

February 28, 2012

A special meeting of the Scandia City Council was held on the above date. The purpose of the meeting was to review the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Zavoral Mining and Reclamation Project, and approve its release for the formal public review and comment period. Mayor Simonson called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. The following council members were present: Council members Chris Ness, Jim Schneider, Sally Swanson and Mayor Randall Simonson. Council member Connie Amos joined the meeting at 7:07. Staff present: City Administrator Anne Hurlburt, City Attorney Tom Miller, City Planner Sherri Buss and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund.

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS), ZAVORAL MINING AND RECLAMATION PROJECT

The Council received a presentation of an overview of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Trudy Richter, of Richardson, Richter & Associates, began with a description about the history of the Zavoral Mining and Reclamation Project. Tiller Corporation applied for a Conditional Use Permit in November 2008 to operate an idled 114-acre mining site located at the corner of State Highways 97 and 95. In March 2009, the City determined that an Environmental Impact Statement was needed for the project. The purpose of the EIS is to evaluate the project for potential significant environmental effects, to consider alternatives, and to explore mitigation measures to reduce adverse environmental effects.

AECOM, an independent consulting firm, was hired to prepare the study. The mining proposal was revised in December 2009 to remove washing, processing and stockpiling activity at the site. This change required a Revised Scoping Decision Document, approved in January 2010. This provided the basis for the contents of the EIS. The draft EIS was reviewed by the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) in November 2011. Based on comments from this review, the draft EIS was further refined. Council members received copies of the draft EIS in mid-February.

Leslie Knapp, AECOM Project Manager, led the next portion of the presentation with a description of the project and an overview of the contents of the study. The proposal is to mine and reclaim 64 acres of the 114-acre site. Aggregate will be loaded into trucks and hauled to Tiller's Scandia Mine, located at 22303 Manning Trail, or to construction sites. Mining will occur in three phases, with reclamation proceeding as the mining phases are completed. The slopes will be graded and the site will be seeded with native prairie grass and transplanted white pine trees.

Ms. Knapp stated that the Draft EIS included three alternatives and one sub-alternative for the mining project. Alternative 1 studied a 5 to 10-year mining operation. Alternative 2 is a no-build alternative. Alternative 3 reduced the timeframe to a 3.3 to 5-year operation. The PAC requested Subalternative 3A which would complete the mining in 150 working days (approximately 30 weeks) over a one-year timeframe.

The Revised Scoping Decision Document required a number of impact analyses. The study gives a very detailed analysis and modeling of each impact according to each alternative. Ms. Knapp provided a summary of the issues which the PAC identified as having the most interest; these being economic impacts, ecologically sensitive resources, physical impacts on water resources and water use.

The final segment of the presentation described the potential mitigation measures identified by the study. If the City were to issue a Conditional Use Permit, these mitigation measures would be a part of the CUP process.

The Council was given the opportunity to ask questions about DEIS content.

Council member Schneider stated that it appears to be an extensive study and he will read deeper into it. He had no questions at this time.

Council member Swanson inquired about traffic mitigation. Ms. Knapp replied that MnDOT identified a right-turn lane as the only measure needed for traffic purposes.

Council member Amos had no questions at this time.

Council member Ness stated that traffic is a large concern of his. Ness asked what time of year could mining occur under Subalternative 3A (a 30-week period); that is, could mining in the summer months be left out. Mike Caron, Tiller Corporation, proposed that February through December would be necessary, but weather conditions could affect the project. Mr. Caron did not think the project could be completed in one year if mining during summer months was eliminated, although it could be possible over a two-year timeframe. Mr. Caron stressed that he would have to talk with the operations division before confirming this.

Council member Ness questioned the number of truck trips under Subalternative 3A. Ms. Knapp explained that the number of round trips per day could peak at 736 trips, assuming a 12-hour work day.

Referring again to Subalternative 3A, Council member Ness asked if Tiller would pursue a permit to exceed an annual water use of one million gallons, if needed. Mr. Caron answered that Tiller would be very unlikely to pursue this, due to the investment of time and funds to apply for a multi-aquifer well permit. Water use would be monitored to an average of less than 10,000 gallons per day, never to exceed one million gallons in a year.

Mayor Simonson asked if Class A would still be hauled from Osceola to the Scandia Mine if the Zavoral site became operational. Ms. Knapp stated that Class A would still be coming from Wisconsin, at a rate of approximately 90 truck trips per week. Mr. Caron explained that Class A material is either granite or basalt which is needed in certain mixes, and this material has to come from alternative sites.

City Planner Buss began an explanation of the public review and comment process. Planner Buss explained that the Council is not making a decision about the project, only determining if the Draft EIS is ready to be released for public comment. The Draft EIS will then be published in the EQB Monitor on March 19, 2012, officially beginning the comment period. Required agencies will also receive the study. A Public Meeting to receive verbal comments will be scheduled on April 3, 2012 as part of the Planning Commission meeting. The 60-day comment period will conclude on May 18, 2012. All substantive comments and concerns received in writing, fax or e-mail will be responded to. A document with all comments and responses will be assembled and distributed to all involved parties. The timing of a Final EIS is dependent on the number of comments received and a determination if more data collection and analysis is needed.

City Planner Buss stated that the Draft EIS can be found on the City website and CDs may be requested from the City at no cost. Paper copies are available at the City office and will be at the Hardwood Creek and Marine on St. Croix libraries once the comment period starts.

The Council then took action on the Draft EIS.

Simonson, seconded by Ness, moved to adopt Resolution 02-28-12-01, Authorizing Release of Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Zavoral Mining and Reclamation Project for Public Review and Comment. A roll call vote was taken. Ness – aye; Amos – aye; Swanson – aye; Schneider – aye; Simonson – aye. The motion carried 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Simonson, seconded by Ness, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
Deputy Clerk