

MINUTES OF MEETING
GREENWICH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
14 DECEMBER 2011

Meeting opened at 7.10pm

Apologies: Don Murchison

Present: As per attendance book

Minutes of previous meeting:

Minutes of meeting held on 19 October 2011 were tabled and approved without amendment.

Moved by Peter Walton, seconded by Alison Bird.

The president Merri Southwood advised that this was a special meeting of GCA and would be conducted as an information evening concerning Shell Gore Bay Terminal emergency management. No other regular agenda items would be discussed.

Special guests forming a panel at the front and within the room comprised:-

Inspector Stefan Kent
NSW Police

Inspector Ron James
Duty Commander
Fire & Rescue NSW

Superintendent Selwyn Mathias
Zone Commander
Fire & Rescue NSW

David Lowe
Deputy Local Controller
State Emergency Service

Scott McGhee
Health, Safety, Security, Environment (HSSE) Manager
Shell

Benjamin Scott
Shell Communications Manager

Troy King
Emergency Services Team Leader
Clyde Refinery and Gore Bay Terminal
Shell

Merri introduced the evening by mentioning that in August this year Shell Refining confirmed that its refinery operation at Clyde will cease by mid 2013. This decision will impact on the range of product imported through its Gore Bay terminal.

The terminal has operated principally as a crude oil import terminal but, after the changes at Clyde, importation of crude will cease. Shell is in the process of resolving exactly what products will be unloaded and stored at Gore Bay. It has confirmed that future imported product will include gasoline but, at a public meeting held on 1 December, Shell advised that it has yet to make a decision as to the possible storage of gasoline at the Gore Bay site.

During the course of recent public meetings convened by Shell, it has become evident that members of the Greenwich community would like to know more about the emergency management plans for the Shell site. Co-ordination of this emergency management function is handled through the Local Emergency Management Committee.

Fire & Rescue NSW and NSW Police, who are both represented on the Local Emergency Management Committee, have agreed to brief the Greenwich community on details of the emergency management plans for the Shell site. Representatives of Shell will also take part in the briefing.

By way of getting started the panel has been previously provided with a set of written questions to which they will respond.

Stefan Kent agreed to take the lead and call upon other panel members where required.

Following is the list of notified questions with responses:-

1. *Please explain the chain of command for management of major incidents that may impact on the Greenwich Peninsular.*

Inspector Stefan Kent set out the command structure for the Local Emergency Management Committee as it applies beyond the terminal gate.

Emergency Management comprises of State, District and Local and is a combination of Police, FRNSW and SES.

Police Commander North Shore is in overall command.

In case of an emergency, the FRNSW will respond first and if it is a structure (building) issue, will send 2 trucks. FRNSW will then cooperate with Shell's own Fire Emergency Team and take over responsibility for whatever action needs to be undertaken.

Police will be informed and will then take over command of the operation, not as police but as Emergency Management.

Should it be required, SES would then be brought in as support for Police and the FRNSW to man road blocks and conduct door-knocks. Shell has a "first intervention" team fully trained to FRNSW standards.

2. *What does the LEMC consider to be the major risk factors in the Greenwich area?*

Greenwich Gore Bay Terminal is listed on the Commonwealth's major hazard facilities. The site is not a factor, it the handling of the fuel.

3. *Please explain in layman's language the meaning of terms such as volatility/flammability/combustibility and where the products imported through the Shell terminal sit within these definitions.*

4. ***Please explain the major risk factors associated with the products that are handled through the Shell Gore Bay Terminal.***

Shell representative Scott McGhee updated residents on current procedures of pumping fuel directly from ships to Clyde, Newcastle and Airport.

Future proposal is for only refined products to be imported and not crude.

Petrol and crude oil are flammable and fuel oil is combustible. Flammability is a measure of the ease with which something will burn or ignite, causing fire or combustion.

Volatility means the ease with which a substance changes from liquid to gas (a process called evaporation) and is related to flammability. Petrol is volatile material.

Southern storage tanks are used to store products such as fuel oil (used by cruise liners) and bitumen feedstock and the northern tanks which are used for crude, will no longer be required.

5. ***Does the fact that there is a single road access to the area pose specific problems- if so what steps are proposed to work around these problems?***

Single road access does not pose any specific problems.

6. ***Is there a public access website for the emergency management plans for the Greenwich area?***

Not on the State website, but if an emergency should arise, it would be on the Police website.

7. ***Are there areas in Sydney/Australia where residences are located adjacent to terminals such as the Shell terminal? – if so please provide details.***

Scott McGhee said Newport Terminal and Geelong Refinery in Victoria and Caltex's refinery in Kurnell, Sydney.

8. ***Say there is a fire in a tank opposite Landenberg Place. Would the smoke or radiation render Greenwich Road impassable, would people in LP need to be evacuated and if so how would they get out? People on Greenwich Point may need to stay home; would they be notified or would they simply come across a "Road Closed" sign?***

Would not expect Greenwich Road to be made impassable. Evacuation would be a last resort with residents being informed by radio broadcast and a system using text and mobile. Extreme situation would be by door knock.

