



TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237
Tel: (978) 448-1111
Fax: (978) 448-1115

TENNESSEE GAS PIPELINE WORKING GROUP COMMITTEE

Members

Chair Kevin Kelly, GELD Manager
Vice Chair Peter Morrison, Cons. Comm.
Secretary John Llodra, Citizen at Large
Peter Cunningham, Selectman
John Petropoulos, Selectman
Dennis Eklof, Citizen at Large

Advisors

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

Meeting Date: July 27, 2015
Location: Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room, 173 Main Street, Groton
Members: John Petropoulos, Kevin Kelly, Dennis Eklof, Peter Morrison, Peter Cunningham
Others: Pierre Comtois (Nashoba Publishing), Stuart Schulman (Groton Board of Selectmen and co-chair of Northern Massachusetts Municipal Gas Pipeline Coalition), Diane Hewitt and Richard Hewitt
Handouts: Agenda, draft minutes March 23, 2015

Meeting convened at 5:37 pm. Kevin Kelly asked the committee to review the proposed agenda.

Peter Morrison moved to approve the agenda as presented. John Petropoulos seconded and the motion carried 5:0 (John Llodra absent).

Kevin Kelly asked the committee to review the March 23 draft minutes.

Peter Cunningham moved to approve the March 23, 2015 draft minutes as presented. Peter Morrison seconded and the motion carried 4:0 (Peter Cunningham abstained; John Llodra absent).

Focus Team Reports and Updates

John Petropoulos noted that he has not heard many Groton area conversations about the proposed transmission pipeline lately. Richard Hewitt agreed that this may be true for people not actively involved in following the project. Richard Hewitt added that many residents may not be aware that the Groton route remains an alternative path and that FERC could always decide to route the pipeline through Groton as Kinder Morgan originally proposed.

The July 24, 2015 filing by Kinder Morgan to FERC was discussed. The size of the pipe was reduced from 36 inches in diameter to a 30 inch diameter. This change will reduce the volume of natural gas transmitted and will also reduce the compressor station sizes. Dennis Eklof said that he has long maintained that the cost of getting natural gas to Canada for LNG export was not economic.

The filing has more than 6,000 pages of information about the project and will take a while for interested people to download and review. Stuart Schulman observed that the earlier filings had more than 20,000 'TBD's' (to be determined) placeholders and that this most recent July 24 filing still has 10,000 TBD mentions. Scoping hearings held in July and August will be done without the public having the benefit of a completely described proposal. For example, the very large compressor station that is projected to be sited in New Ipswich, NH is lacking information on the operational sounds – what decibels at what distances – which is meaningful when imagining the impact on the abutters.

Diane Hewitt stated that the purpose of the scoping hearing is to ask questions of FERC regarding what still needs to be studied about the project. Any speaker recognized will only have three minutes to speak and can ask questions.

Kevin Kelly provided some recent pricing data. In the Monday and Tuesday heat wave of last week, the highest price was 5.9 cents whereas the price of natural gas dropped back to 2.5 cents when there is plentiful supply. With this price fluctuation in mind, Kevin Kelly said that he was disappointed that the proposed pipe did not stay 36 inches in diameter. Kevin Kelly observed that the proposed pipeline route in New Hampshire appears to be proceeding well. Economic benefit of bringing natural gas to Southern New Hampshire towns was noted as businesses and residents in these towns may appreciate choice of using natural gas.

Kevin Kelly said that the Board of Selectmen has asked for an update and he asked the group what its input to the Selectmen should be. Kevin Kelly will address the Board of Selectmen in their August 3rd meeting.

Peter Cunningham stated that it is in the Pipeline Working Group's charge to advise the Selectmen and to formulate a strategy. Jack Petropoulos said that he views the Selectmen's objective is to avoid having the transmission pipeline pass through the Town. Stuart Schulman commented with his views as a Selectman. He said that due to the overwhelming majority of the Town that turned out at the Special Town Meeting to vote against the project that he opposes the project.

John Petropoulos commented that many residents may believe that having a transmission pipeline within 100 feet of your house would be harmful to one's property values. He is not sure that this is accurate. Hopkinton has such pipelines that are about 30 years old and there is not a stigma that affects home prices there. A new pipeline may be a different matter. The FUD effect (fear, uncertainty and doubt) is real and a new project will have uncertainty attached to it. Some residents have already been told that their house would be unsaleable if the pipeline passed nearby. Also, some home insurance carriers have declined to insure a home located near a natural gas transmission line. Another selling homeowner had news of prospective pipeline lead to a \$17,000 decline in the purchase price of their home.

After a broad discussion, the committee agreed by consensus that the Board of Selectmen should have some presence at the Scoping meetings. There is a meeting in Lunenburg on August 12th at 7 pm. Questions to be asked of FERC in that meeting may include: (1) what first responder capacity must Groton have in order to address the range of emergencies that could occur with the transmission pipeline; and (2) what resources would need to be in place to safely evacuate the Groton Dunstable Regional High School in the event of an emergency. The group agreed to ask the Conservation Commission if there were specific questions that would be useful to ask with respect to crossing Groton's wetlands and sensitive environmental habitats. Peter Morrison will follow up with the Conservation Commission.

Also, the committee agreed by consensus to explore intervenor status for the Town. The committee will have time to investigate the costs and benefits as the Town cannot intervene as a party until Kinder Morgan files its certificate application. That application is not expected to be filed by Kinder Morgan until October, 2015. Kevin Kelly will investigate costs and benefits with his MMWEC contacts (Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Co). Beverly Woods may also have an idea of the costs and benefits. She works with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments.

Website updates

Unclear whether the Town's website entries for the Pipeline (commonly referred to as the Pipeline Page) need much updating at this juncture, but group agreed that to post the July 24, 2015 Kinder Morgan cover letter and matrix. This website -- <http://www.nofrackedgasinmass.org/resource-report-project-scope-update-72415/> -- called NoFrackedGasInMass.org serves up all of the submitted documentation that Kinder Morgan references in its July 24, 2015 cover letter.

Next meeting: 5:30 pm to 7 pm on Monday, September 21, 2015

Peter Morrison moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:37 pm. John Petropoulos seconded and the motion carried 5:0 (John Llodra absent).

Notes by Fran Stanley.