

**Pickering Nuclear Generating Station
Community Advisory Council
Pickering Nuclear Information Centre
Minutes, January 21, 2020
Highlights**

Site Update

Randy Lockwood presented a site update, beginning with two clarifications: 1) the false alarm about an incident at Pickering Nuclear came from the provincial government, not the plant; 2) OPG Pickering is discussing with the provincial government sequential closing of site units into 2025, but is currently licensed to operate only to the end of 2024. Other items were also mentioned. Council members asked many questions about the false alarm and length of time it took the province to issue a correction.

Site Planning for Pickering in 2020

Randy presented Pickering Nuclear's business plan for 2020 and beyond. Council members asked questions about the extensive work the station is doing to optimize plant performance.

Station Emergency Response Capability

Richard Geofroy presented an overview of the station emergency response capability. Stan Whatmough discussed the Provincial Nuclear Emergency Response Plan (PNERP). He also reviewed highlights of emergency preparedness at Pickering and Darlington in 2019 and plans for 2020. Council members asked questions about the various aspects of emergency preparedness at OPG.

Agenda Topics for Future Meetings

Council members suggested a number of topics.

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Pickering CAC:

Frank Dempsey
John Earley
Bill Houston
Tim Kellar
Julie Kim
Greg Lymer
Pat Mattson
Sean McCullough
John Miseresky
Peter Ottensmeyer
Dan Shire
John Stirrat

Regrets:

Jill Adams
Donna Fabbro
Kristin Hall
Natalie Harder
Tracy MacCharles
Zachary Moshonas
Helen Shamsipour
Ralph Sutton

Guests:

Shireen Whitmore
John Simpson

OPG:

Ricky Aroda
Richard Geofroy
Rich Hadden
Randy Lockwood
Analiese St. Aubin
Stan Whatmough

Pickering News Advertiser

Keith Gilligan

PDA:

Francis Gillis

Dave Hardy

Regrets:

John Vincett

Topic #1: Introduction

CAC Facilitator Dave Hardy welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that John Vincett is still undergoing treatment. All extended best wishes to John.

Topic #2: Review of Minutes

The minutes from the CAC meeting of November 19, 2019 were approved without changes.

Topic #3: Site Update

Site Vice President Randy Lockwood presented a site update:

- An erroneous alert was issued to the public on Sunday, Jan. 12, saying there was an incident at Pickering Nuclear. On behalf of Pickering Nuclear staff, I apologize for the concern and anxiety that this error caused members of the public. However, the error was made by the provincial government, not the plant. There was, in fact, no incident and no danger. OPG Pickering had no involvement in the alert, which took place during a test at the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre. Pickering Nuclear has a good relationship with the community, and immediately informed community leaders that this was a false alarm. The Solicitor General has apologized to the public, and the provincial government is doing a full investigation into the erroneous alert. OPG is exploring whether any lessons from this occurrence can be applied at the site.
- A Toronto Star article claimed that the Ontario Cabinet has approved extending Pickering operations into 2025. This is not accurate. Under current plans, the plant is shutting down at the end of 2024; it is not authorized to operate beyond that date. However, OPG would like to add value to the shutdown by closing units sequentially through 2025 rather than closing all active units simultaneously

at the end of 2024. The provincial government (who, as the sole shareholder in OPG, will be making the decision) supports this proposal but would like to do public consultation before it gives final approval. For OPG, the issue is: How can the Pickering shutdown be optimized so that it adds value for the community, rate payers and staff? If the province does approve extending the shutdown into 2025, OPG would need a licence amendment from the CNSC. And the Commission would likely require a public hearing.

Randy responded to Council questions and comments:

- *When will the decision about extending the shutdown be made?*
We would have to make our proposal to the CNSC by 2022.
- *Regarding the false alarm, has the province identified the person responsible?*
It was someone at the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre (PEOC).
- *The false alarm is one thing, but the delay in cancelling it seems inexcusable.*
Yes, it did take the province considerable time to issue a correction. Here at the station, we contacted community leaders immediately. There has been a demand for an investigation and rightfully so, including investigating why the province took so long to declare there was no emergency. At Pickering, we had a meeting with staff on the Tuesday morning following the alarm. We made sure they understood what changes might be required for future drills. We also met with the staff about the Star article and explained our proposal to optimize the shutdown of the units. We emphasized that the staff role is to focus on plant performance.

