

NMI/Starmet Re-use Planning Committee

Meeting Minutes

October 11, 2019

PRESENT:

Members: Gary Kleiman, Jim Burns, Pam Rockwell, Karl Seidman, Paul Boehm, Andrew Boardman, Steven Ng

OTHERS:

Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning & Land Management Department (DPLM)
Garry Waldeck, Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
Linda Escobedo (Select Board liaison); Kim Kastens (Acton resident); David Ropeik, Nick Pappas
Matt Robbie (SKEO – EPA reuse contractor) and Haley Gannon (SKEO) participated by phone

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am.

Discussion of the Consent Decree

Gary Kleiman discussed that the consent decree has been signed, and this starts the clock for pre-design work and remedial design. There is a 30-day comment period, then the decree will be entered in the Federal Record, after which documents will start being lodged.

Gary K. questioned whether this committee needs to comment. Paul Boehm commented that the Reuse committee should be linked to this comment process, so that it will have more input in coordinating future use. An example is that we might want to have input about whether parts of the site will be cleaned up first. Gary K. requested that the forum be posted as a public meeting of the committee so that the committee could discuss the public comments at the forum.

Planning for the forum

Matt Robbie and Haley Gannon joined the meeting by phone, and reviewed the presentation by SKEO which will be the introduction at the workshop, after EPA's opening remarks. Marcia Rasmussen suggested that Gary K. & Paul B. start the discussion at the forum, and make it clear that we are setting aside the contamination and liability issues and assuming the site will be ready for development in 7-10 years. After the opening PowerPoint, the forum will divide into 3 tables with Matt R., Haley G., and Marcia R. as facilitators at each table. Committee members will function as co-facilitators during the breakout sessions to help frame potential use ideas, and help people think about combining uses.

The main questions the committee wants answered are: Is there a need in the community that we are missing? Which uses are critical? Is there some greater need that we need to recognize? Is there a greater benefit to co-locating some uses?

Karl Seidman asked details about the breakout session. Facilitators will take notes. There will be maps and handouts at each table, and the committee member facilitators can talk about what we have already looked at. Pam R. will provide a safety sheet. Gary K. requested that each breakout session begin with a discussion of the four principles from handout.

Paul B. suggested that we need to set the tone earlier, by being sure that the principles are in the presentation, and the discussion shifted to the presentation. Andrew Boardman wanted EPA/SKEO to give the remedial considerations more emphasis in their presentation. Paul B. wanted to get rid of bullets about previous problems, but other committee members felt these were beneficial. Matt R. said he will have Chris Smith (EPA project manager) explain that we are not discussing the actual cleanup issues. Then Matt R. will do the rest of the presentation. Gary K. and Paul B. agree that Chris S. and Matt R. should both emphasize how much money and work will be spent at site. Matt R. said he will rework the language in the presentation outside of the meeting, Kim Kastens also requested that the presentation mention how close the superfund site is to other towns. Gary K. wanted to be sure that the most up-to-date version of the reuse map is used at the meeting.

Paul B. suggested that we use this language when we talk about liability, “the Town has a clear path to ownership that could provide liability protection”

The committee returned to a discussion about the breakout session. There will be 5 copies of handout, big version of map at each table, with cutouts of local buildings/facilities at each table to provide scale. Marcia R. identified local school buildings, outdoor track, a soccer field, and a commercial building, and committee members suggested adding six tennis courts, an indoor track, and a parking lot to the list.

Gary K. questioned how we will prioritize the information we get in the breakout sessions. Committee members should encourage participants to think about whether some particular combination of future uses should have a priority over others. The Committee will get notes from the facilitators, cards with ideas, sticky notes, and copies of any future email after the forum. Nick Pappas pointed out that there are constraints on the site because it is far from other side of town and close to a power station. Gary K. and Andrew B. suggested that committee members can discuss that during the breakout session. At this point, Matt R. and Haley G from SKEO left the meeting.

Advertising the forum

Gary K. began a discussion of how we will get people to come to the forum. We will post info to the Town News & Notices. We will print up fliers, email the Concord Yahoo group, and use Town sandwich boards. David Ropeik suggested we reach out to other communities. Perhaps DPW flashing signs – maybe not. Jim B. will post fliers in West Concord, Gary K. in Concord center. Marica R. will email a copy to the committee so that we can all can post them or hand them out.

David Ropeik suggested that there is still a group of people that hasn't been engaged. Establishing trust is important. Gary K. responded that we are only beginning this conversation.

After the forum

Gary K. began a discussion about the next steps after the forum. Our committee charge says that we need to report to the Select Board. Linda Escobedo suggested that someone should address the Select Board about what "safe and clean" really means. Gary K. can represent the Reuse Committee, and Pam R. can represent the 2229 committee and perhaps EPA could send someone (maybe Bruce Thompson.)

David R. explained that he is an expert in Risk Communication, and his experience is that people don't trust EPA. Any feedback the Select Board gets about safety concerns has to be taken seriously. We need communication in the presentation to address this.

Paul B. noted that we don't yet know who decides how this land will get used. The Select Board is a key constituent here, but Karl S. commented that this is not a final reuse plan, we will always options. Nick P. pointed out that we need more examples of other successful cleanup sites. Paul B. will find other brownfield sites as examples. Pam R. pointed out that we need to emphasize that Concord citizens' oversight of the cleanup should make it easier to trust the EPA science.

Gary K. asked how we can get more examples, and figure out who chooses the final use of the site. Marcia R. pointed out that for any future owner, including the Town, any rezoning or funding development at the site will need to come to Town meeting. Paul B. reiterated that we will identify a few uses, but the final process will go to Town Meeting.

Karl S. suggested that we look at whether the forum helps us to decide if a grand plan is emerging. Gary K. recommended that after the forum we develop 3 combination uses and do a mockup. Paul B. suggested that we first coordinate with Bruce T. about possible constraints. Karl S. reminded us to look back at principles to score each alternative. Paul B. pointed out that according to the consent decree timeline, site restoration plans don't need to be done before April. Marcia R. and Gary K. will come up with timeline for the committee to start specifying our

3 combinations for November meeting, and the Committee will also start a second wave of outreach.

Paul B. reminded the group that natural resource damage money will become available as part of the superfund site. Gary Waldeck reported that this money is under negotiation and the amount could be significant. Funding could be used to include repair retaining walls, and/or restoring ecology on or off the site. Karen Pelto used to be the state administrator of the DEP damages program, but she has retired.

Minutes

Andrew B. moved to approve the September minutes as written. Paul B. seconded and all VOTED to approve.

Public Comment

David R. reminded the committee to be careful about the word safe...don't declare it one way or another, always use the word safe with a qualifier (according to EPA, etc.).

Acton resident Kim K. expressed concern that in her opinion that EPA is not good at communicating with the public. Gary K. pointed out that SKEO will do the heavy lifting at the meeting.

Marcia R. reminded us that the next meeting is November 8.
The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Rockwell, Clerk