



MINUTES OF MEETING

UUNGULA WIND FARM COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (CCC)

5:00 pm, Monday 23rd September 2013
Goolma Hall
Minutes taken by: Naomi Finlayson

Attendees:

Lisa Andrews (LA)	Independent Chair
Daniel MacDonald (DM)	Wind Prospect CWP (WPCWP)
Naomi Finlayson (NF)	Wind Prospect CWP
Heather Gough-Fuller (HGF)	Community Representative
Michael Flynn (MF)	Community Representative
Peter Harlow (PH)	Director Strategic and Planning Services, Wellington Council
Craig Stubbs (CS)	Community Representative
Chris McDonnell (CM)	Community Representative

Apologies:

Jim MacDonald (JM)	Community Representative
Michael Tolhurst (MT)	General Manager, Wellington Council
Rod Buhr (RB)	Mayor, Wellington Council
John Weatherley (JW)	Councillor - Mid Western Regional Council
Catherine Van Laeren (CVL)	Director Development & Community Services, Mid-Western Regional Council

Absent

Louisa Kiely (LK)	Community Representative
Stephen Lowe (SL)	Community Representative
Lyn Jarvis (LJ)	Community Representative

ITEM	ACTIONS
<p>1.0 Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>5.09 pm - Meeting opened</p> <p>LA, Independent Chair welcomed all to the meeting. LA declared her interests and that she would be taking over from MMH.</p>	
<p>2.0 Apologies</p> <p>As above</p>	
<p>3.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes</p> <p>MF has raised an issue with the minutes – the words “MF raised ‘Gag Clauses’ host neighbour refusing to speak about wind farm progress” have been incorrectly recorded and have been removed. SL withdrew his query with the previous minutes.</p> <p>Minutes of CCC #2 were confirmed by HGF and seconded by MF.</p>	<p>Post CCC #2 final minutes on the web page.</p>

4.0 Business Arising

LA: Questions from previous meeting raised by CVL regarding whether WPCWP would object to a dwelling within 2km of a built wind farm.

DM: clarified with company, WPCWP would have no objections to dwellings being built within 2km of an existing wind farm. For host land owner proposing to build a dwelling within 750m of an operating wind farm, the company would want to speak to the landowner to ensure they are aware of the impacts. The same would apply for a non-involved landowner.

In line with the draft guidelines, we currently consider all existing dwellings within 2km of proposed turbines. Blocks with existing dwelling entitlements are identified and assessed for potential conflicts.

HGF: Does a DA count as an existing dwelling?

DM: As per the draft guidelines an approved DA does not count as an existing dwelling although we consult with the effected landowner and consider each approved DA on a case by case basis.

LA: Follow up on proposed visit with the Conn's.

DM: Meeting took place the day after the previous CCC meeting, 18/06/13.

LA: Wind Farm Tour

DM: Took place on the 31/08/13. Will be discussed further in 6.0 Reports.

5.0 Correspondence tabled

In:

01/07/13 - Email from SL withdrawing his query with the minutes of 11/02/13.

04/07/13 – Email from MF wishing to clarify the “gag clause” comment (dealt with in item 3).

Four emails received – tendering apologies for this meeting.

10/09/13 - Email from JM – sending apologies and asking that a question be tabled at the meeting – move this item to General Business

Out:

04/07/13 minutes from CCC meeting #2

04/07/13 – Letter to Sam Wilderbeek sending committee's condolences.

Apologies

6.0 Reports

DM: Gave update of recent consultation work carried out over the last 3 months. Primarily consisted of meeting with local residences within 5km of the project and showing early drafts of figures and photomontages which will make up the Environmental Assessment.

Mudgee Small Farm Field days: Had a stall at the Field days on the 12-13/07/13 and received an overwhelmingly positive response. Discussed the Uungula Wind Farm as well as the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm (including possible construction traffic transportation routes through Mudgee).

Watershed Landcare Green day: Took place on the 12/09/13. Built wind turbine models with school children.

Wind Farm Tour: Took place on the 31/08/13 with 25 participants (12 host landholders, 5 Neighbours and staff) including SL and HGF. Visited two wind farms, Gullen Range which is under construction and Gunning which is operational.

HGF: Provided feedback on the tour. Found the visit to Gunning WF helpful particularly stopping at 1km and 2kms out from the turbines to listen to the noise emitted. Had no trouble hearing the noise at 1km distance but had to consciously listen for the noise at 2kms distance. Was mindful that the turbines and the overall wind farm size at Gunning are much smaller than what is proposed at Uungula WF. Discussion of the role of the CCC at Gunning WF and how the money in the community fund is directed towards people in the immediate area, including landscaping and student scholarships.

