

 **NRPC APPROVED MINUTES**
NRPC ENERGY FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
11/06/15

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Young, Town of Litchfield
Elvis Dhima, Town of Hudson
Kat McGhee, Town of Hollis
Mark Bender, Town of Milford
Tad Putney, Town of Brookline

Tim Thompson, Town of Merrimack
Sarah Marchant, City of Nashua
Kermit Williams, Town of Wilton
Steve Wells, Town of Mason

STAFF PRESENT

Tim Roache, Executive Director Sara Siskavich, GIS Manager

CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Roache called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm. The first order of business was to accept the draft EFAC minutes from July 24, July 29, and September 9, 2015. After brief discussion on the September 9th minutes Thompson moved to approve all three sets of minutes as drafted with a second from Young. All were in favor.

LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Roache began the discussion by summarizing the various sentiments from the group regarding the direction of EFAC. Reactions to the NRPC decision and comment letter are mixed. Some are disappointed by the lack of a position. Some feel that the letter was diluted and didn't adequately represent the work of the EFAC. Others have taken the time to say it was the correct decision and that NRPC should remain a neutral fact finding body.

In particular Roache described the letter from Tad Putney, Kat McGhee, and Mark Bender to the NRPC Executive Committee calling for a re-examination of the committee and its leadership. Roache indicated that he and Williams had sat down together to discuss the content of the letter.

Williams recounted and he and former Executive Director Diers were largely responsible for the idea of the Committee, and they had discussed the Committee as an informational group—not an anti-pipeline, and a pro-pipeline group—an as a neutral body was to examine both sides. Secondly, Williams said that he tried to run this group collaboratively rather than authoritatively, and he felt that having a “soft hand” and being from a town with at this point little direct impacts from the pipeline had helped to guide the group in an unbiased manner.

Williams said that he agreed with the vote that on the balance, the impacts to the region are more than the benefits. But he feels we need to recognize the benefits on a larger scale beyond our region, for example, lower gas prices. But again, he does not see the need to be a pipeline opposition group, there are several of those. All that being said, Williams said he would let Tim take the reins and he would continue to represent Wilton on EFAC.

McGhee agreed with the comments of Williams, but that the EFAC group never heard him say he agreed with the balance statement, and so there was no clear message. Williams felt that it was the job of EFAC to study the project, and considering it will most likely get approved, and that there are benefits outside our region, the EFAC should examine what the NRPC towns should be doing. Williams also mentioned he was writing an op-ed to the Monadnock Ledger making this point, and others.

Marchant brought up the charge of the Committee. She felt that the Executive Committee thought the mission of the group was to be fact-finding only, and while she was surprised at the reaction of the Full Commission against the idea of a resolution, she felt that overall the problem was that of communication.

She reminded the group that the working context for EFAC is the NH SEC process, and that the Commission may be understandably reluctant to make a recommendation until the proper point in that process.

Bender indicated that he felt the issue of taking a position or forming some recommendation is central to the purpose of the group; also the timing of when to take a position is very important. The time is now, and perhaps we have lost that opportunity.

Roache said that while the formal application date is still November 20th, there is still the entire NEPA process which he thinks will take longer than 12 months. He reminded the group that NEPA generally trumps state process (with the exception of MA and CA who have parallel processes). He mentioned that no other RPCs or RPAs have yet to take a formal position on the NED and that NRPC has gone the furthest. It all comes back to the role as an RPC, and we are in new territory. He said that NMCOG is expecting to tackle the issue of a position soon. Overall, Roache feels we are not too late. Thompson added that he thinks we are too early.

Moving forward, Roache said that he will step in as interim chair of EFAC, and that choice of new permanent chair would require Executive Committee input.

UPDATES TO THE STATUS REPORT

Roache asked for a short brainstorm of all the events and issues related to the NED since August. The group identified the following:

- Route changes, specifically in Amherst and Merrimack
- Addition of Hollis back onto the route
- PUC position on NED's influence on electricity costs
- PUC has determined power generators are allowed to enter into long-term contracts vis-à-vis no power generators have signed up in KM's latest open season
- Findings and claims made at the NH Energy Summit
- Recent arguments promoting LNG (e.g. Steppingstone Report)
- Imminent study by Mass AG on need

Marchant suggested that the EFAC focus on an update to the whitepaper. Roache agreed that we should add content and take out inaccuracies or out-of-date content such as most of the charts and tables. Marchant suggested that the whitepaper is a slice in time, and we keep it as is, and we should add a new slice to it.

Putney asked about timing, e.g. is this for the NH SEC process? The group reviewed the slides provided by Atty. Icopino which indicates the first comment period could be anticipated to be xxx. The group also reviewed the membership of the Site Evaluation Committee.

Roache then asked for a list of update areas for the whitepaper. The group identified the following update areas:

- Demand & Need:
 - We should elaborate on statements we have accepted at face value, e.g. the "gas problem.
 - Examine, in a simple way, the issues of costs and heating days
- Environmental Impacts on Amherst, Merrimack, and now Hollis.
- Compressor station and metering
 - Pre-construction testing
 - Impacts of blow-downs
 - General health and safety
- Agency Actions
 - Update on municipal actions to date

- Add in a section on the NH Municipal Coalition
- Add in a section on the joint MA-NH regional activities
- Address actions of individuals RPCs, e.g. NMCOG and Southwest
- New Liberty franchise into Windham and Londonderry, where is this capacity coming from?
- What is pre-empted versus not pre-empted, e.g.
 - Local ordinances and site plan regulations
 - Drinking water issues –these are not federally pre-empted
- Issues around eminent domain
- Issues specific to Mason: aquifer, routing
- Under-utilized infrastructure (e.g. LNG)

Roache suggested the group continues to meet on a monthly interval. We have the filing date coming up, and then there's Thanksgiving, so it puts us in early December. Marchant said while the EFAC group is clear on what we should do between now and the Full Commission meeting in December, we should confirm the direction with the EC before going too far down the path. Roache agreed that we need to seek consensus on the issue of whether the group should be making recommendations. Roache referred to the narrative on the NRPC website describing the role of Commissioners, and in particular that Commissioners are charged to officially represent their boards. Marchant said that NRPC must strategize on communication between EFAC, the Executive Committee, the Full Commission, and our member communities' elected boards to manage expectations.

Roache will craft a one-page summary of the group's proposed direction and circulate it to the EFAC and then the Executive Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 1:25.