



**Community Liaison Committee for
Higgins Mountain II Wind Farm Project**

MEETING NOTES

August 20th, 2020 - 6.00pm - 8.00pm

Video Call - Zoom

In attendance:

CLC Chair: Garfield Moffatt

CLC Members: Gregor Wilson, Mike Eddy, Councillor Barbara Palmer and Adrian Dobson, Karen Henderson, Councillor Tom Taggart, Helen Browne (Verterra)

Higgins Partnership: Graham Findlay (3G Energy), Dan Eaton (Elemental Energy), Maryam Baksh (Elemental Energy), Will Patterson (Elemental Energy), Helen Browne (Verterra)

Guests: Paul Smith (Manager of Planning Services, Municipality of Colchester), Will Balser (Planner, Municipality of Cumberland County)

Regrets/Absent: Bob Maclean, Paul Pynn

Action items:

- **Tom and Barb:** update the group on decommissioning bond requirements and why they are not included in the bylaws for Colchester and Cumberland Counties at the next meeting.
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1. Welcome

2. Review of Agenda

- Agenda was reviewed and approved.

3. Approval of Notes from May 12th, 2020 Meeting and Update on Actions

- **Comments on Notes:** Gregor said that he expects the developers to include impacts on tourism in the environmental assessment (EA). They confirmed that they would be included in the socio economic section of the EA. Gregor asked when this chapter would be available for review.

Dan responded that this would be later in the development process following an award of a PPA.

- **Action item:** Consider the Mission statement presented and send any feedback to Garfield.

Action complete. See item 6. below.

- **Action Item:** To provide any details of the Provincial loan to Northern Timber.

Action complete. Gregor shared information on the loan that the Province provided to Northern Pulp. News articles regarding the loan can also be found in the following links <https://www.thechronicleherald.ca/news/local/nova-scotia-knew-controversial-mill-kicked-back-tens-of-millions-to-parent-northern-pulp-479515/> and <https://www.thechronicleherald.ca/news/local/british-columbia-judge-approves-northern-pulp-loan-482665/> .

4. Project Update - Dan

- There is still no imminent procurement process, however the group is expecting one to be announced late this year/early next.
- Preliminary environmental studies are being conducted at the proposed project location. An email was sent earlier in the year to notify the group. These studies started in June and include seasonal studies for wildlife, vegetation and birds as well as wetland and watercourse delineation. Later in the year further birds studies will be conducted along with surveys for bats.
- Questions and comments:
 - Karen and Gregor - noted that June was a late start for breeding bird surveys.
 - Garfield - asked what the shelf life was for the studies i.e. for what period of time are these studies relevant. Will (Elemental) responded that Strum Environmental, the consultants conducting the studies, said that they have no shelf life i.e. the data can be used from previous years for the EA.
 - A question was asked about why the studies are being conducted and money being invested, given that the development team has said that they are moving forward slowly up until the point when a procurement process is announced. Dan responded that the group would spend risk capital on items that are on the critical path for the project plan. Seasonal

studies can only be conducted at certain times of year and the group doesn't want to miss those windows were the studies can be conducted. The results from these will also feed into the project layout design.

5. Community Update

- Karen said that she had not heard any discussion about the project in the community, it is currently a silent item although she expects this to change as soon as a procurement process is announced.
- Garfield said that Folly Lake and Wentworth Environmental Protection Committee is interested to get a project update and would like to attend a future CLC meeting as guests.
- Gregor stated that he updated the Wentworth Community Development Council (WCDC) on the CLC at a recent meeting.
- Adrian commented that the majority of community members he's talked to would like to see action taken to remove or repair the three existing turbines before they consider any other development in the area.

6. CLC Mission Update

- Garfield has received comments from CLC members on the proposed mission statement and suggested the following:
"Help to guide the developer and if possible regulatory bodies by identifying and assessing risks to the community, including but not limited to the environmental impact, the health and well-being of residents/visitors and the financial risks to residents visitors and businesses alike."
- Graham was concerned that this statement had negative tones and suggested including words that also highlighted the benefits of the proposed wind farm.
- A discussion about the benefits of the proposed project ensued. Helen highlighted the significant positive impact that the project would have in terms of mitigating climate change. All acknowledged that this was true but agreed that the CLC's role is to focus on benefits at a local and more granular level.
- Garfield asked that the group send any other comments on the mission statement to him before next meeting in order to finalize.

7. Presentation and Review of Cumberland and Colchester By-laws – Paul Smith and Will Balsler

- Paul Smith presented the wind energy by-laws for Colchester County
- Will Balsler presented the wind energy by-laws for Cumberland County
- There were many questions and comments for both planners, these are summarised below:
 - **Noise:** Was noise a consideration for Cumberland when setting their bylaws?
Answer; yes, and this was how the separation distances were set.
Tom noted that the CLC should ensure that the developer conduct the initial baseline study for noise during the initial EA stage of the project.

- **Complaints:** Have Cumberland and Colchester had any complaints taken to council regarding other wind farms in the area?
Answer; None had been received for either county. For Colchester County, many of the wind farms were constructed prior to the bylaws coming into force and so there is not much practical experience of operating under them yet.
- **Other Developments:** Is there any consideration for one type of development over another in the bylaws?
Answer; yes, the separation distance from residential dwellings was put in place for this reason.
- **Decommissioning Bond:** it was noted that neither county required a decommissioning bond for the project.
Answer; No comment. Tom and Barb were going to look into why this was the case and report back at the next meeting.
- **Community Consultation for Cumberland Wind Energy Development Plan:** Will Balsler was questioned on why a community consultation event was not held at Wentworth or Folly Lake as part of the Cumberland Wind Energy Development Plan in 2011. This plan was used as a base and to inform the wind energy bylaws for Cumberland.
Answer; Will responded that he did not know how the community locations were selected as it was before he joined the planning team at Cumberland.
- **Revision of Bylaws:** Both Will and Paul explained that the bylaws are living documents and can be revised as new information comes to light and science evolves on wind energy technology.

8. Next CLC meeting date and proposed agenda

- Next meeting is proposed for mid-late October.
- CLC members would be interested in having the landowners, Northern Pulp as guests, a report from the biologists currently conducting field studies at the proposed project location or a representative from Department from Environment explain the EA process.

9. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 8.00pm

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**List of Future Agenda Items/Guest Speakers**

Environmental Assessment:

- Invite a representative from Department of Environment to explain the EA process

Land:

- Invite the current landowners, Northern Pulp as guests
- Discuss other users and uses of the land in general i.e. what future uses are allowed alongside wind turbines, clear cutting, recreational activities etc.
- Mitigation of damage to sensitive species during construction of a wind farm

~~County By laws~~ - Complete

- ~~Invite Nelson Bezanson from County of Cumberland to talk about county by laws for wind turbines.~~

Wind Turbine Insurance:

- Understand developer/county/landowner/insurance liabilities and limitations for various scenarios.

Community Consultation:

- CLC role should circumstance change i.e. change of ownership, project is built and becomes operational
- Community consultation plan as the project evolves.
- Recommendation from the CLC on how to best contact community members.