Randy added further items:

- Units 4, 6, 7, and 8 are operating at full power. Unit 1 is now in a planned outage that will last well into the spring. The Unit 5 planned outage is expected to be completed by the end of the year. In the fall, outages of Units 4 and 6 are planned.
- The WANO (World Association of Nuclear Operators) evaluation of Pickering Nuclear last fall went very well. The safety performance and the engagement of staff at the site were noted. The station was rated as one of the top nuclear operators in the world.
- The station business plan for 2020 and beyond was recently presented to the operations team.

Topic #4: Site Planning for Pickering in 2020

Randy presented Pickering Nuclear's business plan for 2020 and beyond under the title OPG25 Update (Appendix 1). Key themes included:

- Engaging staff in innovation
- Optimizing performance and reducing costs
- Driving a cultural shift to achieve these goals across the station and OPG

Randy noted that Pickering's current performance is the best in station history, as demonstrated in the safety record, plant reliability and community involvement. The Pickering Nuclear Roadmap is aimed at redefining what's possible:

- 2019 Outage Optimization
- 2020 Innovation Velocity
- 2021 CANDU Leading
- 2022 CANDU Defining
- Our last day is our best day

Randy responded to Council questions:

- *You mentioned 300 outage days at the station over the coming year. How many units will be in planned outages after this year?*
Two outages are planned for 2021 and three for 2022.
- *You talked about OPG Pickering showing leadership among the CANDU Operators Group. Are there other industry groups that you are comfortable working with?*
Yes, we pull together information on commonalities across all types of nuclear plants and share best practices and continuous improvement strategies. Pickering station is seen as much older than it actually is; we are trying to communicate the modernization projects we have completed over the years.
- *Will the station's leadership in the CANDU Operators Group lead to selling more CANDU reactors?*
Anything we learn is of value to CANDU operators and the industry as a whole. We share best practices and innovation information. However, there are a number of challenges to selling CANDUs.
- *It's sad that OPG is not reaping the benefits of all the work it is doing to enhance nuclear operations. There is a long history of that lack of recognition. That has to be changed.*
There are lots of possibilities with CANDU technology. For example, a CANDU reactor can burn any kind of nuclear fuel. But most potential customers want a "modern" version of nuclear reactor. But we should look at developing small modular reactors (SMRs). We are getting lots of interest there.

City Council Motion Regarding Dismantling of Pickering Reactors

CAC member Peter Ottensmeyer noted that a motion was recently tabled at Pickering City Council calling for the immediate dismantling of the Pickering CANDU reactors once the last six units are shut down. Peter will be speaking against this motion at the

City Council meeting of Jan. 27. He made copies of a draft of his comments, including an alternative proposal (Appendix 2), available to CAC members.

Topic #5: Station Emergency Response Capability

Richard Geofroy, Director of Operations and Maintenance at Pickering, presented an overview of the various aspects of the station's emergency response capability (Appendix 3). He discussed:

- Design features of the plant that protect the public
- Site actions by the shift manager during an emergency, including in-plant and out-of-plant response
- On-call staff response

Richard Geofroy, Rich Hadden (Manager, Projects), Stan Whatmough (Acting Senior Manager, Emergency Preparedness) and Randy Lockwood responded to Council questions:

- *Regarding the earlier discussion about the false alarm issued by the province, were there other external aspects that led to the message being sent?*

R. Geofroy: Any such aspects would be with the province. When Pickering Nuclear performs a drill, we have a number of protocols to prevent any false alarm being sent to the public. For example, all communications are marked "This is a drill."

- *I was an observer of the province-wide drill a couple of years ago. On that occasion, a communications breakdown was noted.*

R. Hadden: Before that large drill, OPG initiated a communications protocol with the federal and provincial governments.

R. Lockwood: Yes, this was a tool to prevent errors and miscommunications. But I understand the frustration of family members who got the false message on Jan. 12.

