

National Conservation Council

General Meeting

(Government Administration Building, George Town, 14 March 2018, 1pm)

MINUTES

1. Call to Order
 - a. A quorum being present (see appendixes) the meeting came to order at 1:20pm, after a delay in gaining access to the meeting room.
 - b. Christina Pineda was chosen chairperson *pro tem* by consensus.
 - c. No interests were declared.
2. Confirmation of Minutes of 18 October 2017.
 - a. The minutes were reviewed and no changes were noted. McFarlane Conolly moved that the minutes be accepted, seconded by Wallace Platts, and passed unanimously.
3. Matters Arising from the Minutes
 - a. DoE reported on the completed 2017 protected area land acquisition and designation. Noting that the areas were protected as designated in the National Conservation Law (Protected Area) Orders 1 & 2 of 2017.
 - b. It was noted that the Council was still awaiting Direction from Cabinet, via the Ministry of Environment, on how Cabinet wished to proceed regarding the October 2017 proposed changes to the spear gun and associated rules.
4. Committees
 - a. DoE – Licencing & s41 Reviews
 - i. DoE invited the Council to review the reports provided and noted that in addition there were 4 spear gun renewals and 3 lionfish spear renewals in December that did not make the report. It was further noted that there were no EIAs triggered in the last quarter of 2017 and that over the course of the year only 1% (5; 1.02%) of all reviewed proposals were determined to require an EIA.
 - b. DoE - Invasive Species
 - i. DoE provided a brief verbal report on the 2017 green iguana culling project.
 - c. DoE - Protected Areas
 - i. DoE is preparing the top 10 nominations received from the public for consideration by the Council for public consultation. Council has been provided with all nominations received during the last nomination period, which were added to previously received nominations from which the top 10 were chosen using the scoring matrix previously approved by Council. Several will be expansions of areas approved for protection in 2017, nominated by the owners of land of similar conservation value adjoining the now protected areas.
 - ii. Any private land acquisition in 2018 (and 2019) will be contingent upon supplemental EPF appropriations being requested and approved as despite the Council's request there was no land acquisition included in the 2018-19 EPF budget.

- d. Climate Change Committee
 - i. The chair provided a verbal report, attached in the appendix below.
 - ii. DOE confirmed it provided a briefing paper to the MLAs who attended the Commonwealth Parliamentarians Forum.
 - e. Public Education & Outreach (PEO) Committee
 - i. Website domain name to be renewed. Website content plan to be delivered to Council for review shortly.
5. Matters Arising at this Meeting
- a. 2017 National Conservation Council Annual Report
 - i. An updated hardcopy of the draft report was provided to members at the meeting. Members recommended final minor edits and gave their thanks to the Secretary for preparing the report.
6. Ratification of General Meeting Schedule 2018
- a. The schedule of General Meetings of the National Conservation Council for 2018 was noted and ratified.
 - i. 27 June 2018, 1pm, GAB 2024
 - ii. 19 September 2018, 1pm, GAB 2024
 - iii. 12 December 2018, 1pm, GAB 2024
7. Any Other Business
- a. The seizure report for the 4th quarter of 2017 was presented verbally by the DoE.

DoE Seizure Report, 4th Quarter 2017

DoE apologises for not having the seizure report from the last quarter of 2017 available in time for the publication of the Agenda. During the quarter DoE Conservation Officers seized:

- 14 lobsters;
- 23 conch;
- 1 Hawaiian Sling.

The seafood was donated to the Pines, the Hawaiian Sling is in DoE's evidence lock-up and two criminal cases have been sent forwards (one was being reviewed by DPP and one was awaiting trial).

