



MID-EAST REGIONAL AUTHORITY

ÚDARÁS RÉIGIÚNACH AN MHEÁNOIRTHIR

AGM MINUTES

OF THE MID-EAST REGIONAL AUTHORITY

HELD ON

THURSDAY 16 JULY 2009

IN

COUNCIL CHAMBER

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTE NO. 20.09 – 24.09



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MID-EAST REGIONAL AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 16 JULY 2009 IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL AT 3.00 P.M.

Present:

Cllr. Francis Browne
Cllr. Bill Carey
Cllr. Anne Dillon-Gallagher
Cllr. Pat Doran
Cllr. Jimmy Fegan
Cllr. Brian Fitzgerald
Cllr. Senan Griffin
Cllr. Martin Heydon
Cllr. Jim Holloway
Cllr. George Jones

Cllr. Conal Kavanagh
Cllr. Paul Kelly
Cllr. Derek Mitchell
Cllr. Tracy McElhinney
Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy
Cllr. Jenny McHugh
Cllr. John McGinley
Cllr. Micheál Nolan
Cllr. John Ryan
Cllr. Pat Vance

Apologies:

Cllr. Barry Nevin

In attendance:

Mr. Tom Dowling, Meath County Council, Designated Manager.
Mr. John Byrne, Director MERA

In opening the meeting, John Byrne, Director, welcomed all Members to the first meeting of the new Regional Authority, and especially welcomed the new Members who had replaced outgoing Members. He introduced himself and Mr. Tom Dowling, Designated County Manager, and indicated that under Standing Orders the Director shall preside for the purpose of receiving nominations before the election of An Cathaoirleach.

Election of Cathaoirleach:

The Director asked for nominations for the position of An Cathaoirleach. On the nomination of Cllr. John Ryan, seconded by Cllr. Conal Kavanagh, Cllr. George Jones was proposed for the post of An Cathaoirleach. There being no other nominations for the post it was declared that Cllr. George Jones is hereby elected as Cathaoirleach of the Mid-East Regional Authority for the coming year. Cllr. George Jones then assumed the Chair.

In accepting the appointment, Cllr. George Jones thanked his proposer and seconder for his nomination and thanked the previous Cathaoirleach Cllr. Tommy Reilly for a fine job done in the past year. He welcomed the Members back on to the Regional Authority, and especially welcomed newly elected Members. He also thanked the former Members of the Authority who had stepped down or who had lost their seats in the recent elections, and specifically thanked Cllr. Seamus Murray for the hard work he had done over the past few years on the Regional Authority and on the Committee of the Regions.

Election of Leas-Cathaoirleach:

An Cathaoirleach then called for nominations for the position of Leas-Cathaoirleach of the Regional Authority. Cllr. Conal Kavanagh congratulated Cllr. George Jones on his appointment as Cathaoirleach and wished him well in the coming year. Cllr. Conal Kavanagh then nominated Cllr. John McGinley as Leas-Cathaoirleach. The nomination was seconded by Cllr. Francis Browne. There being no other nomination

for the position, An Cathaoirleach declared Cllr. John McGinley to be appointed Leas-Cathaoirleach of the Mid-East Regional Authority.

MINUTE NO. 20.09

Minutes of Meeting of the Mid-East Regional Authority held on 21 April 2009

a) The Minutes of the Meeting of the Mid-East Regional Authority held on 21 April 2009 were proposed by Cllr. Micheál Nolan and seconded by Cllr. Paul Kelly, and agreed.

b) The Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Mid-East Regional Authority and the Dublin Regional Authority held on 21 April 2009 were proposed by Cllr. Paul Kelly and seconded by Cllr. Micheál Nolan, and agreed.

MINUTE NO. 21.09

Role, Functions and the Duties of Regional Authorities

The Director gave a Presentation to the Members on the role, functions and duties of the Regional Authority, including their setting up in 1994, and their involvement in the making of Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area under the National Spatial Strategy.

The Region's involvement in the INTERREG Programme was also outlined, as well as initiatives underway and European Union issues the Authority has been involved with.

MINUTE NO. 22.09

Regional Planning Guidelines Review Process 2010

Cllr. Kavanagh made reference to the previous role of the Regional Authority in the production of the Regional Planning Guidelines, and their current Review, which is ongoing at present. He suggested that the current Members, and indeed, the new Members of the Authority, need to be brought up to date with the process, and suggested that a presentation be made at the September meeting by the Regional Planning Guidelines Officer for the Greater Dublin Region, Ms. Deirdre Scully. This was agreed.

Cllr. Fitzgerald congratulated Cllr. Jones on this election and wished him well into the future. He said that the current Regional Planning Guidelines had failed the Mid-East Region as policies and objectives had been dominated by the Dublin Authorities, and as a result, the Mid-East Regional Counties had been treated differently. There had been no restriction on development in the Metropolitan counties of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, South Dublin, Fingal and Dublin City, whereas, county Meath has been badly effected by decisions of the National Roads Authority and objections of An Taisce to certain planning decisions. He also indicated that the current job ratio in this county has deteriorated since the last Guidelines in 2004. The Region needs an improved rate base to sustain the increase population, and the counties must be operating from a level playing pitch in competing for jobs with other Regions.

Cllr. Vance agreed with Cllr. Fitzgerald, and challenged the dominance of the Dublin City Council and the Metropolitan Counties in providing jobs and development in the Metropolitan Area at the expense of the Mid-East.

During the discussion that followed, several Members instanced the need for more jobs in the Region as the Region as become a commuting capital for the Greater Dublin Area, and Policy needs to be put in place in the new Guidelines to reverse this trend.

Cllr. Kavanagh suggested that the Funding Report on the Region from Farrell Grant Sparks be re-examined in this Review process to enable the Region to make a valuable input into the new Guidelines.

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Jones, indicated that the Regional Planning Guidelines has not supported the position of Meath, Kildare and Wicklow over the past five years. This Region needs a bigger input into the current Review process, and urged the Members to be more proactive in the development of Economic Policies in their Counties and for the Region.

In summarising the issues raised, Mr. Tom Dowling, Designated County Manager, said that there were very important and valid points raised today by the Members. This Review process for the Regional Planning Guidelines is of critical importance to the future development of the Region, and the Regional Authority must get the policies right in the Review process. The Regional Planning Guidelines give legal effect to planning policies introduced by the Counties under the National Spatial Strategy, and all these policies must be right or developments will not get through the Bord Pleanala process. It is very important that the Regional Members understand that an input into the process and the Regional Planning Guidelines must have a strong focus on Economic Development in this Region. He looked forward to working with the Members in developing the reviewed Regional Planning Guidelines over the next year.

MINUTE NO. 23.09

Correspondence/Conferences

No correspondence or conferences arose under this heading.

MINUTE NO. 24.09

Any Other Business

The Cathaoirleach raised the issue of the starting times for the meetings of the Authority and said that suggestions had been made that the meeting time be changed to 3.00 p.m. to facilitate travel from the various counties. Following a discussion, there was no unanimity on a proposal to change the meeting time, and it was agreed that the time of 6.00 p.m. remain as per the Standing Orders.

The Director informed the meeting that the next meeting of the Regional Authority is scheduled for 10 September 2009 in Wicklow County Council.

Signed:

Cllr. George Jones
Cathaoirleach

Mr. John Byrne
Director

Date:
