

Saint-Gobain Merrimack Community Advisory Council

Final Meeting Notes

January 12, 2021 - Via Zoom

Prepared jointly by Lia LoBello of Saint-Gobain and Sandra Liburd of Leadership Strategies

Attendance

Community Advisory Council Members Present

- John Henderson, Saint-Gobain
- Wolfram von Schoen, Merrimack Village District
- Sharon Connary, Saint-Gobain
- Rosemarie Rung, State Representative
- Robert Healey, State Representative
- Mike Wimsatt, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
- Don Provencher, Merrimack Village District
- Wendy Thomas, Executive Director, NH Challenge
- Laurene Allen, Merrimack Citizens for Clean Water
- Mark Smith, Leadership Strategies
- Sandra Liburd, Leadership Strategies
- Mike Apfelberg, United Way

Other Guests:

- Mark Rayfield, Saint-Gobain
- Chris Angier, Saint-Gobain
- Brett Slensky, Saint-Gobain
- Lia LoBello, Saint-Gobain
- Peter Clark, Special Assistant for Projects & Policy, Office of U.S. Senator Shaheen
- Justin Troiano, Outreach Coordinator & Veterans Liaison, Office of U.S. Senator Maggie Hassan
- Colin Pio, Office of U.S. Representative Chris Pappas

Declined/No Response:

- Ron Miner, Superintendent, Merrimack Village District
- Matthew Gage, Merrimack Resident

Zoom Functionality Overview

Mark Smith: Overview of participant, chat and raise hand functionality. Overview of chat function and appropriate use. Instruction on how to toggle between gallery and speaker view. Mentioned that tonight's agenda is robust in terms not just of volume but importance of items. Introduction of Rep. Healey to the group and Sandra Liburd of Leadership Strategies as moderator.

Agenda Overview and Opening Remarks

December meeting notes approval. Rosemarie Rung stated notes were well done but requested that upon first instance of acronyms, spell out upon first instance. The group nodded affirmation that with this change, the notes were approved.

Wastewater Permit Update

Mark Smith turned the floor to Brett Slensky. Brett Slensky:

- Tonight, I want to provide some table setting thoughts. Following, I'll go over some deeper updates on the wastewater permit before handing over to Chris Angier.
- Last month, we provided a detailed overview of the air permit and BACT analysis. This was to provide foundation and set context for conversation going forward.
- Today, will focus on RTO itself as know it's important to the group to receive project updates. We've prepared a robust slide deck that provides insight into the work thus far.
- This project is first-of-its-kind in the country and is massively complex. It's also a pretty aggressive timeframe that we are working hard to meet.
- Tonight, we wanted to provide an update on the key systems related to the all of the elements of this project, including mechanical, electrical, ductwork, concrete – all of the key pieces.
 - o We have been submitting monthly status reports to DES, as well.
- The headline this evening is that we will be missing the permit deadline
- The Town has appealed the permit with some fairly specific asks – so I do need to flag that if there are questions touch these areas we will do our best to answer them as best we can but may not be able.
- Before we get into the full RTO update, though, we wanted to provide information on our appeal of the 2020 wastewater discharge permit. This has not been a huge topic in the past but wanted to share.
- We have decided to drop our appeal of the 2020 permit. From our perspective, it's another good step – similar to efforts the here at the CAC – in furtherance of our ongoing effort to build and improve the relationship between Saint-Gobain and the community, and address the Town's concerns.
- A few things helped us get to this point but the bottom line is that appeal was withdrawn and we are moving forward with ensuring compliance with current permit.
- This is one less thing on the table to work on that could be viewed as a point of contention.
- This really benefits all parties concerned and allows us to move forward with regulatory aspect of current operation.

Question from Wolfram von Schoen:

- It would be wonderful if the community and the corporation focused its efforts on more than just appeals and permit submittals. There's been a lot of energy spent with nothing to gain. We need to find ways to work faster so that an appeal is not necessary anymore.
- Speaking for everyone who has been part of this, there's been a lot spent on lawyers and proceedings. A better path forward is finding the common ground between what the law says and what the Town would like to do.

- The last three meetings have shown we can get there and that there is commitment. To this end, Mark Rayfield's continued presence is noted.

Mark Smith: Thanks. We note the grounding trend of continued cooperation.

((Wendy Thomas joined the meeting))

RTO Update

Chris Angier

- Quick review of agenda for the RTO update. Tonight, we are going to walk through the work to-date and the details of the February deadline. Chris also opens up for questions along the way.
- First pointed out photos which aren't our unit but very similar.
- The RTO Saint-Gobain is building is a "three chamber design." (Chris shows picture of a three-chamber design.) This photo gives a sense of what the unit will look like. RTOs often have a two-chamber design, but with a two-chamber RTO there is a portion of the treatment cycle when the valve configuration changes and emissions can bypass treatment. A three-chamber RTO eliminates that scenario, which is why we wanted to go with a three-chamber situation.
- The other bit of key information is why an RTO was selected. We went into details on this in the last meeting, but an RTO is well-suited to applications with high flow rates and low concentrations. An RTO typically goes up to 980 degrees Celsius, but we will be operating higher than that: at 1,000 degrees Celsius.
- As Brett mentioned, this a big complex project – it's not easy to get a sense of scale. For frame of reference – you can see what the size of the RTO will be in this picture. The unit for our plant will be roughly 30 feet wide, 70 feet long, and 60 feet high. It handles 70,000 cubic feet of air per minute. This is a very big piece of equipment, with some complex engineering challenges.
- Construction is underway at our vendor, Air Clear, but the unit will not be fully assembled until it gets to us. It actually cannot fit on the back of a truck.
- Before we walk through what the go-forward schedule is, we want to talk through what has been done to date:
 - o October 2019 – we issue the draft permit to qualified manufacturers so they could start to think about how to potentially build this machinery, and hit the ground running when the final permit is issued.
 - o February 2020 – we get the final permit, and then ask the vendors to adjust their bids with the final specifications we now have in hand.
 - o March 2020 – we get the final bids from the vendors, however, in March, we also start to get a lot of changes. In March, we start to see COVID-19 disruptions begin and the Town of Merrimack also files an appeal to the February permit.
 - The appeal meant the RTO manufacturers couldn't be sure they had the final design criteria – which presented some challenges in our discussions with them.
 - o April and May 2020 – We start to see more widespread effects of pandemic, but specific to our project, we were hearing from our vendors that the lead time was increasing significantly. Parts with a 20 week lead time went to 32 or 40 week

lead times after COVID. With these material impacts in the schedule we wanted to inform DES. So we submitted the variance request to highlight the uncertainties from the appeal, COVID, the supply chain and construction schedules.

- June and July 2020 – We put in additional submittals to DES regarding what we were hearing from contractors and really wanted to be transparent to share as much info as we could.
 - August and September 2020 – We continued to work to update bids in light of what we knew about the appeal path; but ultimately variance was denied and so we took action to pick one vendor. I want to stress that during this time we didn't hit pause or put pencil down on design or work, but tried to advance where we could.
 - October 2020 – This is when we receive the first design drawings so we worked to move quickly. Here we were also at a point where we had fabricated ducts on site which were ready for insulation. ((Shows pictures of ducts that will connect from towers into the RTO.))
 - November and December 2020 - Throughout these months, we were looking at the loading and electrical details in order to make big design decisions about construction. We are working to get the site ready wherever we can. Relocating electrical lines, pouring concrete, etc. The concrete contractor submitted a permit application to the Town and as soon as that is approved, we can pour the concrete, which forms the critical pad for the RTO.
- Looking ahead:
- A key piece to highlight is that once we get a successful factory acceptance test, which is done at Air Clear, we will need 8 to 14 weeks before the RTO is operational.
 - This is an important step as the RTO will not be fully assembled before it arrives on site.
 - The factory acceptance test will look burners, logic controls, and other key elements which if testing is successful is then disassembled, and then put back together at our facility.
 - Following an acceptable factory acceptance test, there will be two weeks for shipping and two weeks for reassembly. Once it is all put back together, there will then be initial onsite RTO system checks as this will be the first time the unit is fully assembled.
 - The manufacturer will take 1-3 weeks to make sure equipment works – interlocks, alarms, etc. – to be sure it's functioning as designed before we tie in emission points. Then, once it passes initial checks, it can connect towers
 - Then, between two and four weeks after that is when we do large duct runs. There are 14 emission points, some of them are 5 or 6 feet in diameter so these are very large ducts.
 - Once the connection is made, we will need flow balancing and duct work testing to be sure we are ready for start-up.
 - Laying that over the schedule we have now, what we see right now is pretty close to final building permit from the Town of Merrimack. We spoke to them

yesterday – had some questions on the concrete foundation designs but as soon as we have that, can resume onsite construction.

- From this point:
 - o We are ready for the manufacturer’s acceptance test in early to mid-April
 - o Currently, we are expecting delivery of the unit in mid-April and targeting an installation that begins in late April
 - o Throughout May RTO installation will continue and we expect Air Clear will be able to perform initial operational checks.
 - o Then, throughout June, we’ll be able to complete duct installation and make the final connections from the current emissions points to the RTO.
- So with this, we have covered the snapshot of where we are and what we are looking at. Are there any questions or remarks?

Question from Wendy Thomas:

- With regard to the RTO, how did you choose the size you are using and does it allow for extra capacity and what if you exceed?

Chris Angier: The size was designed by Air Clear based on maximum air flow at both the facility and permit requirements that account for residence time. So, it’s already sized to meet the flows from all the towers, at the same time.

Question from Wendy Thomas:

- Could you ever exceed the capacity?

Chris Angier: Not with building in its current configuration.

Question from Laurene Allen:

- The Air Resource Council has scheduled the appeal for the beginning of April. How does that work into the plans?

Chris Angier: Yes, that hearing is scheduled for early April, but we are moving full speed ahead. We decided we can’t wait for the appeal given with the February deadline – we had to get moving.

Question from Laurene Allen:

- What if the appeal requires a scrubber?

CA: We’d have to take a look at the timeline, but really we would need actual test data from this RTO in order to determine if a scrubber is needed, and then we would need to design that based on the test data. So essentially, the first step is to get the RTO in place and test it.

Question from Wolfram von Schoen:

- You made mention that the appeal to the air permit delayed the project and made it more difficult. I can understand to a certain extent but my understanding is that appeal was about a discrepancy between BACT, a scrubber and what should be achieved. Had the

target been sent higher in the first place, perhaps the appeal would not have happened. I just want to caution how this is being presented, is it the fault of the Town of Merrimack that this was delayed?

Brett Slensky: As Chris mentioned, the appeal was simply a factor we had to consider. It did cast some uncertainty on the project and was one variable we had to manage among a few. However, there was not a point where the pencil was put down. We are not raising the fact of the appeal to point a finger – but it is one of the complexities we had to work with. Relative to appeal – I'd be happy to clarify if the group would like more detail.

Wolfram Von Schoen: Can accept may not have all the details.

Mark Rayfield:

We are no in way saying the appeal was to blame. From a layman's perspective, it just added to a tight schedule, given the existing complexity of the engineering discussion. We respect the Town's appeal and think we built something that will meet the needs of the Town– on top of the tight timeframe and COVID.

Question from Rosemarie Rung:

- I have two questions. Laurene asked first question regarding scrubber. Second, since Saint-Gobain will not be able to meet the date for the permit – do you have plans to scale back or halt production so further PFAS is not emitted from air?

Chris Angier: We have looked at how not to exceed annual limit as outlined in the permit. If we follow the current timeline for install, we will be under the annual limit.

Brett Slensky: To add, the February 11 deadline is one condition in an otherwise extensive permit with other conditions. We are taking steps to do what we can and mitigate potential effects.

Sampling Update: When and Where

Chris Angier:

- We submitted Addendum No. 6 on 12/21 to the DES.
- ((Shows latest snapshot provided))
 - o 1,643 properties have been identified for sampling and have a good return rate with 870 responses.
 - Of this we have a combination of access agreements back and the forms returned. Other times, we've received declines or told that they don't have well on property
 - o Of the 787 returned with a yes for access, Golder is scheduling and sampling. Thus far, we have collected 732 samples, and 683 results back.
- This data is being shared with Mike and his team at DES, and will have more on this at the next call.
- There is not as much private well sampling in Merrimack as there are in other towns where there are more wells

- ((Looking at map)) To zoom in, looking at Bedford, it's a mix where concentrations are above standard (yellow) and below standard (green). Non-detect are gray dots.
- We are at a point now where looking if there is enough data density to make decisions on next steps.
- I want to highlight on this slide that the sampling done on edge is Pre-GMZ. We received non-detects from sampling in Merrimack. The results are coming back below the standard -- so that is good news.
- This will likely be a standing agenda item for a while yet, as this is happening week over week and looking we are looking to get a better understanding of the area

Question from Wendy Thomas:

- I live 2 Wildcat Falls Road. My well was tested. I understand that because of COVID, they didn't want to come into the house and so an outside spigot was tested. However, we have a whole house filtration system and so we have several GAC cartridges through which the water is filtered. So I question the validity of the testing being done at my house. And when I talked to Golder about these concerns he mentioned (paraphrasing) "Don't worry the PFAS chemicals we are testing for get around the filters and so if it's there we will find it." So that was a little alarming.

Chris Angier: That is alarming, but I'm not aware of any PFAS that would bypass a whole house filtration system. I will speak to Golder and see what they were referring to.

We can also take samples directly from a well. In most cases, most folks don't have whole house filtration system. The risk of entering homes right now is significant and so we have to take serious precautions.

Question from Laurene Allen:

- There was a response on the workplan earlier this month by DES that I had seen on OneStop. The gist looked like the outer boundary for the Consent Decree was determined by air modeling deposition. Some of the asks were to look at buffer zones, exclusions, some landfill concerns that were excluded. It seemed to make the point that there wasn't hydrogeological analysis by Golder to determine why some of the exemptions are there. So my question is - when you did testing in the fall, did you consider the spring testing because of the fall drought? The details are what matter here.

Chris Anger:

We are working on a detailed and full response to Mike and his team. What I can comment on right now is seasonality. Previously when we had the 70 ppt standard we had a plan for the wells around the perimeter. We would be visiting these wells to understand the fluctuations with the seasons. There are some wells where seasonality is part of the measurement and evaluation. Right now, we are trying to work on as many wells as we can to understand the big picture and then finding the good candidates for seasonal evaluations.

Laurene Allen:

As a community, we would ask to be as proactive. We are also in NH – we are live free or die and don't like to pay taxes. The Town has spent millions to proactively address this issue. People are now paying for water, and paying more for it, and that is a sticking point for many. It's troubling to think about for the private well owners. I know there's a way to do things, and the state has to do things, but it would be phenomenal to be as proactive as possible and do our best to make things right. Even the homes in buffer zones that DES is making recommendations that we would all agree with.

Question from Rosemarie Rung:

- The map you showed with the clusters of tests above 12 ppt, you said you were evaluating next steps. What are the criteria for determining how many wells will need a water line or creating community water system for those folks?

Chris Angier: There is not a hard and fast decision framework laid out yet. Looking at the data we have to try and determine that.

Rosemarie Rung: Will they be done soon? If a constituent looks and asks how long it's going to take to get off bottled water, what can I tell them? I don't want to see people on bottled water with no end date. I would like to provide them a decision – that's a big priority for me, for folks not live with bottled water uncertainty.

Also, regarding letters requesting permission to go onsite for testing. I'm on the PFAS Commission and we are not encouraged by those numbers. We have a sub-committee to do outreach and encourage participation. The Town will likely be sending out its own letter to request approval for Golder to go on site and do testing – we would like to see 99 percent response rate. We are putting energy on that at the commission level using different vehicles. I'm afraid that a letter from Golder means they may not trust it.

Finally, I have a bill in to include Londonderry in the PFAS Commission, as its showing well contamination. Would like to show meeting notes to those groups impacted in that town.

((Laurene Allen in chat: Please keep in mind that the uncertainty is very stressful to impacted residents. This has been a lengthy experience and has taxed the mental health of so many.))

Question from Wolfram von Schoen:

- Just want to note that the homeowners and landowners may reject findings because of a loss of property value. Some people may also reject it for privacy...but I also expect because of monetary impact.

((Wendy Thomas in chat: that is valid concern))

((Rosemarie Rung in chat: may have to jump for a call))

Question from Donald Provencher:

- I wanted to circle back to a topic brought up last meeting, which is the ongoing site investigation and future remedial action measures that are anticipated at Saint-Gobain and Flatley. In looking at supplemental site investigation report from October 2020, it says “proposing or considering a groundwater capture and treatment system. Groundwater extraction...to discharge to public works. It may or may not include treatment prior to discharge.”
- This doesn't specifically say what boundary or area it is referring to. Is this specific to Saint-Gobain's property or does that include the Flatley parcel? Also it doesn't talk about timing. It will be five years this spring since this was identified, and the initial testing – and there is additional testing proposed in this investigation.
- So my question is - when will the remedial action plan be implemented and what boundary will be included? Saint-Gobain or beyond?

Chris Angier: We are still at a point where we are working to finalize site investigation. We want a complete picture in and around facility, which is how you know the best path forward. There are no timetables for remedial action steps, but want the investigation to be done first and done right. At a future CAC, we can talk about the investigation process, what we have found to date, and what next steps could be.

Donald Provencher: There were a couple of Flatley proposals submitted for development. We saw elevated PFOA at Flatley that needs to be remediated. Flatley doesn't seem like they are going to do it. I'm happy to act as conduit between the two groups. No one is addressing groundwater.

((Wolfram von Schoen in chat: Flatley's lack of concern with groundwater contamination and remediation?))

((Mike Apfelberg in chat: To Rosemary's comment about Londonderry, is there a process for adding them to the testing? Or did I misunderstand?))

Chris Angier:

- On Londonderry – they are part of the testing already. Rosemarie Rung was talking about adding them to a Commission she is a member of.

Open Issues and Next Steps

Mark Smith: Thanks Chris and Brett for their presentations. Now, if we can move to a roundtable to participants I would like to ask two questions. One – was this meeting effective and two - going into next meeting, is there anything specific for agenda?

Wendy Thomas:

1. Finding meetings to be very effective and well run
2. For future, in the private well world – will there be a plan coming out at some point on how houses and neighborhoods will be hooked up? Please include private wells going forward.

Laurene Allen:

1. Very effective. Appreciate Mark Smith's moderation and Mark Rayfield, Brett, and Chris. I just ask that you consider the little people on the ground in addition to the complex things every day
2. Some consideration for future: Even if it's not specific, a broad or general sense of the timeline that gives people a sense of what to expect and when to expect it. It helps reduce the anxiety and uncertainty. Many are living in limbo, which we know now causes background stress. People have no way to dissipate that stress.
 - a. Could we find a way to exchange and create a system for plastics and recycling program that we put in place?

Rosemarie Rung:

1. Meetings have been very effective. It's a huge change in just keeping PFAS on the agenda. Other topics aren't on people's radar.
2. PFAS Commission – this is a statutory commission, expanding to Londonderry. Should the CAC include a resident from Litchfield, Bedford and Londonderry? If you take away our federal delegation representatives and expand it to the region, the concerns we have are equally shared. This could be a conduit for communications. One of the things we've learned is that some people well educated and others have no idea. Now with a couple of these under our belt, it may be time to invite.
3. Plastic waste: When Monandock delivers, can they let that be the point source for the plastics so if its originating with them it goes back? Merrimack currently taking on this work and the costs are going up.

((Wendy Thomas in chat: Notes that pick up times can be long for some))

Wolfram von Schoen:

1. Thanks Saint-Gobain representatives for continued attendance
2. Feel we are making progress, but a lot riding on permits. Next meeting, two things;
 - a. Several subjects come up repeatedly – can the meeting minutes include a to-do section of sorts and record action items, including things to be tabled for next time so that individuals aren't tasked to remember?
 - b. I'm an idealist by nature. Believe in the best of people and that has worked out well. People have shown in this meeting they put their best foot forward – until we talk about the difficult stuff it's hard to gauge where we are. Maybe I can ask that aside from the progress report, we start to bring things from the Town Council letter that are still out there. Maybe we don't go through them all at once, but I don't think we have gotten to all the things that we think make a difference. Would like to find a path to resolving some of these.

Bob Healey:

1. Meeting was run very well, especially virtually.
2. Want to bring up something Rosemarie and Wendy did, which are the tipping fees for town. My wife is town councilor, Barbara Healey so connected to this. It will be important for the Town – how we address this.

Sharon Connary:

1. Meetings are a far cry from before. As an employee of Saint-Gobain – I wanted more productive conversation and think that's what we are seeing now. I am glad we are staying on task and staying on main issue – just want to caution that going back to the 9 points may muddy this.
2. Going forward, I'd like the ability for us to focus on PFAS. If we move onto the 9 points, we won't get to address the elephant in the room -- though I understand it is all important. I want to just utilize the resources we have to fix the first things you want fixed first.

Peter Clark:

- Will abstain from opinion but Sen. Shaheen is happy if the committee is happy
- Going forward, I echo Rep. Rung's when I hear adding people from Litchfield, Londonderry and Bedford. Would ask to consider this.

Mike Apfelberg:

1. Echo previous sentiments, especially Wolf's: it's good to see the meetings on task and productive. I appreciate the tenor.
2. Public vs. non-public nature – can these be made more public in near future? One suggestion would be to consider using Zoom to record these meetings for people who couldn't attend to share a video vs meeting minutes.

Mark Smith: Makes note to look into this.

Justin Troiano

- Great to hear everyone feels these are productive

Don Provencher:

1. Agree these are effective, and thanks everyone for participating and showing up month over month
2. Would like to see a short timeline on some of the issues being discussed to gain more clarity on what to expect and when. I'm focused on site remediation issue at Flatley. Might not be something we can pin to exact month but maybe quarterly, or at the half year mark. I'm concerned that land will be developed and there is no comprehensive remediation plan. Would like a timeline before any concrete is poured.

Mike Wimsatt:

1. Pleased to hear people find useful
2. In favor of creating a to-do list for items going forward

Chris Angier:

1. I'm here to answer questions so happy to hear people are happy

John Henderson:

1. As someone who has been here since the first CAC – seeing a big difference and appreciative of that

2. Going forward – just want to continue to see these trending in right direction

Lia LoBello:

1. Happy also to hear that the meetings feel productive
2. Going forward, taking notes on all items requested for agenda and will discuss with the team how to address

Brett Slensky:

1. Very happy to hear team is happy
2. At all of our sites across the country, it is important for us to have good relationships with the regulators and the community.

Mark Smith thanks everyone for thoughtful & insightful comments. Appreciates the candid feed and meeting demeanor. Notes that this is a critical subject for all participants.

((Wolfram von Schoen in chat: The question of making the content of the meetings public should be added to the agenda for the next meeting and to do list until resolved.))