

Meeting Minutes



ARCWG Sub-Meeting: Social Impact Assessment

Location:	Caledon Town Hall, Mayfield-Palgrave Room 6311 Old Church Rd, Caledon East, ON
Date:	May 6, 2024
Time:	05:00 p.m. – 06:35 p.m.

In Attendance

Anneliese Grieve (AG), Ian Sinclair (IS), Neil Morris (NM), David Sylvester (DS), Joe Nethery (JN), Martin Bamford (MB)

Agenda Items

Introduction

- IS: I want another subgroup meeting on fuel and refueling. I want to hear from someone from the town or public works. We don't need an outside person. In order to meet standards, we need to know what they are.
- AG: I am an independent consultant. I spent 30 years working as a consultant and am a specialist in environmental impact assessments (EIA) and social impact assessments (SIA).

Anneliese's Presentation (5:10 p.m.)

What is a Social Impact Assessment (SIA)?

- AG: The process of assessing the social consequences that are likely from the development of a project and an effort to describe and analyze the real and/or potential impacts of a project on specific groups of people, individuals, and communities.
- Social impacts are changes that occur in:
 - People's way of life
 - Cultural traditions
 - Community
- The purpose of SIA is to determine the direct and indirect impacts of a purpose
- We don't consider all people to be the same
- SIAs are a social science-based field of inquiry

- There is a difference between technical studies and SIAs. Technical studies assume everyone is the same, whereas SIAs look at who the people are, how they are affected, etc.
 - e.g., If you're in a community where most people do shift work, where that noise occurs is very important.
 - e.g., Noise near a rehab center will also have a different impact.
 - SIAs take input from technical studies but then go a step further with it.

What Does SIA Address?

- Baseline conditions and effects on:
 - Demographics.
 - Socioeconomics.
 - Social infrastructure.
 - Resources and resettlement
 - Big issues in areas for mining.
 - Community character and culture.
 - Social equity (who gains and who loses)
 - Cultural resources.
- IS: Does social equity include fairness and trust?
 - AG: It can.
- Information Sources:
 - Key informant interviews
 - Talk to people who know what is going on in the community.
 - When we do mining projects, we will talk to healthcare and social services (as it often relates to access to drugs).
 - Going into people's homes (if people work shift work, how people use their backyards, home-based business, etc.)
- Questions to be answered:
 - How do people use their property?
 - Use it to dry laundry, host Church services, etc.
 - Special needs, recently immigrated, seniors.
 - Vulnerable populations that are less able to deal with change.
 - Unique community attributes.
 - e.g., There is a very stable population in Port Hope. There is another Port Hope population who move in while their kids are at Trinity school and then leave, so it makes for different needs.
- Study scoping is the same way you would assess migratory birds, but with different data.
 - Scoping: Area of influence of project; Identify communities; Identification of vulnerable groups and key issues.
 - Share findings: Share with the team we are working with.
 - Mitigation: tools and mechanisms.
 - Monitoring: ensure effects happen as we intend them to.

Policy and Regulatory Basis

- Aggregate Resources Act – approval of pits and quarries.
 - Mentions socioeconomic matters related to pits and quarries (Sec. 3(2)(h)).
 - Shall have regard to “the effect of the operation of pit or quarry on nearby communities” (Sec.12(1)(b)).
- Provincial Policy Statement
 - Section 2.5.2.2. “extraction shall be undertaken in a manner which minimizes social, economic and environmental impacts.”
- Environmental Assessment Act – does not apply to pits and quarries unless designated.

- Caledon Official Plan:
 - Section 5.11.2.4.13 “Any impact studies required by this Plan, will include, where appropriate, an assessment of social impacts based on predictable, measurable, significant, objective effects on people caused by factors such as noise, dust, traffic levels and vibration. Such studies will be based on Provincial standards, regulations and guidelines and will consider and identify methods of addressing the anticipated impacts in the area affected by the extractive operation.
- Ontario Land Tribunal – Fowler Quarry Expansion Decision.
 - Pg. 20 “Land use planning is concerned with the uses of land and not the users of land, and it is the compatibility of uses that must be assessed.”
 - They essentially said that people don't matter.
- Even if SIA was done for quarry applications the Province does not have standards, regulations, or guidelines to support SIA nor does it have the internal expertise to review SIAs.
- With respect to the town's OP requirements, while the Province has standards and regulations with respect to noise, air, traffic, dust and vibration these standards do not take into consideration the community or resident characteristics, nor do they consider the cumulative effects.
 - Back to the original example where a noise engineer does a noise assessment, not taking into account the people who can hear that noise.
- The Province has no standards, regulations or guidelines for social and economic impact.
 - Not in any legislation.
- Quarries are a use of land perhaps only marginally more popular than landfill sites.
- Every community in Ontario requires the services provided by quarries and landfill sites, yet each of us would prefer to not live near one.
- Many of the social impacts of quarries and landfills are similar: traffic, noise, and dust changes the use of property, the perceived risk, and the actual risk.
- However, the impacts and risks of quarries and landfill sites are assessed differently as SIA is typically done for landfill projects but not for quarries.
- Given the social impacts of quarry operations are similar to landfilling operations, the assessment of those impacts should be similar to that undertaken for a landfill.

Questions and Discussion:

- IS: The difference is an embedded cartel. The Pits and Quarries Act, right from the start, was designed to protect the industry from the community. They are so confident they have control over their operation.
- NM: There are issues with perception. It is really tricky because the perception here (Caledon) of aggregate is negative, how do we deal with the bias vs perception?
 - AG: There is going to be a difference between perceptions of the project and industry. Different populations experience things differently.
 - NM: It seems very subjective
- AG: Triangulation is collecting data from 3 different sources to look into why an issue raised is a concern. The process of triangulation is to review public input through different methods, to see what issues are raised and what is behind that.
- NM: Recalls wind farm proposals where issues were raised and the effects of those issues.
 - AG: You need to assess fears and understand why they feel that way. This is where talking to people becomes very critical because it depends on the sources of information.
- DS: Applicants seem to suggest that a social economic assessment (SEA) is important. I assume it's not the same as an SIA or is it a variation?
 - AG: One is a variation of another, and both are similar. Many SEAs are cursory because there are no standards. They get away with SEA because no one reviews them at the Province.
- DS: Quarry expansion application (Fowler). I read the decision in that case and was very disappointed. The hearings officer said something like people don't count and land use shall prevail, what was the quote used in the slides?

- AG: The compatibility of land uses and not land users.
- DS: Was that simply the opinion of this hearing officer? Can it be used as a precedent? How does the OLT process function?
- AG: Yes, these are important, and he cited precedence in his decision. It means if users are not happy with the land, they can move. 25 years ago, they were more willing to think more broadly, but we seem to be regressing.
- NM: Does it assume all residents are equal? Is that the problem?
- AG: Yes.
- DS: Speak about the mention of assessment of gain versus loss analysis. Have you ever addressed SIAs that include property values?
 - AG: Yes. Let's talk about property value. Literature typically does not support the impact on property values. For example, in Port Hope there is a legacy of contamination, but property value increases were consistent with homes not at risk. The value of homes is technically still always going up (even at 7%), so it is not a measurable change.
 - DS: If literature does indicate that, then end of story.
 - AG: I have seen proponents put in place. For example, a Metrolinx study suggested purchasing a property as part of a plan. A proponent arguing compatibility of uses gets out of such people-oriented changes.
- IS: It results in changes in community character. When people leave, you lose networks, connections, and mutual support.
 - AG: The Fowler decision remarked how the previous quarry had no mitigation; therefore, expanded operation with mitigation would represent an improvement
- NM: Proponents talk about jobs, impacts. How does that factor in? Is there a balancing act with social equity?
 - AG: In late 80's, when Toronto was trying to find a landfill site, the argument made was that "a new landfill site should not be in our communities, we've done our share, they should look elsewhere." The social equity argument is used for power generation plants, jails, airports, landfills, quarries. It should be more equitably distributed.
- IS: Where do you get a lack of trust in the system?
 - AG: Perceptions deal with a lack of trust. Often perceptions of any proponent are the basis of a lack of trust because the people affected do not understand what might happen. The notion of mistrust is unfortunate. I get it on waterfront projects.
- IS: When you are deceived it is hard to overcome it. It is a major problem (decision- making) at this level. We had a planning staffer at the town who opined there was no social impact policy. You quoted OP policy accurately tonight. In that case, there was an aggressive 100-foot setback proposed. The area councillor proposed it as a done deal. Those actions severed trust.
 - You can have the best policies in the world that do not get applied.
 - Transportation (noise and vibration of trucks) adds to the issue. The community does not see any benefit.
 - The industry does not care about perception.
- JN: Make sure to get specific suggestions from the group. What should we consider in this study?
 - **IS: The town has to develop protocols for SIA for aggregate proposals.**
 - **IS: The town shall also develop SIA criteria. How do these criteria get met?**
- DS: Are you aware of SIA content in other jurisdictions that we could emulate?
 - AG: There is SIA guidance from other jurisdictions around the world but not in Ontario
 - AG: One thing about this is you scope it and then decide what you will look at. I am working on a trail study in Toronto. When doing SIAs we are not looking at noise or vibration, I am looking at changes in the city that will impact the need for this area. SIA has flexibility within it. To answer who will have the ability to review and know whether or not SIA tests are being met, you would need to farm that out to a consultant. That is why most have not done it.
- DS: I support IS's point that we should move forward with development with guidelines for proper SIA measures for aggregate applications.

- NM: This would typically be part application. Are there generalities? Can you do SIA for a community?
- AG: The nuclear waste management in Canada spent the last 8 years doing community studies to look at potential sites. These communities say they are willing to be hosts, they are now down to 2 sites. I don't know if you can do something similar here. Is that a baseline assessment?
- MB: I think this discussion has been productive. The type of study you were talking about, isn't it trumped by the notion we were talking about earlier?
- AG: No, because they would be volunteering to host.
- NM: Port Hope is a town with soil contamination. No one tells you that you're close to contamination. One has to be vigilant in finding information about potential resource areas.
 - AG: Some people look at that information and others don't.
- IS: The problem with aggregate operations is that you can't plan them like other facilities. It requires an extra duty of care. At the same time, provinces have a huge interest in aggregates no matter what. The center of these issues are risk and equity. Implications of blasting vibrations, dust, etc., and nothing has been offered to the community.
- NM: Was trucking included in your assessment?
 - AG: Yes. Some operators are better than others, but these generate traffic.
 - IS: Truck traffic is going to be an issue.
 - AG: You can cite examples and case studies with operators while still pushing other higher-performing operators to do better.
- IS: In camera training sessions with aggregates. Now no member can talk about it because they are now muzzled by the camera. It is within the rules. But this is a disaster.
 - JN: They should be able to discuss. I do not share that opinion.
 - IS: Why were we excluded?
 - JN: I will follow up with the clerk. [Note: the meeting was held in closed session in accordance with *Municipal Act* s239(3.1), materials were released on April 6, 2024, Council agenda]