

HIGHWAY 104 AT ANTIGONISH COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE

MEETING NOTES APRIL 1, 2010

Attendees: Ken Donnelly
Dwayne Cross
Ian McCallum
Roger Garvey
Harry Damon
Bruce Thompson
Sean Vane
Brian Segal
Ken Proctor
Alisha Grant
Heather Mayhew
Bill MacFarlane
Shannon Murphy
Holland Sayers
Trudy Spooner
Anne-Marie MacKenzie

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND REVIEW

Ken Donnelly welcomed the CLC to the meeting. At the last meeting 50m, 70m and 90m spans for the bridge were discussed, but these were not acceptable both in environmental or financial terms. Therefore, the NSTIR examined 140m and 241m spans. Based on the results, the 140m span is more favourable. This meeting will be to compare the impacts of a 140m and a 241m span and explain how the 140m span is most desirable.

DWAYNE CROSS PRESENTATION OF 140M AND 241M SPANS

Upon receiving the feedback about the 50m, 70m and 90m spans, NSTIR redesigned the span with 140m and 241m options. Based on the results (presented below), NSTIR felt that 140m was the best option and presented a proposal to the Department of Environment (NSE) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The 140m proposal has been met with approval by both NSE and DFO, though some adjustments are being made to improve it further. Holland Sayers, the expert who created the water level models of the different spans, noted that climate change impacts had been accounted for in both models.

Below are the main points of comparison between the 140m span and the 241m span:

- In the case of a 1 in 100 year flood, the difference between the level of flooding that would occur with the 140m span and the 241m span is insignificant;
- The 241m span creates 0.3m of scour. The 140m span creates 0.5m scour;
- Both spans would impact fish habitats therefore it is necessary to work with DFO to minimize or offset impacts;

- The 140m span is predicted to cost approximately \$5.1 million less than a 241m span. A cost analysis was done which accounted for 10% inflation. Furthermore, two additional scenarios were modeled with the span costing 10% less and 10% more than predicted. In all cases, the 140m span was less expensive than the 241m span (ranges from \$4.6 million to \$5.1 million less expensive).

BIOLOGICAL MITIGATION

Ian McCallum presented the plans for biological mitigation. Mitigation will occur to offset the footprint of the new highway. In both instances of a 140m span and 241m span the impact is significant. The 140m span would result in the disturbance or loss of 0.53ha agricultural land, 0.20ha of flood zone habitat and 0.55ha of upland forest area. The 241m span would result in the disturbance or loss of 0.16ha of agricultural land, 0.16ha of flood zone habitat and 0.18ha of upland forest area.

To mitigate the biological impacts of the construction of a span the following actions will be taken:

- Two agricultural sections of land will have some loss due to construction, so two other areas of land will be reclaimed for use as pasture land;
- NSTIR will attempt to transplant any disturbed coffee tinkerweed to another area. NSTIR is also working with Acadia University to work on cloning the coffee tinkerweed as transplanting can be difficult;
- There is an attempt to have no net loss of coffee tinkerweed plants but plans are still being developed;
- All access roads that are built during construction will be restored once the project is complete.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND OFFSETS

The development of a span across the West River will disturb fish habitat. As a result, DFO must be involved to mitigate or offset the impact on fish. A federal Environmental Assessment (EA) will have to be conducted.

To conform to regulations regarding the disturbance of fish habitat, NSTIR will engage in site remediation along the Rights River to offset the disturbance on the West River. NSTIR has purchased seven properties in downtown Antigonish along the banks of the Rights River and is conducting habitat rehabilitation. In five years, the area will become part of the Antigonish Wildlife Management Zone. While the remediation work is being conducted, NSTIR is proposing to NSE that small ponds and channels be created on the land, a trail system be built with extra signage and invasive alien plants be removed. There is a plan to work with the Nova Scotia Agriculture College to assist with the plant removal.

Developing the habitat rehabilitation will include using LIDAR information to delineate the wetlands in the area. A compensation proposal will also be developed to ensure that none of the hydrology in the area is affected. Also, a monitoring plan will be put in place. Once final approval has been given, NSTIR will put out a tender for the Earth movement work, which will be monitored by DFO. Habitat Unlimited will also be contacted for consultation on how to proceed with the rehabilitation.

FUTURE MEETING

In order to quickly submit a final proposal for the span, NSTIR requests that members of the CLC talk with the community and email any questions to them within the next two weeks. At the next meeting in

late April the NSTIR staff will be able to quickly and efficiently address all issues. **Action Item: Ken will send a note to everybody asking for questions or concerns which can be forwarded to NSTIR.**

All information from this meeting will be posted on the website and available for public viewing.