specifics of licencing so the delay desired by the CTC in its submission was not ultimately proposed.
- iv. Council considered the updated draft Plan in light of the Consultation Report and the accompanying comments from the public and the question was put to Council whether to submit the conservation plan, together with copies of all the written objections and representations received, to the Ministry for the approval of the Cabinet, in keeping with section 17(6) of the Law.
 - A. Motion moved by Patricia Bradley, seconded by Lisa Hurlston-McKenzie.
 - B. The motion was approved unanimously. (With no abstentions, save the Chair.)
- v. DoE spoke to the Public Consultation report, thanking everyone – individual members of the public, stakeholder entities, DoE and the Council – for participating.
- vi. DoE noted that this Species Conservation Plan is not everything turtles need. The Conservation Plan is mainly regulatory in nature. The actions of the Cayman Turtle Centre are still needed, as are other turtle management activities. Tourist and turtle Action Planning is needed. Some of the input received during this public consultation, such as from the CTC, highlighted various areas outside of the Species Conservation Plan where wild sea turtle management and conservation could be improved and enhanced in the Cayman Islands.

b. Lacovia EIA Screening Opinion

- i. DoE feels it is able to and has adequately assess(ed) the impacts presented by this proposal and that no EIA is needed.
- ii. The issues around redevelopments having smaller setbacks with larger building footprints than the buildings they are replacing was noted.
- iii. The applicant has mitigation measures built into their design plan.
- iv. The motion to ratify the Council's decision to accept the DoE's recommendation that no EIA is needed was moved by Tim Austin and seconded

by Fred Burton. It was passed unanimously. (Colleen Stoetzel (Planning) and the chair abstained.)

- c. Meagre Bay Pond Management Plan
 - i. Fred Burton presented the draft Plan on behalf of the DoE, thanked Council, especially Lisa Hurlston-McKenzie, for review of the earlier draft, and proposed that the Plan goes to public consultation.
 - ii. Council considered the Plan and proposal. No issues were raised.
 - iii. Council agreed unanimously for the draft Plan to proceed to public consultation. (Abstentions: Fred Burton (DoE) and Chair.)
6. Next Meetings, 2020
- a. Council noted the proposed schedule of meetings for 2020.
 - i. March 25, 2pm, GAB 2024
 - ii. June 17, 2pm, GAB 2024
 - iii. September 9, 2pm, GAB 2024
 - iv. December 2, 2pm, GAB 1038
 - b. Council expressed a desire to relocate one of the meetings to one of the Sister Islands again.
7. Any Other Business
- a. DoE presented, for Council's reference, a proposal for a Seven Mile Beach Carbon/Sand Nourishment Study, to be potentially funded from the Environmental Protection Fund. Which would need the Council's approval if that funding option were to be utilised.
 - i. DoE is confident the modelling conducted so far for the proposed Port Redevelopment shows no impact on Seven Mile Beach (SMB). But sand source and SMB stability are still nationally important issues to elucidate. DoE has therefore proposed this study, with an external researcher, after reviewing previous studies and modern techniques which could update our understanding of the SMB sand system.
 - ii. Council suggested that if the research occurs Boggy Sand Road coastline needs particular focus in light of erosion and coastal armouring in the area. (DoE is observing the area and has advised against hard structures which exacerbate beach loss, as has been seen.)
 - iii. Lands & Survey map SMB monthly, in 1ft contours. And it may be possible to redeploy monitoring equipment from the Port EIA for ongoing monitoring off of SMB, e.g., current meters. It appears, anecdotally, that the weather is changing (possibly due in part to climate change) with less significant Nor'wester and other weather events resulting in the sand transport along SMB decreasing. Both ends of the beach are now experiencing significant-to-critical erosion. Private proposals for parcel-scale engineering works continue to be received but appear insufficient to the problem. Government-level intervention will likely be needed, especially taking climate change (especially sea level rise and hurricane

change) into account. (Sea level rise in the Cayman Islands over the last 20 years could be in the region of 2.5 inches.)¹

- iv. The DoE proposal would just be for SMB, from Crescent Point to the WB Beach launching ramp. This would include the site in WB for possible relocation of some corals from the Port, but would not include the primary relocation site at Pageant Beach.
- v. Council considered that in principle the project proposal appeared worthwhile, and value for money, and encouraged the DoE to continue to refine the proposal, and look for other sources of funding if the EPF proved unavailable in whole or in part.

b. Bee Deaths

- i. Council and DoE reviewed the situation with bee and bat deaths during 2019. Investigations are ongoing as DoE tries to ascertain what is known, what can be determined (post-mortem toxic assays of dead bees, and bats), and what monitoring would need to be established to better determine cause of death (and how to avoid it) in the future.
- ii. There is no link established with MRCU spraying, but DoE and MRCU will be meeting to discuss the issue. There is also no evidence of hive collapse. The number of dead bees observed so far have been relatively small. There are many possible related and unrelated causes of the observed bee and bat deaths.

8. Adjournment

- a. There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 2:55pm.

¹ Based on the 3.2 mm global average from 1993-2010 reported in the 2019 IPCC report and applying it to 2000 to 2019 which gives 64 mm or 2.52 inches. This is of course based on the average for 1993-2012 so things could be off and of course it doesn't take into account the fact that the Caribbean basin itself maybe responding slightly differently to global sea level due to other factors.

9. Attendance Appendix

Council Member	4 Dec. 2019	Representation
McFarlane Conolly	Present	Chairperson; East End and Sustainable Development
Franklin Thompson	Present	West Bay and Marine Conservation
Lisa Hurlston-McKenzie	Present	George Town and Sustainable Development & Climate Change
Dominic Williams	Absent	Bodden Town
Edward Chisholm	Present	North Side
Pedro Lazzari	Present	Sister Islands
Nadia Hardie	Present	National Trust for the Cayman Islands
Patricia Bradley	Present	Avifauna & Biodiversity
Fred Burton	Present	Terrestrial Biodiversity
Adrian Estwick	Apologies	Director of Agriculture
Haroon Pandohie	-	Director of Planning
Colleen Stoetzel	Present	Planning Officer, representing the Director of Planning
Gina Ebanks-Petrie	Apologies	Director of Environment
Timothy Austin	Present	DoE Deputy, Research
John Bothwell	Present	Secretary