



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

MEETING NOTES

December 1st, 2020 - 6.00pm - 8.45pm

Video Call - Zoom

In attendance:

CLC Chair: Garfield Moffatt

CLC Members: Gregor Wilson, Mike Eddy, Adrian Dobson, Karen Henderson.

Higgins Mountain Wind Farm LP: Graham Findlay, Paul Pynn , Dan Eaton , Will Patterson , Helen Browne (Verterra)

Guests: Councillor Kathy Redmond, Shawn Duncan (Strum Environmental)

Regrets/Absent: Councillor Tom Taggart, Bob Maclean, Tracy Menge (KMKNO)

Action items:

- **Helen:** Send details of Bird Radar and Shawn's response on whether landowners usually attend CLC's.
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- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Review of Agenda**
 - Agenda was reviewed and approved.
- **Review and Approval of Notes from August 20th, 2020 Meeting and Update on Actions**
 - **Comments on Notes:** Gregor commented that the County Bylaw item should remain open while the action to follow up on decommissioning bond requirements is still in progress.

- **County Bylaws Decommissioning Bond:** Councillors to update the group on decommissioning bond requirements
Action in progress. Councillor Redmond provided an update from Nelson at the planning department for the County of Cumberland. He stated that there is no decommissioning bond currently in place.

Councillor Taggart provided an update through Garfield and has asked that the bylaw for Colchester County be reviewed.

- **Project Update - Dan**

- There are no significant changes to update the CLC on since the last meeting.
- The procurement process has not yet been launched. It is expected to be early or mid 2021.
- Other news relating to renewable energy is that the Federal Government issued its Climate Action Plan outlining how it will achieve net zero by 2050. This is an important guiding document for the future of the energy industry.
- Nova Scotia Power Inc (NSPI) finalised their Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). Key findings are:
 - Renewable energy will play a key role in meeting Nova Scotia's Sustainable Development Goals.
 - Electrification will help with the climate goals as well as reducing rates.
 - Wind energy is the lowest cost source of renewable energy in the Province.
 - 500MW of new installed capacity is required by 2045.
 - Regional integration with neighbouring provinces, through the Atlantic loop is required to enable this much new renewable energy.
- Environmental studies are being conducted at the proposed project location. Shawn, from Strum Environmental will present on this later in the meeting.
- Later in the meeting Paul provided an update on the three existing turbines. He said that they are working on getting the turbines operational. They have sourced new parts to repair the turbines that will be installed in the spring. If this does not happen, they will be removed.
- Questions and comments:
 - Garfield – asked which is more likely to drive the next call for power; the Federal requirement or NSPI's IRP? Paul responded that the Federal requirement is potentially more likely as the electricity act has recently been amended to provide for this.

- **Community Update**

- Garfield shared anecdotal evidence from personal conversations with residents that visual impact of the proposed development is a concern.
- Karen said that it's difficult to make comment on the development until there is more detail. She asked that information is shared as soon as it becomes available.

- **CLC Mission Update**

- The draft Mission statement was distributed prior to the meeting.
- Paul suggested that the group use the NS CLC guidelines.
- Graham suggested one change and the following CLC Mission Statement was agreed:

“Help to guide the developer and if possible regulatory bodies by respectfully and transparently communicating with the developers to understand the project status and the regulatory process, and by identifying the interests of the community 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.”

- **Environmental Studies Plan and Summary of Work to Date – Shawn Duncan, Strum Environmental**

- Shawn presented environmental studies conducted to date, those planned for the future and a high level summary of the findings.
- There were many questions and comments, these are summarised below:
 - Garfield asked how results are interpreted and to what extent ‘professional opinion’ is used? Shawn explained the methodology used to interpret results. This involves analysing the data collected and reporting the level of significance of any likely impact that the development would have on each species following mitigating measures. Shawn also described the EA process and explained that, following submission of the EA to the Province, there will be a 30 day period where the EA is open to public comment as well as comments from other stakeholders.
 - Garfield asked if the surveys to date included adjacent properties. Shawn responded and said that they only surveyed the land that they had landowner permission to access.
 - Adrian asked whether Strum conducted the environmental surveys for NSPI’s new transmission line on the mountain? Yes, they did.
 - Karen asked for continued updates as the work progresses and asked what Shawn’s experience is with other CLC’s. Shawn has Chaired and attended many CLC’s.
 - Garfield asked if, in Shawn’s experience, landowners are absent from CLC? Helen to get response from Shawn as he had dropped from the call.
 - Karen asked whether a shadow flicker analysis would be conducted on the ski hill during the winter months. The shadow flicker analysis is done using computer modelling of the terrain, tree cover and other relevant physical properties.
 - Gregor asked whether the EA should be changed from a Class 2 to a Class 1 because of the size of the project. Shawn said that the EA Class is set based on project type not project size and that the EA for this site will be extensive and meet all regulatory requirements.

- Gregor asked if cumulative effects were considered as part of the EA and the impact on the adjacent wilderness property and NS nature trust land. Yes, cumulative effects are considered.
 - Gregor asked over what period of time the radar collected data and what the specifications of the radar are. Radar targeted periods of time when birds were migrating. The radar measured 24 hours a day from August to November, it will be redeployed in spring. Helen to send radar specifications.
 - Gregor stated that he had additional questions. Paul suggested Gregor send his questions directly to the development team who can forward to Shawn for response.
- **Presentation and Review of Potential Community Economic Benefits – Graham Findlay**
 - Graham presented on the potential local benefits that the development may have. It was very high level due to the early stage of the development.
 - Comments and questions:
 - Adrian voiced concern on the impact that the development may have to snow mobile trails. The main snow mobile trail follows the route of the future wind farm road, which will need to be plowed in winter if the wind farm is built. If the road is plowed then it can't be used by snow mobiles. Graham responded that he knows of wind farms where both snow mobiles and wind farms are compatible. Helen suggested that the development team contact the snow mobile group to understand how they use the area so that trail access can be considered when planning the project.
 - Both Garfield and Karen agreed the EA presentation was informative and helpful and encouraged the sharing of additional information when it becomes available.
 - **Next CLC meeting date and proposed agenda**
 - Next meeting is proposed for February.
 - A number of different agenda items were discussed but there was no conclusion.
 - The CLC are due to review of membership, chair and terms of reference.
 - **Adjournment**
 - The meeting was adjourned at 8.45pm

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### List of Potential 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 – Planners presented, follow up required.

- 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.