

*Extract from Draft Minutes of Special Meeting of Galway City Council,
held on Monday 24th March 2014
at 4.00 p.m., in City Hall, College Road, Galway.*

Presiding: *Cllr. P. Conneely, Mayor of the City of Galway.*

Present: *Councillors: Catherine Connolly; Colette Connolly; T. Costello; M.J. Crowe; O. Crowe; F. Fahy; P. Keane; D. Lyons; D. McDonnell; N. McNelis; M. Murphy; N. Nolan and T. O'Flaherty.*

In Attendance: *Mr. B. McGrath, City Manager,
Mr. J. O'Neill, Director of Services,
Mr. T. Connell, Director of Services,
Ms. E. McCormack, Head of Finance,
Mr. B. Dunne, A/Director of Services,
Mr. G. McMahon, Meetings Administrator,
Ms. L. Mitchell, Senior Executive Officer,
Ms. Caroline Phelan, Senior Planner,
Mr. R. Brennan, A/Senior Engineer,
Mr. S. Walsh, Senior Executive Parks Superintendent,
Mr. J. Molloy, Senior Executive Engineer,
Mr. L. Blake, Senior Executive Planner,
Ms. H. Coleman, Senior Executive Planner,
Ms. S. Donoghue, A/Senior Social Worker,
Mr. P. Salmon, Administrative Officer,
Mr. L. Hanrahan, Administrative Officer,
Ms. S. Johnstone, Executive Engineer,
Mr. B. Burke, Executive Engineer,
Ms. N. Keane, Senior Staff Officer,
Ms. K. Lohan, Clerical Officer,
Ms. C. Clancy, Clerical Officer.*

Apologies: *Cllr. B. Cameron*

1. BUSINESS PRESCRIBED BY STATUTE

(a) Galway Harbour S.I.D.

Prior to the matter proceeding, Cllr. Ollie Crowe informed the Mayor that as he was currently a member of the board of Galway Harbour Company, and in consideration of S.177 of the Local Government Act 2001, he was withdrawing from the meeting. Cllr. Crowe left the Council Chamber.

Mr. T. Connell, Director of Services, outlined the process required by Galway City Council in the

preparation of the Manager's Report and of the process of consultation with the Elected Members. Ms C. Phelan, Senior Planner, stepped through the Manager's Report as circulated previously to the Members.

The Mayor thanked Ms Phelan for her presentation and invited observations and comment from the Elected Members. Following discussion, the Mayor agreed to allow Members five minutes each to make comment. Each of the Members present raised questions, made observations and offered suggestions.

The Mayor and the Members were all, in general, supportive of the development of the Harbour.

The views of the Members can be broadly summarised as falling under the following categories of observations: overview of the project and process and its strategic importance; issues related to traffic and transport; issues related to environmental concerns and other issues.

Overview of the project and process and its strategic importance:

- Support from all Members for the development of the harbour area by GHC;
- The positive economic impact on the city and region of both the construction and operation of the Galway Harbour Extension;
- The support contained in successive City Development Plans for the sustainable development of the harbour and surrounding lands;
- The significance of the project as one of the most important to ever come before the Council;
- Difficulty with the timeframe between receiving the Manager's Report and this Special Meeting; seen as a flaw in the process; other concerns around deadlines;
- That Members have had insufficient time to consider the Manager's Report;
- Issues regarding the proposed handover of the shareholding in the Harbour Company from the Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport to Galway City Council and the future role of the Council in the governance of GHC;
- Two of the Members in particular believe that the proposed harbour extension is premature;
- This development in the context of other ports such as Foynes and Rosslare;
- The need for major funding and investment by Government in the project which does not appear to be forthcoming;
- The absence of a full, costed, business plan from GHC which outlines specific funding sources;
- The mix of potential funding sources: loans, public-private partnerships and the sale of assets;
- Fears that the phased nature of the proposed nature of the development may leave aspects unfinished;
- The need for an oral hearing to allow further interaction with the process;
- The absence of a corresponding or complementary process for the development of CIE lands around Ceannt Station;
- Queries around the number of formal and informal meetings between GCC and GHC;
- The consideration of alternatives including Mutton Island and Rossaveal Harbour.
- The sustainability of the entire development in the long-term;
- The consultation process and the engagement and submission of considerations from other

- statutory and non-statutory bodies and groups;
- The need for provision of details to the Council of compliance with ‘Commencement Conditions’ prior to the start of development;
- The need for ABP to pay particular attention to the 40 suggested conditions in the Manager’s Report.

Issues related to traffic and transport:

- The need for a closer look by An Bórd Pleanála at the entire traffic impacts of the proposed development;
- That GHC’s Environmental Impact Study may be underestimating the impact of the development on both traffic figures and the effect on the structure and life-span of roads in and out of the area;
- The very significant impact of the recently announced weight restrictions on the future use of Wolfe Tone Bridge;
- The possible replacement of the existing Wolfe Tone Bridge;
- The impact on city traffic during the construction phases;
- The impact of the proposed Part VIII process to allow the lowering of the road under the railway bridge at Lough Atalia Road and associated concerns about disruption during construction;
- The need for conditions to be attached regarding suspension of construction works around particular ‘peak times’ in the year, e.g. Galway Arts Festival, Galway Races, Christmas shopping periods;
- The need for consideration of the doubling in the number of HGVs on local roads and junctions, in particular the junction of Lough Atalia Road and College Road; the effect slow-turning vehicles have on roads and traffic;
- Consideration of a tunnel to alleviate traffic from existing roads;
- Issues around the proposed rail spur, its phasing in later stages of the development, its possible dependence on sufficient tonnage of freight traffic before it is developed;
- The linkages between the passenger terminal and the city centre, in particular the opportunity to use the rail link as a means of transporting visitors into Eyre Square;
- The need for the developer to make a significant contribution towards the costs associated with roads and bridge development, replacement and maintenance in the area.

Issues related to environmental concerns:

- The impact the entire development may have on flood risk and the linkages with the ongoing process around C-FRAM by the Office of Public Works;
- The impact of the proposed development on protected habitats;
- The impact on the current and future capacity of Mutton Island WWTW;
- The impact on beaches and water quality, in particular at Ballyloughane and Grattan Road; the distance from various points in the development to both;
- The mitigation of impact on sand-flats and mudflats;
- The impact on the shores further afield in Renmore and Salthill;
- The development’s compliance with the Habitats directive, with Natura and with the adjacent SAC;
- The effect on water flow in the river and estuary; sedimentation and its mitigation; the

- creation of a “rough water” channel;
- The opportunity to improve water circulation in Lough Atalia by widening the entrance;
- The impact of reclamation and dredging on the sea-bed, on noise and disturbance to local residents and on water flows; the length of time dredging will take;
- The impact of both the construction and the operational periods on waste and waste-water management for the city;
- The impact on the shrimp nursery adjacent to the docks;
- The effect on fish stocks and marine life; the impact on fishing;
- The impact of the proposed development on protected views;
- The height of the development and its visual impact from Claddagh, Renmore and city centre;
- The noise and vibrations from cruise liners at anchor.

Other Issues:

- The opportunities arising to develop recreation and leisure facilities at the docks, on Lough Atalia and at Ballyloughane (particularly sail-training and other marine sports;)
- Question from one councillor about the need for anchorage for cruise ships at the harbour when, for instance, the Cayman Islands operates a substantial cruise business without a deep port;
- The implications of the National Ports Policy 2013 and imminent legislation on the development and its relationship with Galway City Council;
- Freight and containers: their storage and movement and their impact on traffic, transportation, environmental and visual considerations;
- The development of public and/or municipal space and the accommodation of, for example, cultural space and buildings within the development.

In response, the City Manager, the Director of Services, the Senior Planner and officials of other departments including Transport & Infrastructure provided clarifications and details to queries raised about the proposed SID, the Harbour Extension and the process of submission to An Bórd Pleanála by 2nd April.

At 7.30pm, it was agreed to extend the meeting to conclude the agenda and to take a ten-minute break following consideration of this item.

