



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

MEETING NOTES

May 19th, 2019 - 6.00pm – 7.30pm

Video Call - Zoom

In attendance:

CLC Chair: Garfield Moffatt

CLC Members: Gregor Wilson, Adrian Dobson

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

Regrets/Absent: Councillor Tom Taggart, Councillor Kathy Redmond, Tracy Menge, Patrick Butler

Guests: Rachel Bower (Environmental Assessment Officer - Department of Environment)

Action items:

- **Gar:** Send Paul contact number for Folly Lake Landowners Association.
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- **Welcome**
- **Review of Agenda**
 - Agenda was changed so that Rachel could present at the start of the meeting.
- **Review and Approval of Notes from March 30th, 2021 Meeting and Update on Actions**
 - Action update: Response to Gregor's questions from Strum have been received. They need to be reformatted for presentation before sending. These include the details of Bird Radar.
 - Gregor offered to purchase a Motis radar for Strum to use to supplement bird assessments. Will to let Strum know of Gregor's offer.
 - Action update: Paul has emailed Folly lake Landowners Association but not had

a response. Gar has a contact number so will pass it on.

- Action update: Procurement size will be covered in the project update.
- Meeting notes approved.

- **Overview of Environmental Assessment Process**

- **Presentation:** Rachel Bower, Environmental Assessment Officer from Department of Environment (DoE) provided an overview of the Provincial Environmental Assessment process. Slides from her presentation were sent to the CLC.

- **Questions and comments:**

- There was a discussion about whether larger wind energy projects should be elevated from a Class 1 to a Class 2 environmental assessment. Rachel said that all wind energy projects trigger Class 1 environmental assessments regardless of size. Rachel noted that she didn't know what the history was behind that determination and then listed the energy projects that currently trigger Class 2 Environmental Assessments.

- Gar asked Rachel to confirm that the environmental assessment has not been registered. Rachel confirmed that this was correct. Will said that they still need to do more work on consultation and environmental studies and that the environmental assessment is planned to be submitted in the Fall

- Gar asked how many environmental assessment submissions have been sent back or rejected by the Minister. Rachel pointed him to the DoE website which lists all previously submitted environmental assessments and the Minister's decision on each.

- Helen asked what format the DoE receive feedback on registered documents? Rachel said that the public provide written submissions by email.

- Helen asked what role a CLC has in the EA process? Rachel said that there is no defined role but that the DoE often asks that a project proponent form a CLC. DoE generally regard CLC's as a positive.

- Gregor asked how a project's impact on adjacent protected areas are considered. Rachel said that a buffer is built into the protected area which takes any impact into consideration.

- Gregor asked how fragmentation and connectivity between different protected or sensitive areas is considered. Rachel said that the proponent is responsible for addressing this in the registration document. The protected areas group within the DoE will consider this and along with their own expertise to provide feedback on the project.

- Gregor pointed out that cumulative effects are not considered as part of the Provincial EA process. Rachel agreed.

- Gregor asked how significant habitat areas are addressed. Rachel said that these are identified by the consultant and are listed as Value Ecosystem Components (VECs) in the registration document. Biologists

from DoE will review these in the consultation period and provide feedback.

- Gregor asked how acid rock drainage is addressed for any project. Rachel said that it would be highlighted as a VEC and dealt with in the same way as above.
- Gar asked about visual impact sightlines and how they are assessed. Rachel said that she would provide additional info on this.
- Gar asked if Rachel would attend the CLC again. She said that it would depend on the timing as it may not be appropriate once the registration document has been submitted.

- **Project Update**

- **Environmental studies:** Will provided an update. Radar work for bird studies has been redeployed, spring migration surveys are in progress. The team have had preliminary meetings with DoE. They have identified and are scheduling a consultant to conduct a Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge Study (MEKS). Environmental constraints have been received from Strum for the layout design.
- **Questions and comments:**
 - Gregor asked when the migratory bird study ended. Will said that studies stopped earlier in the week.
 - Gregor asked if the studies identified scree slopes in the area. Graham and Will confirmed that it does.
- **Preliminary turbine layout:** Will said that a preliminary turbine layout for the Environmental Assessment will be available for a meeting in mid-late June. The team are currently working to integrate the constraints that have been identified through the environmental studies. They are also waiting for key information on project size through the procurement process.
- **Community consultation:** Will put forward a new plan for the community consultation based on feedback from the last CLC meeting. The development team would like to hold an initial public consultation session in July to share the layout and details of the project. A later meeting would take place later in the Fall which would include the detailed results of the environmental studies.
- **Questions and comments:**
 - Adrian recommended that no public meeting be held in August as many community members would be busy with the blueberry season.
 - Gar said that July may miss many of the cottage owners. Will said that they intend the consultation to be ongoing and not limited to July.
 - Helen asked whether these sessions would be in person or virtual considering current Covid restrictions. Will said that they are planning for in person meetings but will adjust to virtual if necessary.
 - Gar noted that September is a good time for a meeting.
- **Land update:** A formal request has been sent to Northern Pulp asking them to attend a future CLC.
- **Three existing turbines:** Adrian asked for an update on the three existing

turbines. Paul said that they are currently sourcing parts from Germany and then once they arrive a crane will be scheduled for work. This is likely to be a few months as there are delays due to COVID and NS lockdown.

- **Procurement Update:** Dan gave an update on the latest information on the procurement process. He shared some of the slides from the most recent webinar on the process, these can be found at <https://novascotiagcp.com/>
 - **Questions and comments:**
 - Gar asked if the development team knew how many other projects are going to bid into this. Dan said that he didn't know but at least 10.
 - Gregor asked if Muskrat Falls is part of this project. Dan said that it was not.
 - Gar asked if the wind energy industry is experiencing global supply chain issues. Dan confirmed that they are but didn't have any details to hand.

- **Community Update**
 - Adrian saw a young moose in Westchester recently.

- **New CLC Members**
 - Two new members were put forward for the CLC these are Mary Beth Bowie and Rene LeClerc. Both are seasonal cottage owners. All agreed that they should join the CLC.
 - Gar would like more CLC members and so is open to any more suggestions.

- **Next CLC meeting date and proposed agenda**
 - Next meeting is proposed for June. Suggested items for the agenda is Tourism Nova Scotia, Tourism Industry Association and Strum or a focussed meeting on the layout if it is available.
 - Unfortunately, a representative from KMKNO was not able to attend. Gar asked if the development team could explain more about their role and if they had a financial interest in the project. Paul said that they do not have a financial interest. There are two organisations: KMKNO and WMA. KMKNO would be the organisation that the development team would consult with as part of the EA process, and WMA is the organisation that would enter into a commercial agreement with the project proponents if there are any.

- **Adjournment**
 - The meeting was adjourned at 8pm.



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.