CS: How much does Gunning contribute towards its community fund?

DM: \$30,000, per year.

MF: Who owns and operates the wind farms?

DM: Gold Wind – Gullen Range WF and Acciona – Gunning WF.

Regarding hearing the turbines, at:

500m out – everyone could hear the turbines

1km out – 2/3 of bus could hear the turbines

2km out – the same 2/3 of the bus could hear the turbines

CS: Does it depend on the number of wind turbines or just the distance?

DM: Explained the effect of number of turbines and distance.

HGF: Noted that when directly under the turbines it is possible to hear a number of other sounds such as knocks – will this noise carry?

DM: The noise models used are very conservative and wind turbines are

able to be turned on and off to meet noise criteria. Modern turbines also have the ability to be run at a quieter setting. Weather also has the ability to effect noise – but this is known to the acoustic industry and taken into consideration.

LA: Asked question of HGF – Were you surprised by the noise?

HGF: surprised at the reduction in noise at 2km compared to directly underneath a turbine – wasn't as obvious as was expected at 2km. The noise was loud standing directly underneath although inside the office was not as bad.

DM: son of landowner at Gunning built a new house 450m away from turbines.

HGF: could potentially habituate at 2km away.

DM: Appreciates that neighbours to the project kept an open mind and participated in the tour.

DM: EA Update – had hoped EA would be on public exhibition by now. Received many adequacy comments from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, more than in previous cases. Open day will also be delayed to keep in-line with EA going on public exhibition.

Feedback from the department had an emphasis on off-sets. Local landowners interested in participating in BioBanking were asked to fill in an expression of interest form. Approximately 11 interested local residents have been in contact so far. At present up to 3,000 Ha are estimated to be required to off-set the impacts of the project.

CS: Are trees mainly removed to develop the roads and the turbines?

DM: Yes. When designing a wind farm we seek to avoid impacts where possible, and where this is not possible we either look at ways to reduce or offset the necessary impacts. . We especially avoid impacting on areas of EPBC listed species. During adequacy the Department of Planning and Infrastructure requested a more thorough off-setting plan.

CS: What do they offer to you as an off-set? Can you explain further?

DM: Possibility for limited grazing in these areas. Properties can either be purchased or have an ongoing management plan.

MF: Excellent quality land which cannot be improved is not suitable for BioBanking as it can't be improved.

CS: Do you look to purchase 3,000 Ha?

DM: This is the maximum size we would need, based on the whole wind farm being built. It is better for us to have larger parcels.

<p>CS: What sort of parcel size is optimum?</p> <p>DM: The larger the better from our perspective.</p> <p>MF: There is uncertainty with the new government and how this will affect the development of the wind farm.</p> <p>Discussion about uncertainty, the economics of the project and time frames.</p> <p>DM: No further reports.</p>	
<p>7.0 General Business</p> <p>LA: Email received from JM: <i>Re compensation, firstly any money should definitely not go to a council, secondly, should not go to a community fund to say upgrade a cricket pitch in Goolma, but should go to those who will be disadvantaged by the wind farm. My question for the meeting is - in the event compensation is approved, what guarantee will be given that when the developers sell the wind farm (my understanding is within a couple of years after completion) the new owners will continue the agreement?</i></p> <p>DM: Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPAs) would spell out our agreed contribution and commitments (e.g. roads, social infrastructure). We will have two VPAs, one with Wellington Council and one with Mid-Western Council.</p> <p>Community fund contribution varies from wind farm to wind farm but for WPCWP it will be based on \$1,250 / MW per year.</p> <p>HGF: Is this amount separate to the VPA?</p> <p>DM: No fixed position yet, community fund may be wrapped up with the VPA.</p> <p>CS: Is the community fund a legislated requirement?</p> <p>DM: This is between the project and the community and is not legislated by the government. There are many models to allocate community funds and it is expected that the Councils would want a say in this. There should be some consideration given to those closer to the project, e.g. solar panels on houses. At this stage it is too early to be making any decisions on how the money is allocated. We will work with the community but will not dictate how the money will be spent.</p> <p>HGF: My take on that is that although we are not deciding now, the VPA will be on the Council side of things.</p> <p>DM: Council are the logical organisation to be involved as they already have the facilities to administer the funds. They don't necessarily have to</p>	

<p>be making the decisions but they have the auditing processes and internal set up to do this. Council are also in a good position to know the cost of infrastructure.</p>	
<p>8.0 Meeting Schedule</p> <p>Monday 20th January 2014 at 2:00pm</p> <p>At least one months notice will be given if this date is to change.</p> <p>Please email LA with any issues.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 6.05 pm</p>	

DRAFT