- b. DoE notified Council that they would be receiving for decision via correspondence a recommendation of no EIA for an upcoming quarry adjacent to existing quarries in Boddan Town, west of Meagre Bay Pond.
 - i. 3 years of quarrying is proposed in 6 phases of 6 months each. The area is currently classified as seasonally flooded wetlands.
 - ii. DoE and the Aggregate Advisory Committee (which includes the Water Authority, NRA, Planning & DoE) reviewed the application and feel they have enough information to review the project and make recommendations with respect to environment in general and the adjacent Meagre Bay Pond Protected Area in particular. There is no encroachment into the Protected Area and a berm is to be constructed to isolate the Meagre Bay hydrology from the quarry

- during rain flood events. The access road to the quarry will be built on a berm which will help to address a similar concern with an existing quarry. Council will, through the DoE, direct if any measures are needed to protect the Protected Area if the quarry is approved by the relevant decision-making authorities.
- iii. The quarry closure plan is for a floating solar panel commercial operation, similar to the existing nearby solar operation in a defunct dry quarry. The closure plan depends on OfReg, etc., so is just a proposal at this time. The solar panel proposal is not mitigation, *per se*, (although carbon release from the removal to the wetlands will occur) but a closure plan. Quarrying, by its nature, will continue in Cayman and continue to have significant local environmental impacts, so the goal is minimising impacts, not achieving zero impact through mitigation measures.
 - iv. Blasting already occurs in the area and new blasts will be mostly submerged so impact to the adjoining environment should be minimal. Blasting is under the regulation of the National Roads Authority. Indirect impacts at the processing site will be minimised by using an existing (already impacted) quarry site. Council will be kept abreast of mitigation measures, etc.
 - v. Council noted that this approval is another deviation from the CH2MHill recommendation of wetlands as non-quarry areas but is in keeping with the goal of reducing impacts to new areas and in keeping with the recommendation to quarry deeper (which is possible in this area as borne out by previous testing in the area). It is hard to keep abreast of quarry and aggregate demand growth. The latter is unknown and the former relies on aerial photos every few years. DoE confirmed that the updated aerial photographic series is still pending.
 - vi. The Development Plan Review should include Aggregate Demand/Reserve & Quarry Zones, to proceed in an informed manner. It should also consider eventual importation of aggregate as a primary source of material.
 - vii. Despite misinformed public comments the Conservation Council and Department of Environment are clearly not stopping or even curtailing development and indeed because of knowledge within the DoE and other regulatory agencies could save the developer the cost of an EIA while giving the country the benefit of national environmental oversight of the proposal.
- c. The Ministry is exploring, with Cabinet guidance, options for appointing new Council members to replace those that have retired and will consider recommendations from the Council next, if needed.
 - d. Turtle Friendly Lighting training & demonstration workshops are scheduled for March 19-21.
 - i. Lighting is currently a major threat to nesting and especially hatchling turtles. The focus is on areas with the most misdirections.
 - ii. Workshops will be free to professionals and will be run by persons from Florida who do this type of work for the State and NGOs. Government staff will be trained to review plans.
 - iii. Uptake of this training opportunity has been adequate. These are technical training workshops for design/build/regulate professionals. Properties in the target zone are being invited to attend. Properties will pay part of the upgrade costs (with the rest made up from the EPF) as part of a pilot project, which is currently going through the procurement process.

8. Adjournment
 - a. There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.
9. Attendance Appendix

Council Member	14 March 2018	Representation
-	-	Bodden Town
Davy Ebanks	Sick	West Bay and Marine Conservation
Lisa Hurlston-McKenzie	Present	George Town and Sustainable Development & Climate Change
McFarlane Conolly	Present	East End and Sustainable Development
-	-	North Side
Wallace Platts	Present	Sister Islands and Terrestrial Biodiversity
Christina Pineda	Present (Chair)	National Trust for the Cayman Islands
Patricia Bradley	Injured	Avifauna & Biodiversity
Fred Burton	Present	Terrestrial Biodiversity
Adrian Estwick	Present	Director of Agriculture
Haroon Pandohie	-	Director of Planning
Colleen Stoetzel	Apologies	Planning Officer, representing the Director of Planning
Gina Ebanks-Petrie	Present	Director of Environment
Timothy Austin	Present	DoE Deputy, Research
John Bothwell	Present	Secretary

