



HIGH LEVEL FORESTS PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 8, 2007
5:00 p.m. – NAIT College Campus

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

John Thurston
Mike Alsterlund
Scott McNeil
Marilee Toews

Lacey Reid
George Friesen
Jeremy Beal

Recording Secretary: Rachel Kidder

1. CALL TO ORDER:

John Thurston, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

MOTION

MOVED by George Friesen

That the agenda be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES: April 3, 2007

MOTION

MOVED by Lacey Reid

That the HLFAC meeting minutes of March 6, 2007 be accepted with the following correction:

The presentation by Fiona Schmiegelow was made to the Federation of Alberta Naturalists, not the HLFAC.

CARRIED

4. ISSUES AND CONCERNS:

No issues and concerns at this time.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

5.1 HLFAC Annual General Meeting:

There was a discussion around the HLFAC AGM. Scott McNeil suggested that the PAC may want to have a joint AGM with the Northern Lights Forest Education Society. This had been tried previously but PAC members felt that it had not been well organized. The AGM date will be Thursday, June 7, 2007. The notice for the AGM will run in The Echo and The Pioneer for two consecutive weeks prior to the meeting, and will be larger than regular meeting ads. Marilee Toews suggested that the PAC could have a draw of some kind at the meeting. Possible agenda items are:

1. Election of Officers
2. Overview of Issues and Concerns
3. Sharing session on improving public involvement
4. Special guest speaker

ACTION: Items to be completed for AGM:

1. Ads for AGM in the Echo.
2. Companies to look into possibility of a draw.
3. Jeremy to request guest speaker.

5.2 2007 GDP & AOP

5.3 GDP Roadshow

Items 5.2 and 5.3 of the agenda were discussed together. Scott McNeil explained the different aspects of the 2007 GDP (General Development Plan) and AOP (Annual Operating Plan). These plans cover topics including harvest cut control, roading activities, public participation, and First Nations consultations. The GDP will be presented to all tenure holders, First Nations, and any other stakeholders. A schedule for the GDP Roadshow was handed out for the month of May. Some communities are missing on this schedule because Tolko and Footner will be doing a joint roadshow with Little Red River Forestry so that these communities can see both GDPs (Tolko/Footner and LRRF) at the same time. The GDP roadshow is scheduled a month and a half earlier than usual to better facilitate awareness of the plan in local communities. Visits to some of the communities have been scheduled around meals because the companies have had input from PAC members who say that meetings around meals are usually better attended. There was a concern that this would keep away many of the people who work during the day and Scott explained that they will be in the communities until 6 pm.

Scott handed out maps of the companies' harvesting areas which also showed the herbicide program for this year, and gave a general overview of the next 5 years. He cautioned that this map may change because the government must approve it before it is final. Scott also handed out copies of a presentation of the GDP which had corresponding information to the map. Mike Alsterlund asked what kind of herbicide the companies were using: Glyphosate. Marilee Toews brought up a concern regarding the increase use of herbicide. She also asked if the herbicide program would be advertised as it was in previous years.

There was also a discussion around the mixed wood management plan. Mike asked if the companies were looking at increasing the number of mixed wood managed stands. Jeremy answered that the companies are looking cost effective ways for mixed wood management to occur in the High Level forests.

5.4 HLFAC Meeting Locations

It has been mentioned several times at previous HLFAC meetings that the PAC should make an effort to hold their meetings in surrounding communities. John Thurston asked how much interest there was in the committee and local communities for this to occur. There was a discussion around different ideas of how to make this idea successful. George Friesen mentioned that public meetings in La Crete are usually well attended. Marilee Teows said that a discussion around trapping might bring out people in Fort Vermilion. It was suggested that the PAC could bring in a guest speaker who could speak on an issue that is important to the community the meeting is held in. George also suggested that the companies could bring in the actual equipment used in forestry to draw people from the general public. John Thurston commented on a successful PAC meeting held in a First Nations community that had been scheduled directly after a public meeting. This item has been tabled to the July meeting as next meeting is the AGM.

5.5 Terms of Reference

Jeremy Beal notified the PAC the timelines for the DFMP (Forest Management Plan) have changed. The deadline for the plan has been changed from September 11, 2007 to October 31, 2008.

