

**Pickering Nuclear Generating Station
Community Advisory Council
Virtual Meeting
Minutes, Tuesday, February 16, 2021
Highlights**

Site Update

Jon Franke presented an update on: the operating status of the six active units on site; Spot, the robot dog at Pickering Nuclear; plans to retire the Pickering units sequentially from the end of 2024 to the end of 2025 (pending CNSC approval); and other items.

OPG Climate Change Plan

John Beauchamp talked about OPG's climate change goals and key initiatives to achieve them. He noted OPG's enthusiasm about Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and the significant reduction in carbon emissions that will result from the refurbishment and life extension of Darlington reactors.

Community Affairs

Carrie-Anne Atkins presented an update on OPG's involvement in public and community activities. A virtual Bring Back the Salmon educational program; fun and educational programs for kids in partnership with community organizations, spread over several weeks; employee fundraising activities at Pickering Nuclear; and other items were mentioned.

DNNP Intervention Letter

CAC members agreed that they should submit an intervention letter to the CNSC for a forthcoming hearing on renewal of OPG's Site Preparation Licence for the Darlington New Nuclear Project (DNNP). Some initial points were suggested for the letter.

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Pickering CAC:

John Earley
Donna Fabbro
Natalie Harder
Bill Houston
Tim Kellar
Greg Lymer
Tracy MacCharles
Sean McCullough
Cody Morrison
Peter Ottensmeyer
Helen Shamsipour
Dan Shire
John Simpson
John Stirrat

Regrets:

Frank Dempsey
Pat Mattson
John Miseresky
Zachary Moshonas
Cameron Richardson

OPG:

Carrie-Anne Atkins
John Beauchamp
Jon Franke
Stan Whatmough

Hardy Stevenson and Associates:

Francis Gillis
Dave Hardy

Topic #1: Review of Minutes

CAC Facilitator Dave Hardy noted an action item from the January minutes related to informing the public about locations of public reception centres before a nuclear emergency evacuation. Stan Whatmough, Section Manager Emergency Preparedness, said that there is no communication of such locations prior to an evacuation. During an evacuation, the provincial government informs the public of centre locations via e-bulletins, text messages, TV and radio.

A Council member asked if localized information was provided. She also asked about parents picking up their children from school.

Stan was not completely sure whether information was customized for different regions. He noted that the province does account for people having to go home before evacuating, and for parents having to pick up their children from school. He was still seeking further information on these aspects.

In reviewing the January minutes, it was noted that Tim Kellar should be added to the “Regrets” list of those CAC members unable to attend the meeting.

With this change, the CAC minutes for January 19, 2021 were approved.

Topic #2: Site Update

Senior Vice President Jon Franke presented a site update:

- Units 1, 5, 6, and 7 are operating at full power.
- Unit 4 had a brief outage over the weekend and OPG is now taking steps to bring that unit back on line.
- The outage of Unit 8, which began in January, is focused on maintenance and is proceeding on schedule.
- Cobalt-60, which is used for radiation therapy and other medical and industrial applications, will be harvested from Pickering units over the next couple of weeks. PNGS is the world’s leading producer of Cobalt-60.
- Unit 7 is coming down on Friday morning (Feb. 19) in order to monitor tritium emissions.
- Spot, the robot dog, was introduced to the Pickering plant last November. It can access hard-to-reach areas in the plant to perform important inspections (see Metroland article in Appendix 1) Link to short video:

[WATCH VIDEO: Spot the robot dog performs tricks at Pickering nuclear plant \(durhamregion.com\)](https://www.durhamregion.com)

- The City of Pickering, in partnership with OPG and the Region of Durham, is undertaking a Financial, Economic and Social Impact study on the retirement of Pickering Nuclear. OPG's Centre for Canadian Nuclear Sustainability will be involved in this study.
- OPG is looking at retiring Pickering Units 1 and 4 at the end of 2024. Units 5, 6, 7, and 8 would be closed sequentially over subsequent months, with the entire plant being retired by the end of 2025. This extension of service beyond 2024 would require OPG to seek from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission an amendment of its licence to operate. Based on a fitness for service evaluation, OPG believes it can make a good case to the CNSC for operating to the end of 2025. The Commission will hold a public hearing on this issue in late 2023.

Topic #3: OPG Climate Change Plan

John Beauchamp, Director – Environment, Health & Safety, talked about OPG's Climate Change Plan (Appendix 2).

He noted that nuclear power plays a very important role in keeping carbon emissions from Ontario's electricity sector so low.

