

Brunswick Terminal Station Upgrade

Community Reference Group Meeting

6:00-8:00 21 July 2015

Brunswick Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

Apologies:

David Grant, AusNet Services

Craig Burton, resident

Anne Voss, resident

Attendees:

Fatima Alisak, resident

Ray Collodetti, resident, Merri Creek Residents' Group

Ray Radford, resident, Friends of Merri Creek

Chris Black, resident, Merri Creek Residents' Group

Denis McCrohan, AusNet Services

Sandra Nielsen, AusNet Services

Grant Thorne, Director City Infrastructure, Moreland City Council

Kirsten Coster, Director, Planning and Economic Development, Moreland City Council

Phil Priest, Group Manager City Development, Moreland City Council

Sam Sharp, Manager Aged, Disability and Emergency Relief

Darren Camilleri, Planning Coordinator, Moreland City Council

Liam Lenihan, Urban Planner, Moreland City Council

Bruce Turner, Chair

Guests

Cr Samantha Ratnam, Moreland City Council

Guy McCrorie, Commander, Community Safety – Western District, Metropolitan Fire Brigade

Dr Nick Perkins, Scientific Advisor, HazMat Unit, Metropolitan Fire Brigade

Mick Maloney, Officer in Charge, Brunswick UNI, Victoria Police

1. Welcome and introductions

Bruce welcomed everyone to the meeting and each person introduced themselves to the group. He noted that the minutes of the previous meeting had already been confirmed by the group.

2. Scope of risks at the BTS

The Agenda for the meeting included a list of risks previously identified by CRG members. These were:

- Major catastrophe (e.g. terrorist attack)
- Fire
- Storage of chemicals, including the potential for a SF₆ gas leak
- Access for emergency services in local streets
- Safety associated with electric perimeter fence

Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) were added to this list and the previous history of discussions regarding the BTS and involving the community around this issue were recapped. This discussion was assisted by reference to a handout ('Information Sheet') that AusNet Services provided to the CRG. It was agreed that EMF was not an 'emergency' type risk, rather an issue of long term exposure. Fatima referred to the Information Sheet and said she would be concerned if it was to be released to the community in that form. Denis noted this was a summary of the information provided in the extensive reports that had been produced on the subject and that the information sheet was intended for the CRG meeting only, as an example of the format. Denis went on to volunteer that the full report/s can be provided to anyone who would like a copy.

Bruce questioned whether information that met community needs, as highlighted by Fatima, was something the Reference Group could play a role in pulling together. Ramon and Chris stated their view that AusNet Services should identify the risks and, in conjunction with Council, identify how they will be managed, and that this was not the role of the community or community representatives on the CRG. Ramon said he believed this information should form a document that was made available to the community and suggested Council should be the lead player in putting together the document, which he referred to as an 'emergency response plan'.

Chris said she was interested in seeing a full list of risks and hazards from the company's perspective. Samantha commented that it would be helpful to distinguish between risks to the site only and those to the surrounding community. Denis advised that he believed the list of risks and associated issues was complete, but undertook to confirm this.

He emphasised that the risks posed by the site were relatively benign. He described how electricity comes into the station from overhead power lines, as it has for decades, then goes underground inside the site into switch gear, then into transformers back above ground, and finally goes underground again and out of the site. There is SF₆ gas and mineral oil stored on site and that is about it. Sandra also confirmed the site does not generate or manufacture anything and there is no storage of chemicals or fuels, etc on site.

Action 4.1: AusNet Services to confirm whether the current list of risks is complete.

Bruce acknowledged the concerns and suggestions around who should prepare and provide communications around the risks and how they are proposed to be managed, and what form those communications should take. In the interests of finding a constructive way forward, he suggested that at a minimum the minutes of this meeting, or a simple summary of the main points, could serve the purpose of communicating what the CRG had learnt about emergency management matters to the community. He deferred further discussion of this matter until Item 5, after the further exploration of risks and emergency management issues.

3. Risk prevention and management

Once the scope of risks had been confirmed, the discussion moved to exploring the detail of the risks and how they are being, or are proposed to be, prevented and managed.

Fire

Denis referred to the BTS Fire Engineering Study (15 June 2015). This was submitted by AusNet Services to the BTS Advisory Committee (AC). A copy was provided to all parties at the AC. It was prepared by Irwinconsult.

The study modelled the worst case scenario if a fire was to occur (i.e. in the unlikely event that all safety systems failed simultaneously). Denis said the worst case scenario would involve a transformer catching on fire and, with no protections working, burning all the mineral oil it

contained. He said a transformer fire had never been experienced by AusNet Services, but was possible. The results showed heat release (oil burns hot) and what impacts there would be. The conclusion was that on-site infrastructure would be damaged, but there would be no impacts off-site (i.e. to residents or external structures) other than a plume of smoke. Denis said all the safety systems were designed to mitigate the impacts of a fire within the facility. He stressed that there are safety mechanisms (fire traps) that rely on gravity, not mechanics, to work.

A key finding of the study was that the likelihood of a fire within the new and existing transformers is equal to or lower than that of a fire at a residential property. In terms of impact, there are likely to be more significant consequences for residents from a fire in adjacent houses, factories warehouses and retail buildings.

Ramon asked if there was an alarm that would notify the community in the event of a fire. Denis advised that staff at the control centre would be notified via detection systems. These staff would then contact the authorities (i.e. MFB).

Guy advised that noise type alarms for the community (i.e. sirens) were being phased out. He advised that research has shown that alerting the community is much safer and better via other systems (i.e. sms alerts and automated phone messages). (This was also discussed further under Item 4)

Fatima welcomed the Study but expressed concern that it was commissioned and paid for by AusNet Services. She said she would be comforted if an independent authority such as MFB could verify its findings.

Nick indicated he had the scientific background on technical issues as they relate to hazardous materials. He commented that it is not possible to model every scenario. Guy advised that it wouldn't be the role of the MFB to endorse the document but they could review it and provide comments. Nick undertook to pursue a comment on the Study from a relevant MFB expert.

Action 4.2: MFB to review the BTS Fire Engineering Study (15 June 2015) and provide comments as appropriate to The Chair prior to the next CRG meeting.

SF₆ gas leak

Denis referred to the Information Sheet that described how SF₆ is to be used as an insulator in indoor switchgear at BTS. He advised that gas leak impacts are minimised by having multiple insulating chambers so not all the gas is in one compartment. If there were to be a gas leak, the gas is heavier than air, so it would fall into the 3 metre deep basement where it would be contained. If there were to be a leak, staff would be notified and would remove the gas and repair the leak.

Nick advised that he had done his own modelling on SF₆ gas (having used it as a calibration gas and studies of gas dispersion in tunnels) and that he could verify that there is very little concern about its release causing any harm off-site. He advised that MFB looks at risks, independent of what any model or report may identify.

Sam asked if there were safety standards that must be complied with within BTS. Denis referred to requirements of the Electricity Safety Act and related regulations. He said all electrical infrastructures must comply with the relevant building codes and safety legislation. He confirmed building surveyors oversee the building codes and Energy Safe Victoria oversees safety regulation. Chris asked if this information was specific to BTS and was it publicly available. Denis said it was generic to all terminal stations and he did not think it was a public document.

Fatima said the important issue for her was to know that the applicable standards are being complied with, not just for SF₆ gas but for all safety matters. She asked who signs off that standards have been met. Denis indicated it was the ESV's role to oversee compliance with

regulation. Bruce asked if ESV would be able to confirm compliance at the BTS site. Denis indicated this is not something ESV would normally do but undertook to ask ESV if they would undertake a special review.

Action 4.3: AusNet Services to ask ESV if they are able to undertake a special review of BTS in relation to the applicable safety standards.

Ramon asked if there are any other gas-insulated terminal stations near residential areas. Guy confirmed there are several, including ones at Richmond, Portland and Keilor.

Guy asked if, now the basement at BTS is complete, whether a site visit would be of use for residents. Both Ramon and Chris reported that their requests for another visit since the CRG's visit in December 2015 had been denied. Bruce expressed surprise and sought clarification, having been unaware of requests for more site visits. Sandra also expressed surprise, indicating that she was not aware of any such requests having been made. Ramon and Chris did not elaborate. It was noted that a recent tour of the site was held in June for the BTS Advisory Committee (the basement was built at this stage) and that a representative of MCRG, John Gottschall, was invited and present on the tour.

4. Emergency Management Procedures (MFB and Police)

Mick and Guy gave a presentation on how emergency management matters are managed and actioned by emergency authorities.

Mick stated that emergency management procedures as explained in the presentation occur every day very effectively. The procedures define the roles of, and coordinate, agencies like the SES, ambulance, police and MFB. Ramon asked if there is a role for residents in emergency planning and response. The response was that there is, through the relevant Council.

There followed discussion of the communications in the event of an incident. Mick and Guy explained that affected people will be told what to do, which is often to shelter indoors. Then decisions would be made regarding the need for evacuation and which from which homes. Mick said public information about what to do in an emergency is a key part of the response. Ramon commented that he was concerned in relation to the BTS that people had information in advance of an emergency so they know what to expect.

Guy provided an example of a gas leak in Preston the previous week. MFB were able to send an 'advice' message to residents that power would need to be cut off. The community were informed via sms to stay away from the factory. The sms warning system sent a message to anyone with a mobile who lived in the area, even if they were not located in the area at the time. It also sent a message to any person travelling through the area.

Evacuations and access for emergency services

Mick explained that the Police oversee evacuations, and are directed by agencies like the MFB regarding when and who to evacuate. Mick advised that Council's role was to provide relief centres if required or potentially other resources like buses or bus drivers to move people.

It was noted the Emergency Management Victoria website has detailed information re: evacuations and warning messages for various scenarios. Nick also advised that the MFB (and CFA) website also has useful information about shelter in place/ indoors.

Ramon asked about evacuation at the BTS. Guy explained that in most scenarios 'shelter in place' was the best option. Guy explained that if evacuation was required it would likely be a coordinated, staged evacuation. Ramon expressed concern that the focus of the information presented was on responses to incidents, rather than planning for specific events and having

preventative measures. Guy said that, while the MFB does regularly conduct assessments of areas for potential risks (e.g. from residents hoarding), the actual responses to events cannot be pre-planned due to the variables at play (such as wind direction) which affect what action is best to take at the time. It was explained how the process-orientated approach to response works best and is the approach taken by all emergency agencies, rather than specific planning for the multiple variable events that may occur. Ramon concluded that a key message to convey to people in advance was therefore: "if there's a fire (or other incident at BTS), we'll let you know what's going to happen and what you need to do".

Ramon asked about the congestion experienced in Alister Street during a soccer match and how this would be managed in the event of an emergency. (The discussion involved looking at an aerial photo of the area to the east, south and west of the BTS). Mick advised that Police would control the roads and most likely, depending on the situation, Glenlyon Road would be kept clear for emergency vehicles. Ramon expressed concern that there are no parking signs so people park illegally near the soccer oval. Ramon clarified that he did not seek a broadening of 'no parking' areas, but better enforcement of the current restrictions.

Chris referred to an incident at the Morwell Terminal Station. This involved arcing from a 66kV transmission line. She asked if there was the potential for something similar to happen at the BTS which would be of concern in terms of fire danger in a built up and vegetated corridor. Denis said that this event was unprecedented and a result of two protection systems failing at the Morwell Terminal Station which is one of the oldest. He also pointed out there are tens of thousands of kilometres of similar lines across the State. He advised that a report on the Morwell incident was provided to ESV.

5. Options for sharing what we have discussed/ learned with the local community

There was discussion around the idea of distributing locally a summary of what the CRG had discussed and learned about the risks associated with the BTS and how these were being or proposed to be managed, including in the event of an emergency. Bruce sought feedback on whether AusNet Services' Information Sheet that had been provided at the meeting might be an example of the format of such a summary for communicating emergency management matters to the community. Fatima reiterated her earlier comment that the sheet in its current form was too generic. Sandra explained the sheet was just an overview. Bruce asked whether AusNet Services could write something up. Denis suggested that this would possibly add little value as AusNet Services had already produced extensive information on these subjects. Fatima concurred that this would need to come from an independent source.

Bruce suggested the minutes of this meeting could be used as a starting point for the content of a summary information sheet which could include references or links for people who wanted more detailed information. The question of who would release the sheet was left open. Ramon reiterated that he felt Council was the appropriate author or sponsor of such a document. Bruce suggested that whoever released it, the CRG could play an important role as a sounding board (i.e. review and critique the content and layout) but not be required to endorse it if that was a concern. There was no resolution on this topic.

6. Finalisation of CRG's Terms of reference

The changes to the draft TOR discussed at the last meeting (including more information about the history of the site that was provided by Ramon) had been circulated prior to the meeting. These were accepted as final by the CRG.

7. Other matters

a. History of the site

Ramon tabled a report titled: *'The impact and influence of the Sumner Estate on the immediate and wider neighbourhood of the Brunswick Terminal Station (BTS) site'* by Kasia Zygmuntowicz. This provides a brief history of the BTS site which was formerly the grounds of Stony Park mansion, the home of the Sumner family. The report also recommends appropriate heritage interpretation through the publication of a history of the Sumner Estate and place-marking/ signage. Approximate costs of these initiatives are detailed.

Bruce noted that the report could be considered and further discussed as part of the 'community benefit' (e.g. infrastructure improvements) discussions taking place between AusNet Services, the CRG and local community/ environment groups. This will be listed for further discussion at the next meeting.

Action 4.4: History of the site to be included on the agenda for the next meeting for further discussion in the context of the topic of 'community benefits' associated with the BTS

b. Goat Track

Darren advised that an on-site meeting had taken place with AusNet Services staff and Council's Transport Services officer. The draft concept plan for the track tabled by AusNet Services to the CRG at its second meeting was discussed. He reported a further meeting has been arranged in August with Council's Open Space officer and representatives of the Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC), as agreed by the CRG (Action 3.6). This meeting aims to further resolve matters of detail such as the path location, width and materials. The outcomes of this meeting will be reported at the next meeting.

Action 4.5: The outcomes of the August meeting involving Council and MCMC regarding the Goat Track to be reported to the next meeting.

c. Deferred items

Other action items from the previous meeting listed for updates under Item 7, were deferred until the next meeting due to time restrictions.

Next Meeting:

6 – 8 pm, Tuesday 15 September 2015 – Venue to be confirmed.

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