

HIGHWAY 104 AT ANTIGONISH COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE (CLC)

Meeting Notes - Meeting #9
JUNE 17, 2009
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
COUNTY COUNCIL BOARDROOM

Attendees:

Ken Donnelly
Roger Garby
Hugh MacDougall
Mary McCarron
Heather Mayhew
Brian Segal
Ken Proctor
Gerry Grant
Len Robertson
Ian MacCallum
Dwayne Cross
Debbie Kampen
John Walker, Stantec
Shannon Murphy, Stantec

Regrets:

Hugh MacDougall
Mary McCarron
Rose Julian

1.0 INTRODUCTIONS

Ken Donnelly provided a brief introduction of the meeting and indicated that the main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Trunk 7 interchange, and build upon the progress made in the previous meeting.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF TRUNK 7 INTERCHANGE

Dwayne Cross provided a brief summary of the Trunk 7 Interchange study and discussed the following points and questions:

- Department is proceeding with designing Highway 104 to go over Trunk 7 and will be confirming this to the CLC shortly.

- Noise issues, especially pertaining to the Chisholm subdivision which is closest to the new highway.
- Use of roundabouts rather than ramps. These will keep the traffic moving in a circular motion, save on costs through not having to provide signal lights and prevent the project team from having to build a three lane bridge to provide for left hand turns. In addition they can be built close to the highway, thereby decreasing the overall highway footprint.
- Question: Should another public consultation should be held to discuss the new configuration changes? Answer: Yes, that was brought up at the last meeting and will be discussed later in today's meeting after information is provided on the noise level study. There have been suggestions that perhaps an open house is needed to enable the public to see the recent changes.

3.0 DISCUSSION ON THE 3D MODEL

A summary was provided on the 3D model with information on what the final structure would look like once built. Detailed explanation was given on how the Trunk 7 interchange would fit around the highway, houses, subdivision, natural environment and vehicles. It was indicated that the model was only the first step in visualizing what the final structure would look like.

Several questions were answered and discussed relating to the placement of the ramps, bridges and roads, the number of lanes envisioned and the past studies that have provided the information for the decisions. The project team discussed that plans were not yet finalized and that final decisions on the structure's design would be made in the fall.

John Walker introduced himself and showed a picture to describe what they were initially envisioning when they discussed whether Trunk 7 would go over or under the new highway.

4.0 PRESENTATION ON NOISE LEVELS STUDY

A presentation was provided by John Walker which provided information on the main factors that can increase or decrease a highway's noise level, as well as those discovered during the study that guided the highway's current design. It was discussed that noise levels can be affected by the grade of the road, the road's level of sight, potholes or degradation, traffic flow, the mix of vehicles, type of pavement, weather, and noise blockers such as trees or jersey barriers. Information was also provided about the algorithms used to determine noise levels.

Questions were answered and discussed on the following points:

- Noise levels, and the design and placement of noise barriers and safety barriers.
- Jersey barriers and how they worked with environmental factors such as water runoff and their utility in mitigating noise.
- The difference in noise levels between asphalt and concrete.

5.0 TRUNK 7 INTERCHANGE CONSULTATION

A discussion was held on whether another public open house should be held to present the new design changes. The following points were discussed:

- An open house for the entire public may not be necessary, but discussion should be held with the home owners that will be directly affected by the new highway, particularly those in Chisholm subdivision.
- Others should be considered as well, such as those in the local business community and the two local councils.
- The downside of not providing an open house for everyone is that the public may come back next year and ask why they were not told about the new changes.
- It may be more effective to reach the broader community through an article in the Casket, and have a targeted open house for people living in the vicinity.
- Question: Is it possible to have a newsletter sent to local residents? Answer: Yes, and that has been looked into. Distribution through the Casket is reasonably priced and cheaper than Canada Post. Once construction begins, a newsletter would likely be noticed more.
- The time needed to develop communications materials for a public open house should be considered if this option is to be pursued.

6.0 WEST RIVER BRIDGE

Stantec has been contracted to design the structure of the bridge and to determine the environmental sensitivities of the area and prepare regulatory permits.

Shannon Murphy discussed the environmental constraints discovered through the EA, and how they plan to take these into consideration when designing and constructing the bridge. These are as follows:

- The area contains several rare plants, as well as those of traditional significance to Aboriginal populations.
- There are several fish habitats and rare bird species.
- Plan to reduce footprint as much as possible.
- There is the possibility of an enhancement program which may involve the removal of invasive species, propagation of species that may be affected, the avoiding of in- stream work, and a salt management program to decrease salt run off.
- Some concerns exist about river widening, however the widening will allow for continued travel/habitat for the wood turtle.
- Stantec will work with the local university who is current conducting studies on some of the rare plants in the area.

7.0 OTHER

An update was provided on the 2009 construction schedule and it was indicated that the intent is to shorten the timeframe as much as possible, especially with regards to building the detour. Currently, the team still needs to determine what infrastructure is needed to deal with the detour.

8.0 RDA UPDATE

The Regional Development Authority provided a brief presentation on their project to address marketing issues for the community and its businesses. They are at a preliminary stage, and are evaluating which community contacts they should make. They will update the CLC at a later date.

9.0 SIGNAGE

Ken stated that once he had been in touch with Brian Storrie, he would provide the signage committee with some possible dates for the next meeting.