OPG's climate goals are to be:

- A net-zero carbon company by 2040, and
- A catalyst for a net-zero carbon economy by 2050 in markets where the company operates

Key initiatives to achieve these goals:

- Development of small modular reactors
- Advancing electrification initiatives in the province
- Darlington Nuclear Refurbishment (continued operation of the refurbished Darlington station will reduce carbon emissions by an estimated 297 million tonnes—the equivalent of removing two million cars per year from Ontario's roads)
- Continued investment in our hydroelectric generation
- Focus on adaption and resiliency of our assets
- Exploring opportunities in non-hydro renewables and energy storage
- Investing in negative emissions technologies (technologies that remove and sequester carbon from the environment)
- Supporting nature-based solutions and biodiversity initiatives

John remarked that OPG is very enthusiastic about small modular reactors and is ahead of other jurisdictions on SMR development.

He also remarked that it is important not to underestimate the importance of natural gas generation. This technology does emit carbon but is a necessary backstop to ensure a regular supply of electricity at all times.

John then presented OPG's climate action plan detailing many specific goals for 2025, 2040, and 2050. He listed these goals in four areas:

- Mitigate carbon emissions
- Adapt to the impacts of a changing climate
- Innovate with new technologies to speed up Ontario's energy transformation
- Lead, in partnership with others, the decarbonization of Ontario's economy and share our province's lessons with the world

Jon Franke responded to a Council question and comment:

- *You mentioned OPG involvement with three SMR developers: GE Hitachi, Terrestrial Energy and X-energy. The SMRs they are developing are thermal and not very good at recycling used nuclear fuel. Why not go for better technologies? Those other technologies are good but not currently developed enough to get a licence to build a grid-scale reactor. But there may be opportunities to look at other technologies in the future.*
- *Comment: Thermal reactors are dead ends. I think consideration of them is short-sighted.*

At a later point in the evening, as the meeting was concluding, a CAC member remarked:

- *John mentioned the potential efficiencies that could be realized by revitalization and/or ongoing maintenance and improvement of the 66 hydroelectric stations. Does OPG have an estimate of the potential for enhancement of the hydroelectric plants over the next couple decades? I recall the improvements they made earlier in the 2000s for the Beck plant in Niagara Falls.*

The member suggested some further comment on this question at a future meeting would be useful.

Topic #4: Pickering Public/Community Affairs Report

Carrie-Anne Atkins, Manager, Corporate Affairs, presented an update on OPG's involvement in community activities:

- The Bring Back the Salmon program has gone virtual, reaching over 3400 students across Ontario. Students will observe Atlantic salmon development and learn all about them through weekly videos.
- With the postponement of March break, OPG will be providing fun and educational programs to kids through a virtual platform spread over several weeks. Community partners include Scientists in Schools, Earth Rangers, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and others.
- Throughout February and March, OPG employees will be raising funds for local charities through Canada Helps. Pickering Nuclear is supporting: Ajax-Pickering Hospital Foundation; Community Care Durham; Big Brothers and Sisters; and Herizon House.
- OPG is seeking from the CNSC renewal of its 10-year Site Preparation Licence to support the Darlington New Nuclear Project (DNNP). Consultation activities include two stakeholder information sessions in March for government officials and for NGOs, and two public information sessions taking place on April 6 and 8.

Carrie-Anne responded to a Council question:

- *Where did you say the Bring Back the Salmon program is being virtually distributed?*
It's all across the province, involving 115 classrooms.

Topic #5: DNNP Intervention Letter

The CAC has traditionally submitted intervention letters to the CNSC for public hearings related to licencing issues of particular relevance to the Council. These submissions have generally focused on Pickering Nuclear but also on occasion have addressed licencing issues related to Darlington Nuclear and to the Bruce Power nuclear plant. For most submissions, the CAC has opted to have several of their members attend Commission hearings to present their intervention in person and to respond to any questions or comments that Commissioners might have.

The Commissioners have always indicated great interest in the role of the CAC and its perspective on particular licencing issues.

It was agreed that the CAC should develop an intervention letter to the CNSC regarding OPG's application to renew the Site Preparation Licence related to the Darlington New Nuclear Project (DNNP). At a later date, OPG plans to apply for a licence to build a grid-scale Small Modular Reactor. Requests to intervene must be filed with the Commission Secretariat by April 26, 2021. The CNSC will consider OPG's application at a public hearing on June 9 and 10, 2021.

It was noted that many of the CAC letters in the past have focused on the excellence of OPG's consultation with the Council and the community in general. However, the CAC, feeling they did not have the technical expertise to comment, tended to be non-committal as to whether the CNSC should approve particular applications. But it was also noted that more recent letters have directly supported OPG applications.

It was agreed that, over the next couple of weeks, Hardy Stevenson and Associates will prepare an initial draft of an intervention letter for CAC comment. Then, if it is felt necessary, the Council will meet virtually on Tuesday, March 23 to discuss and finalize their submission.

Topic #6: CNSC News

For selected news items from the CNSC, please see Appendix 3.

Forthcoming CAC Meetings

Tuesday, March 23, 2021
Possible Virtual Meeting
(this meeting was ultimately CANCELLED)

Tuesday, April 20, 2021
Virtual Meeting
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm