

**MINUTES OF MEETING
SITE REVIEW TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

2:00 P.M.

**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

JANUARY 8, 2003

MEMBERS PRESENT: David M. Holden, Planning Director, Chairman
John Burke, Parking and Transportation Engineer;
David Allen, Deputy Public Works Director;
David Young, Deputy Police Chief;
Steve Griswold, Captain, Fire Department;
Tom Cravens, Engineering Technician (Water);
and, David Desfosses, Engineering Technician (Engineering)

ALSO PRESENT: Lucy E. Tillman, Planner 1

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The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. The application of **Public Service Company of New Hampshire**, owner, for property located at **400 Gosling Road** wherein site plan approval is requested for the construction of the following: a) a wood fire boiler, b) an air emission control device and ductwork, c) a wood conveyor constructed over the existing coal conveyor extending from Lot 1 over the railroad parcel to Lot 2A, d) a 200'± x 300'± wood chip storage building including all wood chip handing equipment; and, e) relocate fireside wash recycle all with associated paving, utilities, landscaping, drainage and site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 214 as Lots 1 & 2 and lies within a Waterfront Industrial district.

The Chair read the notice into the record.

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION:

Richard Despins, Station Manager of Schiller Station, addressed the Committee. He reviewed the history of how they got to this point. Approximately one year ago they started looking at a NH solution to help with the declining timber industry. They determined that the most beneficial way to deal with this was to construct a fluidized bed technology boiler at the Schiller Station. That will qualify them for Renewable Energy Certificates with the States of Massachusetts and Connecticut. The revenues that they generate from selling the RECs will be used to pay for the investment so that they will be able to provide this new technology at the Schiller Station at no cost to the customers. They will be replacing one boiler unit so they are not adding to the capacity of the facility. PSNH filed a formal proposal in August with the PUC for this \$7 million project and the key component that allowed this to happen was the re-modified legislation regarding the deregulation process. This project not only provides tremendous benefit to the State of New Hampshire economy and timber industry but it also has key local benefits as well. The emissions from the unit will be significantly reduced. Local businesses will benefit from Schillers existence, along with the 76 employees that work there. It is anticipated that their tax revenue payment will go up in the six-figure range.

Michael A. Hitchko, Maintenance Manager at the Schiller Station and project Manager for this project, spoke next. He briefly explained how the Schiller Station generated electricity and basically explained

that it was very much like a furnace in a home but magnified many, many times. He reviewed the existing site, including the docks where the coal is unloaded. They would continue to use boiler #5 until the new wood burner was completed. This is not a new technology but is greatly improved. Noise and dust are two big issues. They fully expect to meet all of the local ordinances regarding noise and do not expect to have any noise impact. There will be much less dust with the wood versus the coal.

Tom Gorrill, of Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers, indicated that they were retained to complete the traffic impact study as well as the site design. His focus was on the traffic impacts. He first addressed the trip ends, which they consider either a trip in or out. They estimated 70 truck loads a day, equaling 140 trip ends per day. Each truck is equivalent to 2 cars which averages out to 48 passenger car equivalent per hour. They studied the impact at the Woodbury Avenue/Gosling Road intersection and determined that only 2 movements, out of a total of 12 movements, at this intersection would be effected. Mr. Gorrill stated that the overall impact would be approximately .032%.

Mr. Gorrill addressed PSNH's plans to convert a road on the Spaulding Turnpike. The DOT is proposing two projects. One is a safety project to improve the northbound interchange with River Road and the Spaulding Turnpike by making the ramps less sharp and eliminate a left-hand exit heading southbound. The Little Bay Bridge is not going to be completed until 2010 at which time it would be a viable route for their needs.

William Haskell, of Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers, spoke about the site project. He discussed the elevation of the site and did not anticipate any additional storm run off. The water from the paved area flows into a catch basin and then comes down through the site and ultimately gets treated in the waste water treatment plant that is on site. In the proposed condition, the stormwater that will be collected from the paved area will do the same thing, and in a large storm event it would overflow and go into a swale that is located along the railroad tracks and discharge into the river, which is similar to what happens now. They propose to collect water from any new impervious area that they have for the new access road, etc., and direct it back into the site for treatment before being discharged. They have had a preliminary meeting with NHDES and they are treating this as two separate areas. The area at the river doesn't have enough disturbance for a site specific permit, however, on top of the hill they have approximately 450,000 s.f. of disturbed area which puts them into the State permit process. In addition, they will be filing a NPDES Construction Stormwater permit which will require monitoring of erosion control during the construction process. The Piscataqua River does have a FEMA 100' flood plain associated with it. The base foot elevation is 9' and that extends up to the River embankment and along the site, so they do not anticipate any impact on the flood plain. There are a couple of small pockets of wetlands that will be impacted and they will be filing a DES permit for that.

