



## TOWN OF GROTON

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## TENNESSEE GAS PIPELINE WORKING GROUP COMMITTEE

### Officers

*Chair* John Giger, G-D School Committee  
*Vice Chair* Peter Morrison, Cons. Comm.  
*Secretary* John Llodra, Citizen at Large

### Members

Peter Cunningham, Selectman  
John Petropoulos, Selectman  
Kevin Kelly, GELD Manager  
Dennis Eklof, Citizen at Large

### Advisors

Mark Haddad, Town Manager  
Steele McCurdy, Fire Chief  
Takashi Tada (Cons. Comm. Alternate)

Meeting Date: September 8, 2014  
Location: Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room, 173 Main Street, Groton  
Members: Kevin Kelly, Dennis Eklof, Peter Cunningham, John Giger, Peter Morrison,  
John Petropoulos  
Advising Members: Mark Haddad, Fire Chief Steele McCurdy, Takashi Tada  
Others: Michelle Collette, Ellen Baxendale, Anna Eliot  
Handouts: Agenda,  
Draft minutes September 2, 2014  
Mitigation Focus Team's draft outline

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Meeting convened at 5:30 pm. John Giger asked for review of the September 2<sup>nd</sup> minutes. Mark Haddad noted that three members only were intended to be assigned to each subcommittee. Peter Cunningham is willing to step off of the first objective to bring first objective membership to three members. First two objectives were edited to better reflect the intent of the committee.

*Peter Morrison moved to approve the revised minutes. Dennis Eklof seconded and motion carried 5:0 (Peter Cunningham abstained, John Llodra absent).*

### **Town of Groton's pipeline webpage**

Discussion of website and decisions made by group for design of the Town's Pipeline page. Fran Stanley introduced the Town of Groton's pipeline page and asked for Committee members to make choices regarding layout and content. In the past week, John Giger and Fran Stanley had consulted with the Town's Information Technology department to start planning for a pipeline page that educates Town residents and allows the public to follow Pipeline Working Group activities. The group was amenable to a tab format. Also, two tabs were selected to start. The first tab will contain Pipeline Working Group committee information and the second tab will be recommended reading. Dennis Eklof's curated Microsoft Word document, consisting of a list of relevant articles, will be included in the recommended reading section.

Down the line, the committee may specify other tabs but the goal is to design a website that can grow without laborious revisions to previously published material.

### **Open meeting law training**

Mandatory Open Meeting law training for appointed committee members to be held on September 17<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm at the Country Club. Recommended training, but not mandatory for elected committee members.

John Giger reviewed meeting posting requirements and explained how replies to emails sent to Committee members risk triggering the open meeting law. Fran Stanley can distribute information and articles and even committee members can distribute information to other committee members. That will be legal so long as no receiving committee member responds to that email. Michelle Collette commented that the 1976 Massachusetts Appellate Court decided a case on the open meeting law that was a Town of Groton case. It remains the case on point for serial, casual communication. Information can be shared, but no deliberations outside of a posted open meeting are permitted.

Regarding the present focus team divisions, John Giger asked members to stay within the focus team silos and not share opinions with other focus teams outside of an open meeting.

Another best practice for Pipeline Working Group committee members speaking in public forums outside of the Pipeline Working Group committee is to clarify that you are speaking as an individual and not speaking as representative of a particular group.

### **Objective Focus Teams**

For the mitigation objective, John Petropoulos introduced an outline of mitigation objectives that his focus team had composed. Peter Morrison and Kevin Kelly are also working on this focus team.

The group discussed the value of directional drilling with use of periodic pits over other methods. Directional drilling would mitigate impact on the environment and perhaps be less onerous to affected homeowners too. The directional drilling is accurate. Pits and directional drilling are less damaging than trenching. The drilled areas would still need to have a mowed fifty foot buffer. Due to the higher cost of directional drilling over conventional trenching, the Town of Groton may need to make a good case for the environmental benefits meriting increased costs for employing this construction technique.

The distribution system leaks about two percent of its capacity in Massachusetts. John Giger referenced a law passed [or bill introduced] to have gas companies accelerate their replacement of aging gas lines. The gas infrastructure for these larger pipelines has a much lower leakage rate, per Dennis Edklof. Michelle Collette spoke as an individual and customer with natural gas. In her experience, the gas company is responsive when you have a gas leak. The large number of local dig safe' notices initiated by gas distributor National Grid shows some attention to ongoing maintenance of existing natural gas that flows into Groton.

Peter Morrison spoke on the issue of tax impacts for affected homeowners. Significant amount of income from personal property tax that the Town of Groton may receive does not mean that the Town needs to spend that new revenue. Perhaps this new tax revenue would allow the Town to lower its tax rates on real property.

John Giger commented that the committee does not have a resource to steer homeowners about how to deal with an eminent domain negotiation. Dennis Eklof says that FERC has good information for landowners facing eminent domain.

Regarding municipal efforts vis à vis the pipeline, Peter Cunningham noted that the Town of Hollis in New Hampshire paid for an engineering study related to pipeline routing and the Beaver Brook conservation area. John Petropoulos acknowledge that effort and observed that the committee needed to learn enough to prioritize its recommendations so that the Board of Selection could weigh alternatives.

Referencing the numerous generation facilities that have been taken off line recently (powered by coal, LNG or nuclear), Dennis Eklof commented that ideally, the New England region will have generation flexibility as well as ready fuel to power generation plants. If low priced Marcellus Shale natural gas supplants other fuels, the New England region may become too dependent on this single source of fuel.

Peter Cunningham is expected to be absent next Monday.

*Peter Morrison moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:51 pm. Kevin Kelly seconded and the motion carried 6:0 (John Llodra absent).*

Notes by Fran Stanley.