- *One upside of that message is that the public now knows that emergency response measures at OPG are being tested.*

- *How come the false alarm was so widely distributed?*

S. Whatmough: That was another mishap. The message is supposed to be geographically targeted.

- *Does the shift manager look after all units during an emergency?*

R. Geofroy: No, there is one shift manager for Units 1 to 4 and another for Units 5 to 8; there are technical differences between the two sets of units.

OPG Emergency Preparedness in 2019 and 2020

Stan Whatmough discussed emergency preparedness at OPG and the roles of the plant and the province in emergency response (Appendix 4).

Stan noted that, as detailed in the Provincial Nuclear Emergency Response Plan (PNERP), the province has authority for off-site emergency response. PNERP determines protective action strategy for public safety.

If there is an event at the nuclear plant, the first action is the identification, classification and, if appropriate, declaration of a station emergency. OPG notifies the province within 15 minutes of categorization. OPG issues three important notifications to ensure an effective emergency response:

- Shift and on-site staff are warned, assembled and mobilized.
- External agencies receive off-site emergency notifications (provincial, municipal, CNSC).
- Emergency Response Organization (ERO) augmentation occurs (duty on-call and call-in responders).

Stan also reviewed highlights of emergency preparedness (EP) at Pickering and Darlington in 2019, and presented highlights of plans for 2020. An extensive drill and exercise program is always a key element in EP.

Stan noted that the quality of EP at both stations was recognized by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO).

Council questions:

- *During an emergency, how much time do managers who are off site get to report to work?*
S. Whatmough: Ninety minutes.
- *At what point in an emergency are public sirens sounded?*
R. Hadden: The highest level of notification is a general emergency. The Durham Emergency Management Office (DEMO) would recommend initial notification. Public alerting can come from DEMO or from the province. Sirens are certainly part of public notification. Other elements include:
 - Instructing the public to listen to the media for regular updates on the status of the emergency
 - Land line communications
 - Wireless communications; e.g. cell phones
 - Broadcast media
- *Who is recording information about the emergency for future reference (black box function)?*

S. Whatmough: This information is being captured and recorded at multiple centres. Plant and provincial levels of information are being captured. The same thing happens during drills.

- *How often are public alerting systems tested?*

S. Whatmough: These systems are tested at least twice a year for all types of events, not just nuclear. The tests can be geographically concentrated or very broad.

- *Do such tests run the risk of making the public complacent?*

R. Lockwood: The experience in the U.S. is that multiple drills make communities and regions safer.

- *When public alerts are issued, false or not, people who call 911 can't get through.*

R. Hadden: 911 is not set up for public emergencies. There are other dedicated lines for the public to call in a general emergency.

- *Right, it is not possible for 911 to handle that volume of calls. The best way to get information is to listen to the radio.*

R. Hadden: There are two types of communication: emergency messaging and public education. The latter tells you what to do if you receive an emergency message.

- *I have a radio in my car but not in my house.*

R. Lockwood: Other communications tools are also used to reach the public.

- *Unfortunately, there is no real way to address emotional response.*

- *Regarding the false alarm, did the plant send out any clarifications or updates to the public?*

R. Hadden: The plant immediately informed community leaders in the Pickering area. The plant does not send out public broadcasts. We communicate with the province, who communicate to the public in Durham Region and Toronto. We provide open portals so that the federal government and the province can see what is going on during a drill, as we would do in an actual event. We provide updates every half hour.

- *Would the plant provide information to the media during an emergency?*

R. Geofroy: We would share information with media on site if there were an opportunity.

Topic #6: Agenda Topics for Future Meetings

Council members suggested future agenda topics:

- Update on the Deep Geologic Repository (DGR) for medium- and low-level nuclear waste proposed by OPG
- Update from Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) with respect to site location and timing for a Repository for used nuclear fuel
- Update on Darlington retrofit – timing and budget
- Changes in the “Exclusion Zone” as Pickering Nuclear closes
- The X-Lab – description of activities and update
- Wireless communications and security issues
- Cyber security in general

It was suggested that interested Council members should observe an emergency drill this year.

Topic #7: CNSC News

For selected news items from the CNSC, please see Appendix 5.

Next Meeting
Tuesday, February 18, 2020
Pickering Nuclear Information Centre
(supper available at 5:30 pm)