Laurel Brown, an environmental analyst with PSNH, spoke on air emissions. From an air perspective she felt this was an exciting project as there were substantial emission reductions and, in addition, it is a renewable energy project. Ms. Brown indicated that they were working closely with the Air Resources Division at the Department of Environmental Services and will be required to have a Federal Permit to build the boiler. In their permit they will have emission rates that are substantially lower than what they are currently allowed to do. They are planning to submit their permit application to the State in the next couple of weeks, which will become public. There will be an opportunity for a public hearing and public comments. They also looked at the impact on air quality for traffic emissions. They determined that the impact of 130 trucks per day would be negligible.

Attorney Robert Ciandella, local counsel for the project, advised the Committee that that concluded their initial presentation.

Chairman Holden opened the Public Hearing for public speakers.

Attorney Malcolm McNeill, representing Commerce Center, which is in close proximity, addressed the Committee. The interest of Commerce Center was what effect the change would have to this area of the city and what impact would occur. Also, what the impact will be to the travelling public and what burdens this will create to the City of Portsmouth. He would like more information on the trucks that will be coming in and out of the site. The Little Bay Bridge situation is already verging on being untenable. He asked what the interaction between the location of the new boiler and its compliance with the Shore Line Protection statute was. He felt the bottom line was, if there were not emission impacts, there were going to be real life issues and they would like reasonable assurances by the City that there will no result in diminution of property values of surrounding properties. He asked for an explanation of why the variances were required and asked if all options had been considered concerning those variances. He indicated that Commerce Center wanted to be involved and heard on issues of consequence so that their specific interests are protected.

Tom Morgan, Town Planner for the Town of Newington, spoke next. He indicated that the Town of Newington and the Planning Board felt there were problems with the additional trucks travelling on Gosling Road. Gosling Road was never built for this many trucks and there are a lot of children in Gosling Meadows. Newington would like to see the rail used, but if that isn't possible, then they would like to see Shattuck Way continued to Gosling Road, which would save a lot of wear and tear on Gosling Road.

Chairman Holden asked how Shattuck Way ties back into the Spaulding Turnpike.

Mr. Morgan explained that when DOT reconfigures Exit 4, trucks would get off on Exit 4 and come down Shattuck Way. If the road were continued, they could travel right into Schiller Station.

Chairman Holden called for further speakers. There being none he preferred to leave the Public Hearing open for questions from the Committee.

Deputy Chief Griswold asked if they would lose their REC when they burn coal, rather than wood?

Mr. Despina confirmed that to make the project work they would have to burn wood as there would not be any RECs when they were burning coal. Not knowing what will happen to the wood market, they do not want to put "all of their eggs in one basket" so they need to have the ability to maintain the lowest price for fuel.

John Burke asked why the coal truck trips don't decrease?

Mr. Despina indicated that they ship their coal to the Merrimack Station.

Mr. Burke had questions about traffic. He questioned how the traffic counts were taken and Tom Gorrill reviewed those again. The traffic count was done in November and seasonal adjustments were made. Mr. Burke took exception to the growth rate and indicated that he wants to take a better look at that.

Mr. Burke was concerned about what guarantee they had that the trucks would be using the connection that they did the traffic study for. He was also concerned that the accident rate did not include State Police or Newington accident reports and he would like to know more about those accidents.

Chairman Holden reminded the Committee that if development occurs at Pease, they are responsible for the impact that they bring to the transportation network and also that that intersection was configured for a SAC base and the development of Pease will probably exceed the design capacity of that intersection.

Mr. Burke indicated that the RPC Regional Impact Committee recommended the Shattuck Road connection and he was interested to know if they had researched the road element designs associated with that, i.e., pavement design, shoulder width, lane widths, impact on land use, noise impact.

David Allen discussed storm drain issues. He questioned the difference in their introduction, they talked about disturbing 450,000 s.f. for the wood storage area however when they specifically talk about the wood storage area they talk about 145,000 sf. of paved area.

Mr. Haskell indicated that the difference is in grading and 145,000 s.f. is impervious area.

Mr. Allen also expressed his concerns over the stormwater treatment and some of it going through the wastewater treatment system. Mr. Hitchko indicated that would all be covered by the NPDES permit.