The following resolutions were put to the Elected Members to be submitted to An Bórd Pleanála with the Manager’s Report.

Resolution 1:

Proposer: Cllr. Tom Costello
 Seconder: Cllr. Niall McNelis

Galway City Council supports the development of the city a regional hub and welcomes the proposal from Galway Harbour Company to develop and future-proof the port to support Galway’s growth and expansion.

Galway City Council wants to see Galway harbour as a vital, active and working port serving the industrial, marine and commercial life of Galway city.

Galway City Council, conscious of the need for proper planning, full transparency, openness and public participation in a project of such scale and impact, calls on An Bord Pleanála, in considering this application, to investigate concerns put forward by Galway residents and stakeholders, namely:

- That the business plan put forward by Galway Harbour Company is credible, realistic and externally validated, and that on a national level an expanded Galway Port has the ability to compete with existing deep water ports.
- That the proposed modular development of the port through phases will not lead to an unfinished/ partial development of the port.
- That environmental issues affecting sea stocks (including potential damage to a rare shrimp nursery), Natura concerns and SAC impacts have been adequately and properly studied and considered.
- That the road and transport infrastructure of Galway City has the capacity to absorb additional traffic and road congestion generated by the port development both during and after construction.
- That there will be no significant increase in flooding threats to Galway City from the port development, nor safety concerns for fisherman in the Claddagh region through the creation of a rough water channel in that area, taking into account the CFRAM report.
- That sufficient public knowledge exists and consultation has occurred on the potential negative visual and tourism amenity impact from key vantage points including Renmore, Ballyloughane, the City Centre, South Park and Salthill.
- The handing-over of the port to Galway City

Proposal agreed unanimously

Resolution 2:

Proposer: Cllr. Frank Fahy

Seconder: Cllr. Michelle Murphy

“That Galway City Council recommend that a rail line --- run from the Harbour to Ceannt Station /Eyre Square to facilitate the mass transportation of passengers from cruise ships and also that the passenger terminal operates to facilitate tour bus operators as a set down and pick-up point”.

For: 12

Against: 1

Proposal agreed.

Resolution 3:

Proposer: Cllr. Catherine Connolly

Seconder: Cllr. Tom Costello

“That this Council calls on An Bord Pleanála to hold an Oral Hearing in Galway in relation to the application currently before the Board re: the proposed extension of Galway Harbour given the significance and scale of the proposed development”.

Proposal agreed unanimously

Resolution 4:

Proposed: Cllr. Michael J. Crowe
Seconder: Cllr. Peter Keane

“That the applicant make a significant financial contribution towards:

- (a) The required upgrading of the Lough Atalia/College Road junction
- (b) The main roads/routes into and out of the development
- (c) The construction of a new bridge to replace the existing Wolfe Tone Bridge”

Proposal agreed unanimously.

Resolution 5:

Proposed: Cllr. Colette Connolly
Seconder: Cllr. Niall McNelis

“In the event of planning being granted to the Harbour development, that prior to a Commencement Notice being issued that the Local Authority be provided with the specific details of compliance with “Prior to Commencement Conditions” in writing and that they be circulated also to Elected Members”

Proposal agreed unanimously.

The matter was concluded.

Kieran Doherty,
Executive Officer,
An Bord Pleanála,
64 Marlborough St.,
Dublin 1.

Monday, 31 March 2014

Re: Galway Harbour Extension ABP Ref: 61.PA0033

Dear Mr Doherty,

Enclosed please find 2 x copies of the Manager's Report from Galway City Council as requested under section 37E(4) of the Planning & Development Act, 2000, as amended, regarding Galway Harbour Extension.

Please also find an extract from the Draft Minutes of the Special Meeting of Galway City Council held on Monday 24th March 2014 in City Hall, Galway at which the Manager's Report was presented to the Mayor and Elected Members. The extract records the observations of the Elected Members and the 5 resolutions passed by the Council in relation to the Manager's Report and regarding the proposed Harbour Extension.

Your sincerely,

Gary McMahon
Meetings Administrator
Galway City Council.
091 536445
gary.mcmahon@galwaycity.ie