Alternative exits would be via the ferry wharf and sailing club.

9. ***Shell is responsible for its employees in an evacuation emergency. Who is responsible for the safety of residents some of whom are located within 50 meters of the facility?***

Police or Fire & Rescue NSW.

10. ***What would happen if there were a bush fire in the surrounding area? Has this been considered in the risk management and emergency plans?***

Don Lowe SES said residents should be prepared with a Home Awareness SES kit for such emergencies and had a demonstration kit as to what should be included. It is often safer to close windows and stay at home.

11. ***Should something occur here at Gore Bay I doubt whether there will be time to wait for someone to knock on our door to tell us what to do? Could we have some***

instructions as to what we should do where we should go in the event of an emergency?

As per 10 above.

12. Does the Fire Brigade and Shell have sufficient media(fire suppressant materials) readily available to control a large petroleum sourced fire?

Shell is able to provide a foam blanket to depress the petroleum vapour. Further supplies of foam can be trucked from Clyde if required.

13. There was a fire caused by fuel leaking from a petrol tanker in Melbourne over the weekend in which cars were damaged and properties were evacuated. What has been ascertained about the cause of the fire and what emergency management procedures were put into effect on this occasion. Does this have relevance for Gore Bay?

Scott McGhee was not aware of this situation and indicated it does not have relevance to Gore Bay.

Questions from the floor were then invited.

Q1 John Blumer

In the event of an emergency, please explain the liaison between the Police, Shell and the FRNSW.

A. Police take control; however in the case of a fire the FRNSW would take control with Shell providing support and local knowledge of the terminal.

Q2 Stephen Coman

Do the agencies think that the proposed changes at the terminal will pose increased public risk?

A. Since the operating procedures and safety precautions have to change in line with any change in products handled then the level of risk would not change.

Q3 John Southwood

Will petrol be stored at Gore Bay?

A. by Scott McGhee: - This decision has not yet been made; we may decide to store petrol only at Clyde as is current practice.

Q4 Garry Draffin

You have put on the table your intention to increase the storage of flammable products at Gore Bay. Who allows you to do so?

A. Scott McGhee – Numerous government departments need to give approval such as EPA and WorkCover. We are already working with these agencies to gain project approval. The terminal comes under the Major Hazard Facility legislation.

Q5 Liz Gill

Does the change increase vulnerability and risk to people in Greenwich Point?

A. Stefan Kent: No

Q6 Liz Gill

Would there be any change to the State disaster management plan as a result of change at the terminal?

A. Stefan Kent: No. The processes are already in place and are evaluated on a continuous basis.

Q7 Councilor Rod Tudge

Firstly a comment – please tell us clear and quick what options are on the table? Secondly can the Shell camera surveillance be made available on a continuous basis to the emergency services as a further monitoring safeguard?

A. Scott McGhee: Yes it can, good idea.
John Taylor suggested communication via GCA website.

Q8 Patricia Queaby

Re air quality, 15 years ago there was an oil spill. The first we heard about it was on the TV. What is your current procedure?

A. Stefan Kent: The Police and FRNSW now have whole media and public affairs units to better communicate with the public. Thousands of people can be sent a warning text message on their mobile phones within minutes of an incident occurring.

Merri: this is good - why don't you spread the word.

John Taylor: we can communicate very fast on the web and on facebook.

Q9 Margaret Vaughan

Mentioned a fire at Pulpit Point in 1964 and asked if Gore Bay has a warning siren.

A. Scott McGhee – Yes there is and it is tested every week. It is set to go off automatically in the event of an emergency.

Q10 Nada Taylor

There are cars parked along both sides of Manns Avenue, surely these would be an impediment to Fire Truck access in an emergency?

A. Selwyn Mathias:- FRNSW would lobby Council to declare a “no parking” zone if it thought it was a problem.

Q11 Liz Walton

If Greenwich Road was blocked we would be stuck on the peninsula; shouldn't you appoint some residents as local area liaison wardens?

A. David Lowe (SES): We could do that but people are not permanent or may not be home. SES prefers to do this with its own resources.

Q12 Merri Southwood

What is the scope of the proposed Q1 2012 emergency exercise?

- A. Scott McGhee: To test our systems and liaise with Police and FRNSW. The exercise still has to be formalised.

Q13 John Southwood

I find it hard to believe that you haven't made your decisions on what products and what volumes of product you intend to store at Gore Bay. Why can't you tell us whether petrol will be stored?

- A. Scott McGhee: Although we have not yet made a decision it is possible that no petrol will be stored at Gore Bay because we also have tanks at Botany Bay and plenty of room at Clyde. The answers are still some months away.
- A. Ben Scott: We currently store only fuel oil, jet and diesel. We expect to have design answers in Q1 2012 and will advise Reference Group of progress.

Conclusion

Merri summed up the evening by reinforcing that more communication is required and thanked all participants.

John Taylor agreed to put the minutes of this meeting on the GCA website.

Merri thanked the members of the panel for their valuable time.

Councillor Pam Palmer on behalf of residents, thanked Merri for having organised the information evening.

Close

Meeting closed at 9.10pm