



Environmental Review Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday March 22, 2021, 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Roger Bolton (Chair), Edward Holub, Eleanor Tillinghast, Kate Fletcher, Malcolm Fick, Jack Hickey, and Kyle Hanlon

Others Present: Thomas Matuszko (BRPC), Melissa Provencher (BRPC), and Courtney Morehouse (BRPC).

I. Call to Order

ERC Chairman Bolton called the meeting to order at 4:02pm and began roll call.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 21, 2020

K. Hanlon made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by E. Holub. ERC Chairman Bolton conducted a roll call vote.

R. Bolton: Aye

M. Fick: Aye

E. Holub: Aye

K. Hanlon: Aye

J. Hickey: Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

III. MEPA Regulatory Review & Updates

M. Provencher explained that there is a March 31, 2021 to submit general comments with regard to proposed regulatory changes. The only information available describing the proposed changes is a PowerPoint presentation and the proposed changes are very vague. M. Provencher explained that it is anticipated that more information and another opportunity to comment will be provided at a later date, but that there are no details available to confirm this.

The Committee discussed submitting a letter expressing strong concern over the lack of detail. It is unclear what is meant by a proposed change with regard to the flexibility of the ACEC threshold. The Committee expressed concern that projects may be discussed with MEPA during consultation sessions and that communities would not be notified of projects proposed within the ACEC. The Committee also discussed concerns regarding the proposed change to the threshold for species of special concern from 2 to 5 acres. It was unclear whether this change would only apply to species of special concern or if it would apply to significant habitat. The Committee agreed that a percent change or ratio to contiguous areas may be an alternative approach worth considering. It was also unclear whether NHESP was involved in the proposed change from 2 to 5 acres. Lastly, there were concerns regarding the lack of

detail with regard to proposed changes to the process for a Notice of Project Change. Whether a Notice of Project Change is required should be directly related to the original thresholds reached and whether new thresholds have been reached. Efforts should also be made to ensure that changes to the procedures for a Notice of Project Change do not encourage segmentation or penalize projects that filed early in an effort to avoid segmentation.

The Committee also discussed the Draft MEPA Interim Protocol on Climate Change Adaptation and Resiliency and the Draft MEPA Interim Protocol for Environmental Justice Outreach. Although the comment period passed before the Committee was able to hold a meeting, the Committee agreed to incorporate comments on the draft protocols within the letter. With regard to the Draft MEPA Interim Protocol on Climate Change Adaptation and Resiliency the Committee agreed that any climate change analysis tools should be available and ready to use, and be user-friendly. With regard to the Draft MEPA Interim Protocol for Environmental Justice Outreach the Committee was concerned with the exemption for remediation projects. T. Matuszko indicated that he had been provided with some suggestions with regard to outreach for environmental justice communities which staff could incorporate into the comment letter.

K. Hanlon moved to authorize the Executive Director to send a letter on behalf of the Committee consistent with staff recommendations within the Environmental Review Report and the Committee discussion. J. Hickey seconded the motion. ERC Chairman Bolton conducted a roll call vote.

R. Bolton: Aye
M. Fick: Aye
E. Holub: Aye
J. Hickey, Aye
K. Hanlon: Aye

The motion was passed unanimously.

IV. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

V. Adjournment

E. Holub made a motion to adjourn at 5:11pm. The motion was seconded by K. Hanlon. ERC Chairman Bolton conducted a roll call vote.

R. Bolton: Aye
K. Hanlon: Aye
E. Holub: Aye
M. Fick: Aye
J. Hickey: Aye

The motion was passed unanimously.

Materials distributed electronically:

- ERC Agenda 3/22/21
- ERC Draft Minutes 10/21/20
- Environmental Review Report 3/22/21