

Report 05.34
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Committee Landcare Committee
Authors Murray Waititi Manager, Parks and Forests

Waitangirua Farm matters

1. Purpose

To report back to the Committee on progress with Landcorp Farming Limited (LCFL) regarding offer to Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) to purchase Waitangirua Farm.

2. Exclusion of the Public

Grounds for the exclusion of the public under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act, 1987 are:

That the public conduct of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists (i.e. to preserve commercial confidentiality and to enable the Council to carry on negotiations), including commercial negotiations, without prejudice or disadvantage.

Interests protected:

Wellington Regional Council

3. Significance

The matters in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3) (b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

4. Background

At the Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee meeting of 16 December 2004, Council considered an offer from LCFL for GWRC to purchase Waitangirua Farm. Council resolved to:

authorise officers to reject the Landcorp Farming Limited offer

authorise officers to initiate discussions with Landcorp Farming Ltd to explore options for purchasing or otherwise protecting the key areas of Waitangirua farm for park purposes

Councillors also suggested that it would be helpful if GWRC clearly identified parts of the Farm which are a priority for Belmont Regional Park.

After that meeting, we contacted Gerry Soanes of LCFL, informed him of the Council's resolution, and requested that he relay that to LCFL's Board of Directors for consideration at their next Board meeting (to be held on 25th February 2005) as per their original request.

On January 14th 2005 (prior to the LCFL Board meeting), Gerry Soanes contacted us to say, that given the Council's intention not to purchase the entire farm, it would be beneficial for Landcorp to have an indication from GWRC of our key areas of interest so that he could relay that to the Board to consider at its next meeting.

5. Areas of interest to be purchased or otherwise protected

In order to identify the key areas, we have divided the farm into blocks with each block representing a catchment area or significant landscape feature (see **Attachment 1**). **Attachment 2** details the specific values that relate to each of these blocks as an indication of why the block should be protected.

Based on this information, we have prioritised the blocks in terms of their environmental, landscape, heritage and recreational value. We have also assessed each area for priority for purchase based on whether the values of the land can be protected by means other than purchase i.e. reserves contributions. We have been careful to bear in mind that just because a piece of land is important for protection, purchase is not the only means of protecting the values it contains. Therefore our priorities for purchase consider the land's importance as well as other means for protecting it that may apply

Each of the blocks has been grouped together into priority areas of interest for purchase. From **Attachment 3** you will see that we have assessed Area 1 as being the prime candidate for purchase, Area 2 as second priority and so on. Area 1 is made up of Cannons Creek, Stratton Street, Hill Road and the Bunkers blocks which are the core of the park. The blocks contain the bunkers, special geological and landform features, and provides a recreational junction for accessing all areas of the park.

They also contain the Maara Roa bush covenants, and access strips into the suburbs of Waitangirua, Cannons Creek, Ranui and Whitby (not to be confused with the priority 3 blocks).

Unfortunately, reserve contribution rules laid down by Porirua City Council in their District Plan, only apply from the point when a house is developed on the property. With this being the case, reserve contributions will be of little use as a mechanism for protecting land as part of any subdivision process.

At this point, I believe it is prudent for the Council to first look to negotiate for Areas 1 and 2. This will give Landcorp a good indication of what is desired by the Council and what the Council's priorities are. However, it does not mean that the areas will be affordable to the Council, hence the areas can be broken down into sub components (blocks) should the Council need some flexibility during the negotiation process.

6. Where to from here?

Assuming the Committee is comfortable with our priority ranking, I will open discussions with LCFL.

Once we receive a response from LCFL we will have a better idea of how we can fine-tune our requirements.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee

1. *receive the report*
2. *note the contents*
3. *endorse the priority areas shown in Attachment 3*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

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Attachment 1: Purchase options

Attachment 2: Table

Attachment 3: Purchase priorities