

MINUTES OF MEETING

CLIENT : Coastal, Stormwater & Catchment Management Department
 Engineering Unit, eThekweni Municipality
PROJECT : Umgeni River Canalisation Basic Assessment
PROJECT No : J25130 D
PURPOSE : Second Public Meeting
PLACE : eThekweni Conference Centre, 6th Floor
DATE & TIME : 29 January 2013
MINUTE TAKER : Snehlanhla Mngadi
MINUTE REVIEWER : Gisela Fechter

NAME	REPRESENTING	E-MAIL ADDRESS	DISTRIBUTION
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PRESENT

As per the attached Attendance Register

APOLOGIES

Carolyn Schwegman	WESSA	afromatz@telkomsa.net	Email
Margaret Burger	Umgeni Estuary Conservancy	margaret@burgerip.co.za	Email
Bill Feredays	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	vermeulj@kznwildlife.co.za/ feredays@telkomsa.net	Email

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

Mervin Olivier	GIBB (Pty) Ltd	molivier@gibb.co.za	Email
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Vanashrie Gounder	eThekweni Municipality	Vanashrie.Gounder@durban.gov.za	Email

Attendees at the meeting are required to take their own notes and act on these rather than await the arrival of the minutes. The minutes serve as a record of events at the meeting.

DESCRIPTION	ACTION	DEADLINE
1. 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS		
1. 1.1. Ms Katherine de Jong (GIBB) welcomed everyone to the meeting.		
1. 1.2. Ms de Jong introduced GIBB as the Environmental Assessment Practitioner on the project and her colleague, Ms Snehlanhla Mngadi, who would be taking the notes of the meeting. (Note that Ms G Fechter of GIBB joined the meeting later).		

DESCRIPTION	ACTION	DEADLINE
<p>1. 1.3. Ms de Jong explained that this was the second public meeting for the project (the previous meeting was held on 12 December 2012), which is offered in response to Interested and Affected Parties' request for earlier notification of meetings. The second public meeting was advertised in the Mercury well in advance on 16 January 2013. Background Information Documents with the notice of the meeting were also distributed to residences nearby the affected river sections.</p>		
<p>1. 1.4. Everyone introduced themselves.</p>		
<p>1. 2. MEETING PROCEDURE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING</p>		
<p>1. 2.1. A slide was presented with the meeting procedures.</p>		
<p>1. 2.2. Objectives of the Meeting</p> <p>Ms de Jong explained the purpose of the public meeting was to consult with Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) on the proposed widening and canalisation of a 1 km stretch of the northern embankment of the lower Umgeni River - just downstream of Connaught Bridge to just before NCP. This being Phase 2 of the lower Umgeni River widening project for flood attenuation of the Springfield/Umgeni Business Park area. The southern embankment had already been canalised. Provide overview of the project and touched on the background of the proposed site.</p>		
<p>1. 2.1. She explained that GIBB had previously undertaken an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for Phase 2 of the Umgeni Canalisation Project (northern embankment) based on which the eThekweni Municipality was granted Environmental Authorisation about 5 years ago. For various reasons, mainly as a result of acquisition challenges, the start of construction was delayed beyond the validity period. It is for this reason that this Basic Assessment process is now undertaken in terms of the latest EIA Regulations. Therefore this is in effect a repeat EIA.</p>		
<p>1. 3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION</p>		
<p><i>Refer to attached slides on:</i></p>		
<p>1. 3.1. Background</p>		
<p>1. 3.2. Site Location – map included</p>		
<p>1. 3.3. Description of the proposed widening and canalisation</p>		
<p>1. 4. BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p>		
<p><i>Refer to attached slides on:</i></p>		
<p>1. 4.1. Background and project description (legislations, roles players and the BA process)</p>		
<p>1. 4.2. Public Participation Process (I&AP comment summary)</p>		

DESCRIPTION	ACTION	DEADLINE
1. 4.3. Specialist Studies and Potential Impacts		
1. 5. DISCUSSION		
<p>The following questions and comments were raised and were then responded to by the GIBB and/or the eThekwini team members.</p>		
1 5.1. Will the river embankment be hardened and will the base of the river be solid?		
<p><i>Response: No. The embankment will be essentially constructed from soil with some stabilisation measures. The foundation is solid ground. The lower portion of the embankment will be stabilised with a reno-mattress layer which will be vegetated. A gabion basked running along the embankment will separate this 'reno-mattress' from the upper part of the new embankment. The upper part will be stabilised through vegetation. It was noted that the normal flow regime and channel will not be altered as the construction is on the upper part of the embankment.</i></p>		
1 5.2. Reference was made to the facility design drawing. It was requested that the yellow line showing the proposed widening on the site map was physically shown in relation to the canalisation design sketch.	Refer to Design Drawing	
<p><i>Response: Mr Vishal Krishandutt indicated where the yellow line was on the design drawing.</i></p>		
1 5.3. Reference was made to the facility design drawing and it was asked whether the projected flood level of the river could be shown on the drawing.	Refer to Design Drawing	
<p><i>Response: The eThekwini team indicated that the water level would be about 1 metre to 1 and a 1/2 metres up the embankment and they showed this in relation to the facility drawing. It was noted that when the river is flooded, the water level will be about 7 metres high.</i></p>		
1 5.4. How high will the embankment berm be above the ground level of the road next to the embankment?		
<p><i>Response: The berm will be approximately one metre above the road level. This may have the added benefit of deterring people from reversing onto the embankment to dump waste illegally.</i></p>		
1 5.5. What will happen to the New Era Motor Spare area, will it be removed?		
<p><i>Response: Yes, the motor spare business will be removed. They have been notified to evacuate the site and indicated that they are currently preparing to move.</i></p>		

DESCRIPTION	ACTION	DEADLINE
<p>1 5.6. Who will maintain the reno-mattresses after construction?</p> <p><i>Response: Once in place, the reno-mattresses would not require much maintenance. However, there is an existing programme known as the River Rangers which employs local people to maintain the reno-mattresses and remove any alien invasive species. Maintenance on the mattresses will also be included in the Engineering works to maintain the project area one year after construction.</i></p>		
<p>1 5.7. Will existing urban-made infrastructure be affected/removed?</p> <p><i>Response: The pipelines will be in front of the culvert, and the culvert won't be affected. The infrastructures near the bridge has been removed already. Some paving may also need to be removed.</i></p>		
<p>1 5.8. How many people have responded during the comments period?</p> <p><i>Response: Approximately 15, including those registered for meetings and these were mainly environmental groups and councillors.</i></p>		
<p>1 5.9. What will happen to the Islamic grave yard?</p> <p><i>Response: It will not be directly impacted. During the previous EIA, impact on the graveyard was raised as an issue of concern. At the time the eThekwini team had met with representatives of the Islamic community and subsequently made some changes to their previous alignment designs to specifically exclude the grave yard from being directly impacted. Accordingly the embankment alteration does not reach as far as the graveyard.</i></p>		
<p>1 5.10.Does this project still allow people to continue with their religious ceremonies?</p> <p><i>Response: Yes, they won't be affected at all as they fall outside the project area.</i></p>		
<p>1 5.11.From a Tourism perspective, will the project impact on the yearly Dusi Canoe Marathon?</p> <p><i>Response: Not at all, the proposed project activities will not impact on the flow of the river, most notably since it is only the upper portion of the embankment that is affected. The construction phase will start downstream and work its way up and where applicable, mitigation measures will be adopted if the activities affect the river. It is planned to do the construction during the dry months and the municipality also hope to be complete with their operations before the next Dusi Canoe Marathon (2014).</i></p>		

DESCRIPTION	ACTION	DEADLINE
<p>1 5.12.If the project receives an Environmental Authorisation, when will construction start? What will the municipality do if the worst case flood scenario happens? The last thing one would want is for the canalisation to occur during flood season.</p> <p><i>Response: Obviously construction can only start once Environmental Authorisation is received from DAEA. Legislation states that the department need to respond within the 60 days period. eThekwini hopes to start construction this year during the dry months when the level of the river is low and the risk of flooding is also low. However, eThekwini has no control over such flooding, and should flooding occur it might affect the embankment as part of a natural process. In the worst case scenario, construction will start in June or August, then it will be a nine (9) month construction period or longer if there are floods.</i></p>		
<p>1 5.13.Concern was raised at the presence of swamp fig (<i>ficus trichopoda</i>) tree which might have survived the last floods (approximately 80 years old), located close to the NCP industrial site, and the Islamic grave site. It was requested that trees of that nature be preserved, a request was made for the eThekwini team/the biodiversity specialist to look into it.</p> <p><i>Response: Noted. If it's near the existing bank, it will experience little impact and may fall outside the study area. DAFF had visited the site and indicated that they had not observed any forests or indigenous trees within the affected area. They did however raise a concern for potential impact on the indigenous trees within the park opposite the Bird Park and requested that the park be considered as a no-go area during construction.</i></p> <p><i>GIBB will request the Biodiversity specialist to investigate the location of the swamp fig, and seek advice on its protection. eThekwini engineers advised that they would involve the eThekwini Parks department to recover small indigenous trees to a nursery and also to plant indigenous trees as part of remediation. A specialist will also be appointed to assist with the vegetation specification.</i></p>	GIBB	
<p>1 5.14.Is funding available to complete the project?</p> <p><i>Response: Yes.</i></p>		
<p>1 5.15.Will the parking area and park (opposite the Bird Park) be affected (opposite the Bird Park)?</p> <p><i>Response: Since the plan is to tie the 'new' embankment in with the alignment of the existing embankment in the proximity of the parking area, the parking area will not be affected; a security barrier may be put in place to restrict access to the site.</i></p>		

DESCRIPTION	ACTION	DEADLINE
<p>1 5.16.Refer to the design drawing sketch. Can a walkway be constructed for recreational purposes?</p> <p><i>Response: Yes, the shape of the embankment, particularly at along the gabion structure, will be suitable for a pedestrian walkway.</i></p>		
<p>1 5.17.Will any lighting be provided on the pedestrian walkway?</p> <p><i>Response: None had been planned for as part of this project, but may be introduced by the Parks Department.</i></p>		
<p>1 5.18. Will there be another press release?</p> <p><i>Response No, but a lady called Lauren Anthony of North Glen News contacted Ms de Jong with regards to the project and was considering doing an article on the project.</i></p>		
<p>1. 6. WAY FORWARD</p>		
<p>1. 6.1. Ms de Jong thanked everyone for their attendance. She noted that the comments period on the Draft BAR closes on the 12 February 2013. Thereafter, GIBB would then finalise the Issues and Response Report and submit the Final Basic Assessment Report to DAEA for approval.</p>		