

Scotian Materials: CLC Meeting #7

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

Attendance

- Anna McCarron, SWEPS
- Mimi LeCain, Resident
- Keri Irwin, Resident
- Martin Zwicker, Resident
- Angela Dicker, Resident (late)
- Dean Bouchard, Halifax Stanfield International Airport
- Bill Horne, MLA
- Cameron Wainwright, FRABA
- Jason Crowell, FRABA
- Rob McPherson, Scotian Materials
- Mark Webb, Scotian Materials
- Casey Spears, NATIONAL Public Relations

Absent

- Bud Baker, Resident
- Sean MacLean, Maritimes Northeast Pipeline
- Greg Hughes, Clean Earth

Meeting

Martin chairs the meeting in absence of Bud. Martin asks if there are any errors or omissions from CLC Meeting #6—the group agrees the minutes are correct. Martin reviews the agenda and the group agrees to move forward. Rob would like to preschedule the CLC Meeting #8 in March—to be discussed at the end of the meeting.

Update on Status of Operation from Rob

Most of the company's focus has been on Environmental Assessment on the property. Crews have recently been mobilized and the crusher will be set up on site this week and next (week of October 29). The next blast will likely be early next week (Monday, October 29 or Tuesday, October 30)—this is weather and schedule dependent. Rob will send an email to the CLC advising them the date and time the blast will take place—likely a 24-hour notice.

By the end of next week, crushing operations will start. Crushing will be from sun-up to sun-down and will continue as long as weather permits. It will then be stopped for the winter. Rob asks if there are any questions.

Bill asks if the gravel from the blast will be used for crushing—Rob says yes. The face of the quarry is set up now (from earlier blasts this year). This rock was used to develop the site. Scotian is now into production blasting. Before the end of this year, there will likely be a second blast. Rob says it's unlikely there will be a third blast. They'll have a better idea about the second blast date after next week's blast occurs.

Jason asks if this is the first blast for crushing—Rob says yes. Martin asks if an office has been built—Rob says no. Rob advised the office was put on hold (originally planned for 3,000 sq. ft. and now increased to 6,000 sq. ft. and concrete tilt up). The investors looked at the site and decided to make more of an investment into Scotian's future here and build in room for growth.

Bill asks if that will be attached to the concrete/asphalt area, Rob says yes, but slightly to the side (between where it was currently planned and Maritime Fence).

Bill asks more about next week's blast. Rob says this will be a 50 tonne blast versus 17-20,000 tonne blasts previously. The method of laying out the drill holes and the loading of the holes ensures the vibration of the blast does not vary between a 20,000 or 50,000 tonne blasts. The second blast before the end of this year will be an additional 50–60,000 tonnes.

Rob confirms Martin's question that it will be monitored the same as other blasts. Rob says yes and the report will be made available.

Angela asks if there were any issues—a second infraction? Rob says no.

Environmental Assessment (EA) Update

Environment responded to the EA with a number of questions and asked for clarification. There will be supplementary reporting and additional studies. Environment asks questions about pre-and-post water balance and more detailed designs of settlement ponds. Based on this, they would like Scotian to re-assess and evaluate the impacts of the work to make sure there aren't any impacts downstream from the quarry.

Environment asks Scotian to ensure wetlands are properly surveyed and evaluated. Rob says these are already done and they just need to provide the supplementary report.

Rob says they have met with Environment and it's the responsibility of the proponent to provide them the information they need. Bill asks what happens next. Rob says his understanding of the process is that these responses are directly to Environment and Environment evaluates and makes a decision. There is no more additional consultation.

Bill asked the Minister if they could have access to it. Bill didn't receive an answer, but Minister will look into it. Bill and Rob aren't sure if access will be granted.

Environment asked for additional work on potential risks for Waverley-Salmon River Long Lake Wilderness Area. They also asked for electro-fishing on the quarry property to identify the fish species present. They didn't do electro-fishing originally because they took the most conservative approach assuming it was all fish habitat. Rob suspects it will show there is less habitat than Scotian originally assumed.

Environment asked for Scotian to complete a Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge (MEK) Study (Membertou Geomatics is going to do the work). EA looks at environmental impacts. MEK Study looks to traditional use—they'll go out and meet with First Nations and ask about the history of the lands (have the lands been used for historical purposes, such as camps, rituals, medicine, etc.). An EA triggers provincial consultation with First Nations. Through this consultation, the MEK Study was asked for. Rob thinks it will be much more common going forward.