10. Appendix: Climate Change Committee Report

Report by the Chair of NCC Climate Change Committee General Meeting March 14, 2018

1. National Energy Policy Review
 - Implementation of the *National Energy Policy 2017-2037* per its Implementation Plan is expected to commence shortly. As a member of the implementation committee, the DOE can continue to feed input from the NCC into this process.
2. Climate Change Policy
 - Update of the draft 2011 CCP stalled after initial review by the CCC to assess policy alignment with NEP goals and strategies. This was partly due to the change in administration and no new directive from the incoming Government to continue the process, and partly to lack of feedback on or information about other initiatives (e.g.

roadmaps) that would have to complement this policy. Efforts by the DOE's Terrestrial Resources Unit to understand the carbon sequestration values for Grand Cayman wetlands and therefore the GHG mitigation potential of these systems is ongoing. Additionally, the DOE and CCC Chair are working with the UK GHG inventory compilers to incorporate emissions and removals from Cayman Islands' land use sectors into future inventories. This improvement in conjunction with understanding both the adaptation and mitigation roles of the recent terrestrial protected areas should facilitate more targeted policy measures in a revised CCP.

3. Climate Addendum/JMC Environmental Roadmap

- It has been over two years since the initial proposal of a Climate Addendum to the Environment Charter and submission to the DOE of climate change and energy sections to Environmental Roadmap previously established under the Joint Ministerial Council framework. The CCC has received no response on either suggestion.

4. Other Activities by Government

- Minister Joey Hew and his Ministry staff attended the 3rd Summit of EU Overseas Countries and Territories Energy Ministers in December 2017 at which the OCT Sustainable Energy Roadmap and other OCTA-related renewable energy initiatives (e.g. climate change and sustainable energy sub-sectors under 11th EDF thematic programme) were reaffirmed. Among the common conclusions is exploring "concrete opportunities for OCTs to be used as testing and early roll-out test grounds of infrastructures and management systems for demonstration projects and capacity building in the OCTs." The DOE did not have any information on whether the Cayman Islands would be included as a testing ground and how, if any, these discussions would affect the implementation of the NEP (or its next review cycle) or the CCP update.
- MLA Kenneth Bryan proposed and received support for the establishment of a climate change council at the Commonwealth Parliamentarians Forum held in London in February 2018. The proposed council would: collect data, monitor and track natural disasters and catastrophic events connected to or caused by climate change, and provide research, technical assistance and advice on and raise awareness of preparedness for natural disasters affecting Commonwealth member states. It is unclear how this body will interact with existing regional weather, disaster or climate change organisations with similar mandates, such as the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) based in Belize, from whom the Cayman Islands received significant technical assistance through the UK Government (DfID/DEFRA) since 2004 with the formulation of the draft CCP and

tourism sector vulnerability and capacity assessment. Ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in April at which leaders will consider the proposal, Cayman's representatives should be reminded of the ongoing Caribbean and Pacific regional climate change programmes and research bodies supported by the UK and international partners, as well as national disaster risk reduction efforts and adaptation planning to date, the latter of which has languished in recent years.

5. Climate Change Adaptation in Fisheries & Aquaculture

- The CCC Chair was asked by the NCC Secretary to review an announcement received from the Cabinet Office regarding the creation of a regional protocol to integrate climate change adaptation and disaster risk management in fisheries and aquaculture into the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy being spearheaded by the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM). It was suggested that the project consultant from Jamaica engage with the DOE, DOA, local fishers and aquaculture practitioners, and other stakeholders in preparing the draft protocol document to be reviewed and validated at the regional workshop in Montserrat on April 18, 2018. The DOE and DOA were encouraged to simultaneously review national Fisheries, Aquaculture and Food Security policies, and collaborate where necessary with HMCI who have incorporated climate change considerations into their disaster risk reduction strategy and who participated in developing the draft 2011 Climate Change Policy (which does not address aquaculture activities or substantially the climate change impacts on local fishing communities).