



Environmental Review Committee
Meeting Minutes

Monday April 26, 2021, 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Roger Bolton (Chair), Edward Holub, Malcolm Fick, Jack Hickey, Mark Smith, and Kyle Hanlon

Others Present: Thomas Matuszko (BRPC), Melissa Provencher (BRPC), and Clete Kus (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 March 22, 2021

MP explained that the minutes have been corrected to reflect that Eleanor Tillinghast and Kate Fletcher were not present. 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

M. Smith: Abstain

The motion passed.

III. Eagle Mill Redevelopment, Lee – Environmental Notification Form

M. Provencher introduced the project and explained that the thresholds reached are related to transportation impacts, which C. Kus will discuss in greater detail. M. Provencher further explained that the project does not require a mandatory EIR and environmental impacts include a positive impact through the modest reduction of impervious surfaces within the Riverfront Area. This project has broad MEPA jurisdiction due to the fact that financial assistance has been received from both the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. However, as the project proponents have already secured local permits, including an Order of Conditions from the Conservation Commission and a Zoning Board of Appeals permit for work in the floodplain there is little room for meaningful comment beyond the impacts that require state permits.

C. Kus presented on the Transportation Impacts. The project meets or exceeds the review thresholds for generation of 1,000 or more average daily trips (ADT) on roadways providing access to a single location

and construction of 150 or more new parking spaces at a single location. The ENF also indicates that the project will require a State Highway Access Permit from MassDOT. A remote “site visit” was held which was attended by BRPC and Mass DOT; however, Mass DOT provided little input.

West Center Street (Route 20) is an arterial roadway which runs through downtown Lee and provides a vital north/south connection to the Massachusetts Turnpike (Route 90). This roadway currently experiences 14,469 average daily trips (ADT) and already carries a significant amount of traffic during peak travel periods. With this project, traffic will increase by 2,100 ADT, to 16,569, further impacting an already strained roadway.

A number of unsignalized intersections in the study area have stop controlled side street movements which currently operate at poor levels of service. This poor level of service indicates that vehicles operating on side streets that are attempting to access Route 20 will experience an even longer wait (delay) before they are able to maneuver into the traffic stream. This situation will only worsen as a result of more vehicles/trips associated with this project. One item to note is that traffic within the Route 20 corridor is greater during the peak AM and peak PM periods and it tends to lessen in the afternoon and evenings.

Based on the submittal materials and the Traffic Impact Assessment, this project will affect the transportation network with the greatest impacts occurring in the immediate vicinity of the project and the downtown area of Lee. Mitigation items included in the ENF to address traffic increases from the Eagle Mill redevelopment include the following Transportation Demand Management techniques:

- Staggered work hours that allow for a flexible work schedule to reduce weekday morning and evening peak hour trips
- Bicycle racks to encourage workers and patrons to use bicycles
- Pedestrian connectivity from adjacent roadways to the front doors of buildings
- The proponent is committed to working with BRTA to determine if this site is appropriate for a transit stop
- Consider incorporating the site as part of the Berkshire Bike Path route.

The Traffic Impact Assessment does not provide any information on the overall effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures. Staff’s position is that the proposed mitigation measures will result in a negligible benefit. To increase efforts to abate the additional traffic from the Eagle Mill project, the mitigation efforts in the ENF should be strengthened. Several recommendations, in addition to those which have been proposed, have been included within the Environmental Review Report.

The Committee discussed concerns regarding the access points to the site and the proximity to the railroad crossing. Various Committee members expressed concern regarding the congestion that already occurs in the area. R. Bolton suggested strengthening the language on the last page of the report stating the extreme concerns regarding safety of project driveways including their proximity to the rail road crossing. The Committee expressed concern regarding the fact that local permits have already been issued and that Mass DOT did not raise any concerns regarding traffic flow, congestion or safety during the remote “site visit”. Despite the fact that these comments may be received late within the design and permitting of the project, the Committee believes it is critical to raise these concerns.

R. Bolton also identified some potential typos or errors. The parentheses on page 2 regarding 1.2% of total Riverfront should be eliminated. R. Bolton also inquired about whether the terminology within the second to the last paragraph on page 2 regarding “stop controlled side street movements” included a typo or whether it was industry terminology. C. Kus indicated that it is ok as written.

E. Holub 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. M. Fick seconded the motion. ERC Chairman Bolton conducted a roll call vote.

R. Bolton: Aye
M. Fick: Aye
E. Holub: Aye
J. Hickey, Aye
M. Smith: Aye
K. Hanlon: No

The motion was passed.

IV. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

V. Adjournment

K. Hanlon made a motion to adjourn at 4:59pm. The motion was seconded by M. Smith. ERC Chairman Bolton conducted a roll call vote.

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

The motion was passed unanimously.

Materials distributed electronically:

- ERC Agenda 4/26/21
- ERC Draft Minutes 3/22/21
- Environmental Review Report 4/26/21