Jason confirms it was triggered by the EA—Rob says yes. Bill says it was also done with the Goldboro project. The province agrees it is the First Nations land, so that's why they have to do it. Dean confirms they've done it with the Airport in 2011 during the extension. He lets Rob know it can be a long process.

Environment gave Scotian a year to complete MEK Study and Rob says it will take about a year to complete. It is becoming more prevalent in quarry applications. It hasn't been consistently asked for by the province or First Nations in the past. Part of the duration to complete the study has to do with when plants are available seasonally for review. Scotian is aiming to have this study completed June/July 2019.

Mimi asks who is doing the fishing stuff. Rob says it will be Golder or a consultant hired by Golder if Golder does not have the expertise to do this.

Martin is interested in the reclamation. Rob says with quarries, reclamation plans (slopping, vertical faces, revegetation, etc.) are important. Environment wants more details—how big of a phase would Scotian open up before starting reclamation. This ties back into water handling plan.

Mimi asks about the Waverly Game Sanctuary and wants to know who is doing this. Rob says it's through Golder, but they may have to hire a second consultant. Mimi asks why DNR won't do this, Rob says it's on the proponent to hire and go out and do the work.

Anna says Salmon River partially overlaps the Game Sanctuary. Anna thinks people can hunt in the game sanctuary—most of the group disagrees with this statement. Anna stands corrected. People can clear the land, but not hunt. In the Salmon River there are different regulations.

DNR Update

Mark followed up with DNR after the last meeting. He sent them the EA summary on the website and explained the quarry is expanding 10x its size today. He received a response that they aren't able to comment on EAs before they are submitted due to changes that can happen throughout the process.

The comments from Meeting #6 were actioned.

Anna looks up the Game Sanctuary on the internet—the website says people can hunt in the wilderness, but it overlaps the Game Sanctuary. There are discrepancies. The Salmon River trumps the Game Sanctuary. Anna continues to read an email from another committee she is part of. Rob confirms the quarry has “No Hunting” signs on their property.

Bill Horne Complaint

There was the first “official” complaint received by phone from MLA Bill Horne. Another party complained about discoloured water at one end of Soldier Lake and one dead fish found on the bank. Upon receiving the complaint, the Response Complaint Protocol was actioned. It was documented and actions were undertaken to address the complaint.

Scotian took water samples at all sampling points up and downstream from the quarry (five total). The tests were sent to the lab and no sediment was found. All samples were within the permitted guidelines (and well below).

In addition, Scotian did a visual walkthrough to look at erosion control features (fence, storm ponds, dams, etc.). All of these were in proper condition and functioning. They took an additional step to bring in Elmsdale Landscaping to hydro-seed as an extra precaution.

Scotian says nothing was found and everything was adequately actioned. This complaint will make its way into the Annual Report.

Bill called Environment and Environment did a site inspection and looked at the controls that were on site. Environment did not contact Scotian again and Bill hasn't heard anything back about the fish. The fish is currently frozen.

Mimi wants an answer to the discoloured water. Bill says the government doesn't have a large amount of money to study these issues—they rely on the proponents. Angela says she has left seven messages for the Environment and no one has responded. Bill says they're there for regulations and not a lot of science is done there.

Rob says under the Act, if Scotian receives a complaint they initiate a process to follow to address this. If something was found and it was because of Scotian's operations, another whole level would have been actioned. Scotian doesn't know who the man is that made the original complaint.

Soldier Lake is 1.6km away from quarry. Martin asks if Environment had an opinion on the hydro-seeding—Rob says no. Environment confirmed there is nothing coming from Scotian's site that would contribute to the complaint.

Jason asks if to-date that this has been the only complaint. Rob says yes. Mimi disagrees and asks about sediment in the tub earlier this year. Rob says that wasn't an official complaint with Scotian, the complaint went through the Environment and wasn't attributed to Scotian's operations.

Requests for Information Discussion

There was a request from a committee member for information on Scotian's bonding. As part of the industrial approval, Scotian provides a bond to Department of Environment and its renewed annually. Scotian receives a letter that extends the dates and this is typical.

Rob wants to report that the bond is renewed and will be extended until February 10, 2019. Prior to this date, another renewal will go out.

Rob asks the committee how they should deal with this because on occasion, he receives direct requests. He doesn't want to convey information to one committee member and he wants to bring the information to all members so everyone hears the same answer. Keri asks if this can be done via email if it's time sensitive and Rob agrees. If it isn't urgent, the response will wait until the next CLC Meeting. Everyone agrees.

