

Minutes: Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Glanmire Solar Farm Community Consultative Committee (CCC)
Held at the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre, Bathurst

Wednesday 9 March 2022

Members Present: Tim Averill (TA, Elgin Energy), Shane Melotte (SM, Elgin Energy), Ben Smith (BS, NGH Consulting), Peter Hennessy (PH, Glanmire Action Group), Rebecca Welsh (RW), Ewan Chandler (EC), Dr Jim Blackwood (JB, Bathurst Climate Change Action Group), Jan Page (JP, Napoleon Reef, Walang & Glanmire Residents Association), Christine Curry (CC), Andrew Young (AY), Ben Jowett (BJ), Neil Southorn (NS, Bathurst Regional Council).

Apologies: Debbie Corlet (independent secretary)

Independent Chair: David Ross (DR)

Agenda Items	Who to Present
1. Introductions and apologies	David Ross
2. Declaration of pecuniary or other interests	David Ross and all
3. Introduction to the CCC process and guidelines	David Ross
4. Overview of the proposal	TA, SM, BS
5. General Business	All
6. Next Meeting – To be determined	All

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/By Whom
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>DR welcomed members to are first CCC meeting. Members introduced themselves. EC noted in his introduction that his participation was not replacing any detailed consultation, which Elgin is required to do with affected landowners surrounding the development.</p> <p>DR observed that an alternate member of the CCC had decided to resign.</p>	
2.	<p>Declaration of pecuniary or other interests – DR advised that he is paid a fee to chair these meetings. CC asked about non-pecuniary interests and related this back to adjacent landholders and their issues.</p>	<p>DR to provide further information on non-pecuniary interests to CC</p>
3.	<p>Introduction to the CCC Process and Guidelines</p> <p>DR gave a presentation on CCC roles, the process for taking minutes and the code of conduct.</p> <p>PH and EC had questions about the renewable energy zones and its relevance. Should a rep from the designated renewable energy zone (REZ) be on the committee? The REZ is being explored further for modifications in order to be situated on mining land. It was believed this was taking place to recognise the conflict, as EC observed, between prime land and agriculture.</p> <p>DR responded that much effort had been put into attracting members when establishing the committee but had not received any interest from the REZ. Furthermore, the committee has been established by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE), focusing on this proposal in this location.</p> <p>CCC Roles</p> <p>Key to the role for the CCC members is the necessity to be a conduit between the community and the committee, sending information out and bringing information into the committee. Should a community representative be unable to attend, they are to notify DR who will arrange for an appropriate alternate, where possible, to attend instead. Should a representative of a community group be unable to attend, they can nominate their alternate.</p> <p>JP asked about the frequency of meetings. DR noted that the CCC may have monthly meetings for several months before the environmental impact statement (EIS) is submitted. It was anticipated that the committee would then have a break for some time.</p> <p>DR must be independent, allowing all members to raise their views and questions and ensure that all issues are properly considered. DR committed to allowing CCC members to provide feedback on his independence in future meetings.</p>	<p>DR to discuss any proposed changes to the REZ with DPE</p>

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/By Whom
	<p data-bbox="315 204 1227 228">Introduction to the CCC Process and Guidelines (continued)</p> <p data-bbox="315 264 1803 328">Representatives of Elgin Energy must provide timely and accurate information to the CCC. Responses to meeting actions are required within 28 days.</p> <p data-bbox="315 352 1803 448">With respect to observers, the guidelines state that DR would have to seek feedback from the committee before deciding whether to let an individual be an observer. It will be up to the committee to determine whether observers will be allowed to attend.</p> <p data-bbox="315 475 488 499"><u>Minute Taking</u></p> <p data-bbox="315 512 1803 576">DR noted that the minutes would be a summary of each meeting's proceedings, rather than a transcript. Draft minutes would be provided for review within a week. Members would then have a week in which to provide comments.</p> <p data-bbox="315 600 517 624"><u>Code of Conduct</u></p> <p data-bbox="315 636 1803 732">DR reminded members that all were to comply with the code. Should anyone not comply, they can be given warnings. Three warnings and people could be removed from the committee. Furthermore, if a member misses three consecutive meetings without an appropriate reason, they can also be removed.</p> <p data-bbox="315 745 1803 841">With respect to media interest, DR is the only committee member who can talk on behalf of the entire CCC. Should the situation arise, members can talk to the media on their own behalf (or on behalf of the group that they represent) but not on behalf of the committee.</p>	<p data-bbox="1839 323 2078 496">CCC members to let DR know if they want to allow observers to meetings</p>
4.	<p data-bbox="315 890 936 914">Overview of the Proposal (see attached)</p> <p data-bbox="315 970 1803 1034">TA introduced himself, SM, and BS, noting that TA is General Manager for Australia. Elgin has undertaken 21 solar projects with 5 GW of development across UK, Australia and Ireland. 45 + professionals within the organisation.</p> <p data-bbox="315 1078 1803 1174">In response to a question from PH, TA observed that there were currently four employees in Australia. PH expressed concern with this, observing whether the legal entity has assets to meet its debt as they become due. DR reminded members the focus for the CCC were social and environmental issues associated with the proposal.</p> <p data-bbox="315 1222 1803 1286">TA observed that Elgin saw opportunities within Australia due to: the excellent natural conditions; the retirement of coal assets; increasing political support; uptake by organisations; and continued reduction in costs.</p> <p data-bbox="315 1310 1803 1406">EC agreed that historically the technology has been becoming cheaper but current global issues may mean this does not continue. Noted that the price of materials such as steel, aluminium has increased by 40%. Trade bans, covid, US spending \$3 trillion on infrastructure.</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/By Whom
-------------	------------	----------------

Overview of the Proposal (continued)

PH asked a question about the adjacent landholders. They have a harvesting business and this occurs in summer in a time of high fire danger. He made enquiries and provided a report regarding insurance issues. In the event of an accidental fire and the neighbour is uninsurable, how will Elgin manage the insurance risk? Peter asked for an update on this.

TA to update PH regarding the insurance matter

What is Proposed

TA and SM continued the presentation. The proposal is to be located approximately 11 km east of Bathurst, with a 60 MW farm plus battery storage being proposed. The proposed footprint is approximately 350 acres, situated on a site that has an area of approximately 460 acres. TA noted that, due to feedback from the community, the site had been pulled back from the road. There is capacity for the project at the local Raglan substation.

EC commented that reference to approximately 11km east of Bathurst is misleading as it ignores the recent SEPP amendments which require solar sites to be located more than 10km from the CBD and more than 5km from residential land.

In response to a question from CC, SM noted that yes, risk assessments are undertaken on the batteries.

EC asked if site cabling would be underground. SM replied yes it would be trenched 600mm below ground. EC also asked if all underground work including cabling would be removed as part of site restoration. SM replied decommissioning would remove all aboveground and underground installed materials.

SM noted that any buffer around the site would be determined as a result of the specialist studies that have commenced as part of the EIS. However, the Rural Fire Service typically require a 10 m minimum. Furthermore, studies undertaken investigating the feasibility of the site have been site specific. TA noted that grid strength and loss factors also drive the site selection.

An overview of the construction process was provided (see attachment). Approximately 150 people would be employed with construction proposed to take around 12 months. There would be about three jobs during operation. SM also observed that there would be potential supply and subcontracting opportunities available for local businesses.

CC asked if Elgin was going to develop the proposal and sell it? Or keep it and operate? TA responded that Elgin was not sure at present what it would do. JB noted that this may be a concern for the community. Wants to understand what this means for the future.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/By Whom
	<p>Overview of the Proposal (continued)</p> <p><u>Community and Stakeholder Engagement</u></p> <p>BS described the proposed community and stakeholder engagement plan that has been prepared. The aim is to seek feedback, good or bad, from as many within the community as possible. Some engagement has already taken place. This includes letters to landholders within three kms, a drop-in day is proposed for May and discussions have taken place with Hon Paul Toole and councillors.</p> <p>PH and TA then had a discussion about Mr Toole’s concerns about the accuracy of Elgin’s scoping report. TA responded that these concerns have been discussed with DPE, who provided Elgin with a copy of a letter that PH sent to DPE, dated 9/6/21. TA advised that Elgin had responded to the letter. This response was sent to DPE but has not been viewed by PH.</p> <p>BS asked if members had any suggestions about how the team could engage further with the community. JP observed that there may be many community members who do not know about the proposal. Some suggested an open community forum with those within a 2-3 km radius. There was a suggestion for a pop-up stand in shopping areas. A number of members agreed that the upcoming Bathurst Show would be a good opportunity.</p> <p>JB asked if a one-pager could be shared by PH on the local landholders’ concerns. Agreed to by PH.</p> <p>A community enhancement fund is proposed to be established. With feedback gained through consultation, Elgin are proposing to provide an annual contribution to a local project or initiative throughout the life of the project.</p> <p>Included discussion that unlike Elgin staff, impacted neighbours were not being paid and were bearing the impacts and costs of this proposed development, including the ability to communicate at the Bathurst Show etc. DR undertook to raise this inequity with DPE.</p>	<p>BS to explore engagement options</p> <p>PH to provide one page explaining local concerns</p>
	<p><u>The SEARs</u></p> <p>A detailed environmental assessment will need to be undertaken in a number of specialty areas; namely, visual impact; biodiversity; heritage; land – eg land use conflicts; noise, transport; water; hazards and risks; socio-economic; and waste.</p> <p>TA noted that the EIS would be submitted in the second half of 2022 and would be guided by feedback from the CCC.</p>	
5.	<p>General Business</p> <p>Members then had group discussions about the specialist studies that Elgin had to undertake. In particular, members were asked to identify what areas did they were to discuss at upcoming meetings. The key areas that members want to discuss at upcoming meetings are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural impact assessment 	

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/By Whom
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decommissioning, maintenance and compliance Followed by visual impact, heritage, hazards, and socio-economic. 	
6.	Next meeting date – DR is proposing to have a meeting in late April and a meeting in May as well	DR to provide committee with dates for April and May

Meeting Closed: 9:25 pm

Page No	Action No	Description	Appendix 1: Actions Date Raised
2	1	DR to provide further information on non-pecuniary interests to CC	9 March 2022
2	2	DR to discuss any proposed changes to the REZ with DPE	9 March 2022
3	3	CCC members to let DR know if they want to allow observers to meetings	9 March 2022
4	4	TA to update PH regarding the insurance matter	9 March 2022
4	5	BS to explore engagement options	9 March 2022
4	6	PH to provide one page explaining local concerns	9 March 2022
6	7	DR to provide committee with dates for April and May	9 March 2022