

MINUTES OF MEETING

CLIENT : KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport
PROJECT : Sani Pass Road Upgrade – Phase 2
PROJECT No : J27344
PURPOSE : Project Meeting No. 4 – Authorities Meeting 1
PLACE : SSI Boardroom, Pietermaritzburg
DATE & TIME : 21 April 2008 09h00 – 11h00
MINUTE TAKER : Sanusha Govender

NAME	REPRESENTING	E-MAIL ADDRESS	DISTRIBUTION
PRESENT			
Thami Hlongwa (TH)	BCOCC		1
Shoni Makhwedzha(SM)	DAEA		1
Peter Heathcoat (PH)	KWASANI MUNICIPALITY		1
Eddy Gademan (EG)	SSI	eddyg@ssi.co.za	1
Obakeng Pienaar (OP)	NDIZANI CIVIL WORKS	pienaarko@ndizanicivilwork s.co.za	1
K. Ngema (KN)	NDIZANI CIVIL WORKS		1
Russell Stow (RS)	ARCUS GIBB (Pty) Ltd	rstow@gibb.co.za	1
Gisela Fechter (GF)	ARCUS GIBB (Pty) Ltd	gfechter@gibb.co.za	1
Rashieda Davids (RD)	ARCUS GIBB (Pty) Ltd	rdavids@gibb.co.za	1
Sanusha Govender (SG)	ARCUS GIBB (Pty) Ltd	sgovender@gibb.co.za	1
APOLOGIES			
Dolphin Mabale	AMAFA		
Raymond Reynolds	SEMENYA FURMELE		
M Mabaso	SISONKE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY		
APOLOGIES			
None			
ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION			
None			

Minuted by: R. Davids & S. Govender

Approved by: R. Stow

Item No.	Comment By	Comment
		OPENING DISCUSSIONS
	RS	<p>Welcomed and thanked all for attending and noted authorities who were invited and their apologies. Those present were asked to introduce themselves. RS then briefly discussed the consultation process and work done to date and further explained that the meeting would be conducted informally to establish a perspective from the authorities.</p> <p>In terms of the Engineering team, SSI have been appointed in a Joint Venture with Ndizani Civil Works and Semenya Furumele Transportation Engineers to design and construct the road. It was discussed that the design of the road would be split between the 3 engineering teams. Semenya Furumele would design Km14 to Km23, Ndizani Civil Works would design Km23 to Km25 and SSI design Km25 to Km33.</p>
	PH	Noted that the section of road to be upgraded falls within the jurisdiction of Sisonke District Municipality. However, the Kwa Sani Municipality is interested in the project as the road provides entry into the Kwa Sani region.
	RS	RS explained the EIA process thus far in that Arcus GIBB is currently in the technical scoping phase and noted that adverts and posters notifying the public of the project will be placed shortly. The Background Information Document (BID) will also be available at the same time.
	EG	<p>EG provided a background to the project. He explained that the project had initially been divided into 3 phases but had been revised into Phase 1 and 2. Phase 1, namely km0–km14 is a stand-alone project serving hotels, tourist facilities, agriculture etc and had already been granted environmental authorisation and was currently under construction. He noted that Phase 2 was still in early design and the engineering team were still identifying the challenges to the project and were seeking input from non – engineering sources, such as environmental and heritage, to aid in their designs.</p> <p>EG described some of the potential challenges that had been identified particularly in meeting the requirements of the client, such as retaining a road width of 7m with a speed limit of 50km/h between km14 – km24. To meet these requirements the road will have to be widened through either infilling or cutting into the mountain. He then explained the available options for cutting and filling the road.</p> <p>Another example of the design challenges was designing the switchbacks near the summit of the Pass which are too tight to achieve the desired 30km/h speed. The biggest engineering challenge was the actual construction as the ToR requires that the Pass remains open at all times. However, this is not realistically possible for numerous reasons including space constraints and safety of both workers and travellers as the road would have to be closed during blasting and clearing, as an example.</p> <p>Further challenges include management of fauna and flora, reinstatement of cuts and fills, deposits for spoil material, weather (ice, snow, rain) and disturbance to the road users (tour and taxi operators). The client has asked for material to be used from Lesotho side as well. How to manage those trucks going up and down the pass is another issue.</p> <p>He then described some of the visual design options under consideration such as constructing bridges out of stone masonry and tinting the concrete retaining wall in order to reduce the engineering visual impact.</p>

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		<p>EG discussed the consideration of using the existing border post as a site camp during construction and rehabilitating it after construction. This option is under discussion with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) but is very much dependent on the border post relocation project being finish in time. He noted that if the Border Control post could be open for longer hours this would give more flexibility both for the construction and for the road users.</p> <p>EG explained that the surface of the road will be a hardened surface as per the TOR provided by the DOT. Options include asphalt concrete and brick paving, however, from a construction viewpoint, icing and preventing infiltration of water into the road layers are issues that must be managed. The surface may change higher up the Pass dependent on conditions but must remain an all weather road.</p> <p>EG noted that it is questioned why the road does not remain a gravel road. There is an extremely high rate of gravel/soil loss from the road which is washed into the valley. KZN Wildlife has stated that they have lost certain species of fish due to siltation of the river. As such, no road surface which allows soil loss can be considered.</p>

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	GF	The visual impacts of the construction will have to be considered.			
	RS	RS briefly addressed some of the issues that were brought up at the meeting held with KZN Wildlife.			
	RS	RS asked TH if the border post could be open for longer hours during the construction period.	TH	<p>TH stated that a request would have to be lodged with the BCOCC and stated that the new border post would probably open at 6am. Provisions will be made to accommodate traffic during the construction phase. The project manager should send a request to the BCOCC.</p> <p>TH mentioned that a meeting was being held today (19 April 2008) to discuss the design phase of the border post. Construction would hopefully commence in September 2009.</p>	
	RS	RS noted that erosion is occurring on the road and that he had noted a slip / fault running along the valley.	EG	EG said that this was not a fault but rather that is a man made trench that had been created in an attempt to manage the water flow. The idea had been that the trench will channel the water down the valley and thus prevent it from eroding the road.	
	RS	RS stated that everyone agreed that the current state of the road is unacceptable and has to be upgraded. He said that			

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		the dispute was not over the upgrade of the road but rather how it is upgraded and the type of surface that is used.			
	RS	RS requested that the stakeholders provide practical recommendations for the upgrading of the road.			
	EG	EG noted that blasting will be controlled but that it will still impact on the environment.	RS	RS stated that high noise levels are related to blasting and that impacts must be mitigated as much as possible. Of particular concern is the impact that blasting will have on avifaunal nesting sites.	
	RS	RS noted that it is important to maintain the quality of the river as people downstream rely on the river for their water source.	EG	Noted that there will be a need to extract water from the river for construction purposes.	
	RS	Raised the note regarding the request by EKZNW to provide a servitude for services.	EG	EG stated that EKZNW would have to put in a formal request to DoT. The cost of installing the ducts now or later has to be considered and it will be cheaper and less impacting if they are installed as the road is upgraded.	
	TH	TH mentioned that if the new border post opens in September 2009, there would need to be concessions for construction workers to cross the border to get to the construction site.			
	GF	GF enquired about the current status of the relocation of the border post?	TH	TH indicated that SARS, the police and a number of other parties are reluctant to move the border post for a number of reasons. The new border post will be approximately 20km from the existing post as opposed to the 8kms that is considered favourable. This will mean that the land between the border post and actual border becomes 'no mans land.'	
	RS	RS noted that the taxi operators also present problems and questioned if there was there a committee that deals with this?	PH	PH explained that the problem is that the Lesotho taxis don't have permits to commute people in SA but that an agreement had been made to allow Lesotho taxis to transport people further down because they have 4x4 taxis which SA taxis do not have. The problem is that passengers are dropped at Good Hope which is not appropriate. Should the road be hard-surfaced, SA taxis would be able to take passengers to the summit.	
	GF	GF stated that the taxi operators will be taken into account in the EIA.	RS	RS requested whether TH could gather the contact information for people in Lesotho to start negotiations.	
	TH	TH stated that the border post is the responsibility of SARS,			

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		not EKZNW or DEAT.			
	PH	PH said that Arcus GIBB would need to liaise with the Lesotho taxi operators regarding the blasting schedules.	GF	GF requested for TH to provide the contact details for the key stakeholders in Lesotho that need to be contacted.	
	GF	GF mentioned that if the road is upgraded it may allow larger vehicles to use the road.	EG	EG questioned who controls the type of vehicles that are allowed on the road?	
			TH	The BCOCC is responsible for patrolling the border and they will liaise with Lesotho about vehicle entry. DoT will also be the authority managing this issue.	
	GF	GF suggested that a weighbridge put in place to adequately regulate the type/weight of vehicles that can access the site.			
	RS	RS queried whether a control mechanism can be installed to regulate the number of cars going up and down the road?	TH	TH stated that this was not possible.	
	RS	RS queried whose decision it was to upgrade the road?	TH	TH stated that the decision had been made by Mr. Jeff Radebe (Transport Minister SA) and the Transport Minister of Lesotho. One of the reasons for the upgrade is to shorten the route from KZN from Lesotho by 150 km.	
	PH	PH asked whether there would be an upgrade of the Lesotho Border Post?	TH	Responded saying that, in terms of the agreement, this would have to be done. He also noted that the new SA border post would house numerous authorities (Customs, SAPS and Home Affairs) whereas the current border post is only patrolled by the police.	
	RS	Enquired about control of access to the road?	EG	Commented that it is a public road and we cannot control the people entering it. The only thing that can be controlled is the weight of the vehicles.	
	GF	Queried what could be controlled?	TH	Traffic can be controlled provided a specification is given on the design and control is requested by DoT and the Kwa Sani Municipality.	
	EG	EG stated that the tight switchbacks will assist in speed regulation.	GF	GF stated she is concerned that vehicles will travel fasted at the bottom of the road where the road is straighter.	
	RS/GF	RS and GF requested that any additional issues to be considered are highlighted and that stakeholders are involved in the process.	SM	Can we create a forum where everyone can raise their issues simultaneously?	

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	RS	RS noted that 3 meetings have already been held and that the next step will be to advertise the proposed project, undertake further stakeholder meetings and then compile the Scoping Report. After release of the Scoping Report an open day will be held for the public.	SM	Commented that this is a good approach as it is important that when DEAT makes their decision that they are satisfied that the key stakeholders have been involved.	
	RS	RS stated that one of the challenges they are facing is trying to meet with all the stakeholders at the same time. He suggested that a meeting is held with all key stakeholders prior to the Scoping Report being released to the public.			
	SM	Noted that because this is such a sensitive and controversial project people may use it as a platform to raise issues unrelated to the project.	PH	Pointed out that the important thing is to ensure that the project is relayed to the public in the correct manner. He noted further that there are existing extorted perceptions that the project will entail a four lane high way with no consideration to the issues involved.	
	RS	RS stated that they wish to compile the draft Scoping Report before the public meeting in order to present people with the information prior to the public meeting.			
	EG	EG noted that the 30m road servitude will be managed by DoT and the surrounding area by EKZNW.			
	SM	Alternatives for the project need to be discussed.	RS/GF	There are numerous alternatives that can be considered however these have to be investigated first.	
	EG	EG stated that the client has not considered all the options. He said he is unsure whether the routes are considered as options but in terms of construction and design options, alternatives can be considered.	RS	RS stated that alternate routes will not be considered as the upgrade of the road is the actual project.	
	SM	A comparative analysis of all alternatives must be given in the report. Aspects such as social and economic impacts must be taken into consideration when evaluating alternatives.	RS	This may not be possible as there are so many options and combinations of options that may be best at different sections of the road. How the alternatives are compared and analysed will have to be thought through.	
	EG	The original design of the road may change during construction due to unforeseen circumstances.	GF	Options that may cause constraints may be with tour operators that do not understand the brief.	
	RD	Who owns the road?		The road is owned by the WHS, who essentially are DEAT. But the landowner of the road servitude (30m) is DoT.	