Rob says two neighbours on Perrin Drive said their houses shook yesterday (Tuesday, October 23). Rob says Scotian didn't blast. Dean says the Airport received the same question. They don't know what it was from, but it wasn't Scotian blasting.

Questions

Bill asks if Scotian uses the same blasting company that on Highway 102 that has a misfire (Gateway). Rob says yes, it is the same, but Rob says he doesn't know what happened. Rob's been asking so he can learn from other mistakes as a preventative measure. Bill advises that Labor is investigating, but Bill and Rob haven't received any information as to what happened.

Mimi asks if rocks can end up on the highway beside Scotian. Rob says this can happen when mistakes are made, but when everything is properly done mistakes don't happen.

The bond is for remediation of the site. Rob says this is so a company can't up and leave and the site is left un-remediated.

Bill asks for an explanation of the growth of the quarry and if everything is closer to the road, Airport, and Maritimes Northeast. Rob says he doesn't have a good visual because this was covered previously by presentation. Rob says it isn't moving closer to Maritimes Northeast. The active footprint gets closer, but the blasting limits are still staying at 200m from the pipeline. It will, however, move closer to the highway and the Airport.

Mimi asks if they've been approved for 4 hectares or 40. The application is in and supplementary information has to be provided before they determine if they'll receive the approval. Rob says it will be next summer before this is submitted. Rob says there is a ready-mix concrete plant and an asphalt plant that falls outside the quarry.

Bill asks about air emissions for an asphalt plant and what standards there are. Rob says the Municipality doesn't have requirements for air quality (this is left to Environment). Environment gives the permit to operate the plant and then there are guidelines. This is not part of the EA or this project.

Martin says there was some overburden from the settling pond and there was something to be done with it. Rob says the quarry floor has to be moved back to make room for the settling pond. Currently run off floods the quarry and they can't operate when it floods. Once the quarry face is moved back there will be more room for the settling pond on the quarry floor.

Bill says he feels the quarry may inhibit industries from staying at Aerotech Park due to the blasting. He thinks the blasting could be more than Scotian has done yet. Rob says the vibrations that are felt by the blast depend on the size of the hole that is drilled and the charges that go in for the explosives. The larger the hole and wider the grid, the greater the vibrations will be and the cheaper the blast. To date, Scotian has gone with smaller holes and tighter grids (costs more), but has reduced risk of fly rock and vibration. They have a zero tolerance on fly rock. There are monitors at pipeline, gate at Aerotech Park, and Miller Lake. Bill is satisfied with this rationale.

Mimi asks if the scale house on the highway is changing for Scotian. Rob says no.

Martin says he didn't get to the open house and asks Rob to provide a report on it. Rob says the attendance was lower than he expected. Attendees were fairly knowledgeable about the plans and what Scotian has done to-date. Rob says two people were disruptive. He says all-in-all, it was good.

Keri received feedback that people found out about the open house late. The downside of mail drop is that not everyone checks their mailboxes as frequently. Two people would have liked to have gone, but were unable.

Keri says the people who signed up had their emails and phone numbers put on the government website. A suggestion is made that the information could be greyed out. Rob says he will look into this.

Keri says the completed surveys were submitted by two people and out of 26 attendees, only six people filled out comment cards. The engagement seemed supportive of the project, but it was only two people out of 26 who commented. As she read it, it skewed positive.

Rob says the written responses were not numerous. Keri says she would have written something if she knew the exit responses were going to be posted. She says the date comes at a busy time and people had to search it out and be committed to submitting.

Bill brings up the black ash tree. Where it was identified, Scotian adjusted the boundary further away so the surface catchment area would not be impacted. Scotian pulled this back and has minimized any impact. There is one, immature, unhealthy black ash. Rob says the connector road will have a greater impact than the quarry. Bill says he will look into it.

Mimi doesn't understand how there is only one black ash on 40 hectares of land. Rob says Golder subcontractors walked the property to review the land. They go into the wetlands to look for types of plants that are expected in those habitats. They know if a certain type of habitat is present then certain plants, etc. should be there too.

Future Meetings

Rob proposes a March 2019 meeting following the submission of the Annual Report (which goes in February). Golder will come in and walk through the submission (water sampling results, complaints, how many blasts, etc.). Anna says she's specifically interested in water sampling results. Golder will be able to give a summary.

The committee proposes **Wednesday, March 13 @ 6:30 PM**. Rob will let the committee know if the location changes, otherwise it will be at the Hilton Garden Inn again.

Rob has invited another member from Clean Earth to join the committee as Greg Hughes has stepped down from the committee.