MOTION

MOVED by John Thurston

The deadline for the plan has been changed from September 11, 2007 to October 31, 2008. Jeremy advised the HLFAC Terms of Reference will need to be amended and asked the PAC for approval.

CARRIED

5.6 Regional Forest Concerns

Mike Alsterlund had questions for Footner and Tolko regarding the current economic conditions in forestry and their impact on the community and surrounding area. These questions were answered in camera.

5.7 Newspaper Reporting

PAC members want to ensure that articles printed in The Echo regarding discussions at HLFAC meetings are factual. It is not The Echo's policy to allow individuals outside of The Echo staff to have access to news articles before they are printed in the paper. PAC members need to ensure that what they say is interpreted correctly by the reporter. Lacey Reid said that if a PAC member has a concern about an article to be printed, they may contact The Echo to meet with the reporter to ask questions or clarify statements.

PAC members requested The Echo not print names of individuals who make comments at the HLFAC meetings. PAC members felt that this could potentially inhibit contribution or involvement by some members. Lacey said PAC members can individually state if they don't wish to have their name printed when they make a comment. John Thurston reminded Lacey that it was normal practice in previous Echo articles that names were not published. Lacey agreed she would comply.

5.8 PAC Meeting Meals

Currently the PAC uses B & B Open camp for the meals served at meetings. It was suggested that the PAC may want to use other vendors in addition to B & B. PAC members felt this was a good idea.

5.9 Wildlife Issues

Dave Moyles, a Wildlife Biologist with SRD (Sustainable Resource Development) was scheduled to make a presentation to the HLFAC this meeting but had to cancel for personal reasons. Dave presented at the FMP Development meeting in Edmonton on April 14, 2007 that Jeremy Beal attended. Part of Dave's presentation was on Caribou in the Tolko and Footner FMA. He talked about the effect of forest fires on caribou populations. He identified concerns that the companies will consider during their planning process. He also identified areas of increased Bison populations and safety concerns of Bison being close to highways.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

6.1 Clipping Service

Rachel Kidder distributed the latest clipping service information to the group.

6.2 Issues and Concerns Document

John Thurston and Rachel Kidder met to update the current Issues and Concerns document on April 19. The documents will be reorganized and index provided of the issues and concerns. Rachel will have the document ready for the next meeting.

6.3 Meeting Facilitator

The companies feel that a facilitator for the HLFAC would be a good idea, but with conditions Jeremy listed some things that the companies would like the PAC to consider:

1. Determine a clear expectation of the role.
2. There should be a process by which to evaluate the performance of the facilitator.
3. There should be no bias of the person performing the role.
4. There should be a 3 month probationary period.

After the PAC has looked at these considerations the companies will place ads in the paper to request proposals. This item has been tabled to the July meeting.

7. CORRESPONDENCE / REPORTS:

Jeremy Beal received an email from another PAC in Nova Scotia looking to communicate with the HLFAC to exchange ideas on public involvement.

ACTION: Jeremy Beal will include email in minutes distribution to allow members to contact.

8. AROUND THE TABLE:

Mike Alsterlund would like to discuss section 4.2 of the Sustainable Forest Management Plan at a HLFAC meeting. This item has been tabled to the July meeting. Marilee Toews gave Jeremy a list of potential individuals the PAC may want to have as guest speakers. She received the list of speakers at the Alberta Native Plant Council workshop put on by Global Forest Watch Canada. Also, Marilee mentioned an educational website that was featuring different plants that are relevant to the area. The website address is www.anpc.ab.ca. She also mentioned newsletters that Ducks Unlimited is putting out and a university news article on ethical purchasing policy regarding recycled materials.

Scott McNeil will be attending a Land Use Framework meeting. He also mentioned that UNBC (University of Northern British Columbia) is closing a forestry technologist course. Jeremy also mentioned that many forestry schools across Canada are struggling right now with a decrease in student enrolments.

John Thurston mentioned a Science Camp happening at Machesis Lake This activity involves two schools: Hillcrest and Rocky Lane. He also mentioned a presentation by Doug McCaully to a grade two class in Rocky Lane. The presentation was on

butterflies and moths. John felt that Doug might be a possible resource for the HLPAC.

9. NEXT MEETING:

June 7, 2007 @ 5:00 pm at the NAIT College Campus. This will be the Annual General Meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm