PUBLIC HEARING

WHITES POINT QUARRY AND MARINE TERMINAL PROJECT

JOINT REVIEW PANEL

VOLUME 8

HELD BEFORE: Dr. Robert Fournier (Chair)
               Dr. Jill Grant (Member)
               Dr. Gunter Muecke (Member)

PLACE HEARD: Digby, Nova Scotia

DATE HEARD: Monday, June 25, 2007

PRESENTERS: -Bilcon of Nova Scotia
             Ms. Susan Sherk
             -Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage
             Mr. Robert Ogilvie and Ms. Darlene MacDonald
             -Municipality of the District of Digby
             Warden James Thurber
             -Town of Annapolis Royal
             Mayor John Kinsella
             -Municipality of the County of Annapolis
             Warden Peter Newton
             -Mr. Michael Hayden
             -Ms. Jan Hermiston
             -Paradise Women’s Institute
             Ms. Phyllis Nixon and Ms. Kim Grimard
             -Mr. Clytie Foster
place.

At the same time, if there is going to be any work undertaken in that zone, it would be overseen by an archaeologist, once again, operating under a Heritage research permit.

There was another general recommendation provided by Bilcon and that is that there be sensitivity training for staff on site, so that they are aware of what archaeological resources may look like, so that if some are stumbled upon during the course of construction, that they can act appropriately. And we would oversee, or at least look at the training that they would put in place for that.

And with that, I'd like to pass it over to my colleague, Darlene MacDonald, for the tourism perspective.

Ms. DARLENE MacDonald: Thank you, Bob. I am Darlene MacDonald, Manager of Tourism Development, with the Tourism Division of the Department.

Just to touch upon our core business activities within the Tourism Division, we work closely with the Tourism Partnership Council which are 14 tourism industry leaders across the Province who help set direction and recommendations to the Minister in regards to marketing, development and research.

With that, we work in development and
So some of the figures as it relates to tourism in Nova Scotia, provincially, tourism is a $1.3 billion sector. While there have been various comments made on tourism up and down, it has remained fairly consistent throughout the Province over the last number of years, generating $200 million in Federal, Provincial, Municipal taxes, and employing 23,800 in direct jobs, and about 9,000 planning, and in particular, that is the area which I work in, so with staff, we work with community groups in building destinations, attractions in developing and enhancing tourism industry, private sector, and enhancing their overall marketing readiness and business operations.

Within the Division, we are the primary source of tourism marketing and promotions for the Province of Nova Scotia, and with that, through our sales and partnerships team, they are actively out promoting Nova Scotia, and supporting our tourism brand to the travel trade.

We also manage provincially-owned Crown assets such as the facility we're sitting in, as well as other Provincial Resorts, and contracts with major suppliers for distribution and call centres. We also have a section that collects and disseminates research based on various tourism indicators, and some of them will be referenced in this presentation.
in indirect jobs.

I must say that these numbers are calculated through our research section that use provincial economic input/output model.

When we look at Digby County, and that is the lowest that we can take our impact model, 37.7 million is directed towards Digby County for tourism revenues representing 5.8 million in taxes, and approximately 1,000 directly into jobs.

Digby is an entry point to the Province, and this demonstrates that in 2006, approximately 29,000 visitors came through Digby as one of the seven entry points. It also illustrates where these markets are coming through this entry point to the Province of Nova Scotia, so we do see Ontario, Quebec, even some western Canada, and a fair number from the U.S. regions.

So from a tourism perspective, and it is in my section of development and planning that we provide a tourism perspective on environmental assessments such as the one proposed. We looked at the following considerations: Transportation and materials, visual aesthetics, noise, local tourism development plans, and potential growth of the development.

In this case, has the transportation of materials proposed is by marine. We feel that the whale
In addition, 44 percent of travellers participated in nature observation activities during their visit to Nova Scotia. As such, coastal experiences such as nature observation... In other words, birding and hiking... May be impacted. In 2002, we hired Tom Heinz, a well-known birder from Ontario to assess Nova Scotia as far as potential to develop our birding experiences, and Digby Neck area was one of the top three birding opportunities in the province. With increased shipping, there is potential that it may impact the already endangered species, which could, in turn, impact the local whale-watching sightseeing tours and businesses. As I referenced through our research section, each... Sorry, every four years, we conduct a visitor-exit survey, so we surveyed those people leaving the Province, and in the 2004 VES surveyed, nine percent of travellers participated in a boat tour for whale and seabirding, watching.

I must say that that is not just to Digby. That is a provincial, so where they took that boating experience, we don't have that specific information.

In addition, 44 percent of travellers participated in nature observation activities during their visit to Nova Scotia. As such, coastal experiences such as nature observation... In other words, birding and hiking...
Province, the other two being Sable Island and Sheffield Mills from a nature observation perspective.

So, as such, we suggest the Proponent mitigate and monitor any potential impact on whales by working with experts and stakeholders in those fields. We also suggest that the Proponent work with local boat tour operators to mitigate any potential impact on their operations, and most importantly, the visitors experiences.

On the visual aesthetics, we are concerned of the impact on the visitors' perception and experience of Nova Scotia.

We position Nova Scotia as pristine, a natural experience. Between six percent of travellers cite general coastal scenery as the main reason for choosing Nova Scotia as their destination. Once again, the source is the 2004 Visitor Exit Survey.

35 percent of travellers cite general coastal scenery as what they liked most about their visit to Nova Scotia, remembering this is as they leave the Province.

So coastal experiences are not only by water, but also by land, and in 1997, we conducted a marine tourism study, and that was one of the key findings; that much of our marine coastal experiences are experienced by visitors who, whether they're doing a coastal hike, or if they're launching their kayak, and do sea kayaking, or
they're visiting a lighthouse.

In particular, since 1998, we have had a joint partnership with the tourism industry along the Bay of Fundy, as well as the Province of New Brunswick in developing and promoting the Bay of Fundy. I have provided a copy to the Panel of the brochure for the ultimate Bay of Fundy experience.

As part of the Bay of Fundy programs since '98, it has evolved to include marketing, whether it be direct media to target markets, as well as website development, and as well as a market-readiness program for operators to denote those operators that offer the ultimate recommended experience on the Bay of Fundy.

I should note in 2006 the Bay of Fundy Tourism Partnership Council received the Tourism Industry Association of Canada award for sustainable development.

So, overall, key to tourism in Nova Scotia is the integrity of our natural environment, and in particular, our coastal assets.

It is through the Tourism Brand Positioning Statement that we position and sell Nova Scotia as a destination, and so we are targeting the market of those people who appreciate the sea; that Nova Scotia is Canada's foremost seacoast vacation destination; that offers an authentic experience for your body and soul, better than
any other destination, because only Nova Scotia unique
combines spectacular scenery, living tradition, maritime
culture and lifestyle with a feeling of deep-down spiritual
satisfaction.

This is not a statement that you would
see as going out and actively putting in the marketplace,
but it is the behind-the-scenes position of everything that
we do from a marketing and development perspective, in the
sense that much of our messaging, as this is Nova Scotia,
Canada's Seacoast, and I have provided you copies of a few
pieces, such as the 2007 Travel Guide, and as well as the
2007 Outdoor Guide.

You will see there's very few images
that do not touch upon an activity or an experience that is
coastal-based. In addition, while I do not have copies to
leave, we do have a binder that offers many ad samples for
2007. So this is the promotional materials that are in the
specific geographic markets, whether it be Atlantic Canada,
Ontario, Quebec, Western Canada and the U.S.

So as such, we are concerned that this
development has the potential to negatively impact our
Provincial Tourism Brand, and this development is not
consistent with our international tourism promotions in
positioning Nova Scotia as Canada's seacoast.

Another consideration in respect to

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noise, we are concerned that the noise from the quarry
collection, operations of the marine terminal, and
blasting may impact the visitors' experience; concerned that
increased noise from operations and shipping may impact
whales and create a risk for sightseeing tour operations.

The work we're doing in development
includes working with regional efforts and in this case,
we're working with the Digby Area Tourism Association to
develop their planning from a tourism destination area
perspective, and one of the areas that they've identified is
the importance of serving as stewards for their ecosystems.

And in conclusion, the potential growth
of the development, given the location on the Bay of Fundy,
which we consider to be an important destination, with
potential for Nova Scotia, consideration should be given on
the impact to the visitors' perception and experience should
be considered.

And given the whale-watching experience
is a strong component for the area, consideration of the
potential impact on this business activity. And should
ongoing expansion be... Should be monitored carefully as
potential growth for such a small geographic area may impact
on tourism experiences north and south of the area.

And I guess that formally concludes the
presentation of the Department.
THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much. Do you want to go?

Dr. JILL GRANT: I'd like to start with some questions to Mr. Ogilvie. The report by the Confederation of Mainland Mi'Kmaq identified concerns about an Indian hill camp on the site. Are you satisfied that the archaeological study was thorough enough to determine whether there was such a feature on the site?

Mr. ROBERT OGILVIE: We were satisfied with the level of investigation done on the site.

It's a very difficult site to look at, being treed and so on and so forth, but that particular area is not expected to have a high potential for this type of thing.

There is potential that there could well be something out there which wasn't discovered because the nature of archaeological remains is that they do tend to be hidden until they're discovered, but we are confident in the methodology that was used.

Dr. JILL GRANT: And if there were, at one time, a small settlement at Whites Cove, as some of the community members suggest, is it likely to have occurred in the coastal plain area, the part that may have been already...