Mr. Haskell went on to describe the stormwater treatment that was being proposed. They have worked with DES and are complying with their requirements. There are several difference options and they have not finalized their final design.

Mr. Allen indicated he would be interested in more information regarding the numbers from the 2 year storm event, how or where that would be discharged into the Gosling Road area. He also inquired about waterlines going to the new facility or any current or proposed fire suppressants. He did not see anything on the plans. He also requested the site utilities be shown on the plans so they could see where the water/sewer lines were.

Thomas Cravens asked about water/sewer to other buildings on the site. He also requested that the existing lines be shown on the plans and also what was proposed.

David Desfosses was waiting for final design plans for the site so that he could review them.

Chairman Holden asked if they had filed with NHDES for the site specific and, if so, how many separate applications were there?

Mr. Haskell indicated they had not yet filed for a site specific and intend to file that at the end of the month and there will be one application.

Chairman Holden asked what permit was required for building in the tidal buffer zone?

Mr. Haskell indicated there was a wetland permit that will be filed that will include the impact within the tidal buffer zone as well as the impact to the small wetland.

Chairman Holden asked if there was any Federal oversight of either of these permits?

Mr. Haskell was not aware of any Federal oversight.

Chairman Holden asked what the air quality status was of this area?

They are within standards for all pollutants except for ozone, where they are in serious non-attainment.

Chairman Holden went on to ask if they had another industry coming in that was going to have some substantial emissions, does the presence of the new PSNH facility impact the area's ability to take on other industry?

Tim Donnolly, of McMillan & Donnolly, stated that there were no short term issues and the plan is proposing a credit in knox reductions.

Chairman Holden asked for future clarification on the passenger car equivalent. He asked for updated information on build-outs in the immediate area. He was particularly concerned about Woodbury Avenue, where a developer provided \$600,000 in improvements to the area and that project was not built out. It was important that this project factors that in. Also, regarding Pease, it is important that they recognize all of the development that is existing and even that which is vacant at the present time.

Mr. Burke asked them to look into the vacancies at Commerce Way.

Chairman Holden asked to see the effect of interconnecting the traffic lights along Gosling Road and up Woodbury Avenue towards Newington. The impact should not be limited to intersections in Portsmouth.

Mr. Burke indicated that Portsmouth owns and operated the Woodbury and Gosling signals, Newington owns and operates the signals at McDonald's and the State owns and operates the signals on the Spaulding Turnpike.

Chairman Holden asked about the accident rate on Little Bay Bridge and whether that should be a concern. He stated that the State viewed it as a concern. Mr. Burke mentioned that accidents are covered by Dover, Newington and State.

Chairman Holden asked to see a building elevation of the storage area (wood storage building) and how it relates to the adjacent properties. He asked for additional details on how the wood operation would take place and what type of equipment would be used to move it. He asked for information on how they would buffer adjacent properties. He was looking for information on the existing ambient noise levels and some spec sheets so that they could compare to the City's Article V, Noise Standards.

Chairman Holden asked about vibrations effecting the area and would like to see that indicated somewhere.

Chairman Holden asked that there be some indication of how traffic routes would be posted. He would like to see the figures for the hauling of ash from the site documented and the corresponding effect on truck traffic. He asked if wood becomes economically unfeasible, would this facility use coal as the

dominant fuel source or would that only be temporary. Could the plant be run to the benefit of PSNH on coal? Mr. Hitchco indicated that it would not be economically feasible to run the plant on coal for any length of time.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD:

A **motion to table** was made by David Allen, and seconded by Tom Cravens. Chairman Holden recommended that one of the grounds for tabling was due to the upcoming BOA meeting on January 20, 2004. Secondly, they would like to see the results of the PUC and he would propose that they table this until their next regularly scheduled meeting on February 3, 2004.

Chairman Holden felt there was the potential for a win-win situation and that this was a very positive project. The three areas that he felt had to be dealt with:

- 1) The MPO process for Regional Impact, regarding the long term consequences of using rail. He would suggest that PSNH, the City and the DOT convene to meet with representatives of the MPO.
- 2) The Newington spur road and whether it does or does not connect into PSNH;
- 3) What improvements are needed for Gosling Road.

The **motion to table** until the next regularly scheduled TAC meeting of February 3, 2004 **passed unanimously**.

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A motion to adjourn was made and seconded and passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

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These minutes were taken and transcribed by Jane M. Shouse, Administrative Assistant in the Planning Department.