A TEMPLATE FOR COMMUNITY WORKING GROUPS

Stakeholder Relations

Contents

COMMUNITY WORKING GROUPS – TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION

The BC Oil and Gas Commission is into the second half of a year-long Community Working Group pilot project, established to address quality of life impacts on the community of Farmington, in northeast B.C. The pilot project is showing signs of success – establishing trust and good working relationships with community members; a number of meaningful changes to industry operating practices; and improvements to Commission processes.

Changes implemented as a result of the pilot project, may help avoid similar development pressures in other communities, but lessons learned – and the value of the working relationships established – provide a template and the impetus, to establish similar community working groups in other areas, on an as-needed basis.

Proper methods for assessment, structure, function and process must be established to allow for effective engagement with working groups in the community.

HOW TO CONDUCT AN ASSESSMENT

Assessment for Community Selection

- Use metrics to determine, by community, the most frequent concerns and complaints regarding oil and gas activity.
- Consider interests raised through previous engagement with community members to identify potential impacts of future activities.
- Review anticipated development plans presented by industry (to agencies and within the communities) and identify possible impacts to community.
- Review known concerns/interests and consult with agencies holding appropriate jurisdiction to assess cause of concerns and triage needs.
- Use collective information to determine the benefits of enhancing engagement with identified communities.
- Determine which need has the most significant impact to the greater community and establish priority for engagement.

Impact Assessment within the Community

- Meet with local agencies (regional districts, mayors, councils, Chambers of Commerce) to assess and understand community interests and the areas of current and projected concern.
- Determine oil and gas proponents active in the area and meet to discuss current and projected activity levels and issues/community interests they are aware of in the area.
- Review current and potential concerns and determine agencies with jurisdiction.
- Use collective information to determine which community members are best candidates to participate in a community working group.
- Meet with individual or smaller groups of community members to verify need and hear initial interests and concerns.

- Based on initial interviews, invite community members to participate in an introductory meeting.

WHAT TO CONSIDER
Size and structure of initial group
It is recommended the group consist of:
- A facilitator
- Maximum of 10-12 community members
- One or two local government representatives
- An administrative representative to record interactions and arrange meeting details

Expenses
- Staff resource costs: [1.]Facilitator / Administrator; [2.] overtime for after hours of administrative and technical expert staff; [3.] frequency of meetings.
- Use/rental of venue or meeting room.
- Meals and refreshments.
- Supplies (pens, markers, post its, A-frame board, dry-erase board).
- Travel costs for attending meetings including attendance by technical experts.
- Potential compensation/stipend for participants.

HOW WILL THE COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP FUNCTION
Introductory Meeting
The initial meeting should accomplish the following:
- Determine if correct participants have been invited or if additional members need to be included.
- Confirm need to move forward with commitment to meet on a regular basis.
- Introduce a Terms of Reference for how the group will function.
- As a group confirm a neutral meeting place.
- Identify issues and interests; prioritize.
- Establish how issues discussed will be actioned.
- Determine how frequently the group will be meeting based on urgency of issues and needs of the community.

Terms of Reference (TOR)
The working group will need to come to consensus on the outline of a TOR. The following format is suggested (sample provided):
- The reason the group was brought together.
- What does the working group want to accomplish, what is the goal.
- Structure of membership and participation.
- Governance/decision making and administration.
- Reporting and communication.
- Resources.
- Timelines/term of service.

How to set and use an agenda

An agenda will need to be prepared and distributed to all participants prior to each meeting. Agendas have three main functions:

1. Prepare participants for discussion.
2. Keep the meeting organized and focused.
3. Track and table issues or discussions for subsequent meetings.

Agenda items should be gathered at the end of each meeting or through electronic communication with sufficient time allowed to distribute to all members of the group a week or so in advance of the next meeting. How agendas are to be distributed needs to be established with the group, with consideration given to the most reliable method available to all participants (e.g. email, social media, shared website, Canada Post).

An effective agenda will include:

- Updates on action items from the previous meeting.
- Issues that may require a presentation or information that is not yet available.
- New issues for discussion.
- Learning opportunities (e.g. presentations on specific topics from subject matter experts).
- A roundtable that addresses activities, planned activities and community updates.
- A discussion about the date and time of the next meeting and any agenda items for that meeting.

STAFF RESOURCES

Administrative Assistant

The role of an Administrative Assistant

- Ensure location is secure for meetings.
- Record meetings and discussions.
- Provide summaries of all discussions and work sessions completed at the meetings.
- Provide information and responses to community members as requested.
- Track all actions and outcomes arising from meetings.
- Coordinate all meeting participants (calendar invites, etc.) including technical experts and regulator/agency representatives.

Facilitator

Benefits of hiring a facilitator

A facilitator can provide unbiased assistance in running the meetings, with no stake in the outcome of the group's process. They may also take a role in helping groups form best practices and performance measures.

A facilitator may be hired to provide continual support throughout the lifetime of the working group or only for specific discussions regarding future planning, public input on new developments or for large public events. It would be the responsibility of the organization

managing the meetings to hire a facilitator or provide a skilled facilitator from within their organization that is able to maintain a neutral approach throughout the process.

The role of a facilitator
- A manager of meetings.
- A neutral and impartial person able to help a group work through challenging issues, identify goals, select activities and stay on track.
- Able to balance participation between outspoken and quieter group members, ensuring everyone has an equal voice and all concerns are heard.
- Assists groups in working through contentious and at times, emotional issues.
- Trained in facilitation skills and dealing effectively with conflict.
- Ensures groups established based on contentious issues move forward effectively while continuing to build relationships between members.
- Helps group members stay on track and work through agenda items in a timely fashion. Keeping meetings constructive is an important way to keep the entire group effective and maintain the members' interests.
- Helps working group determine which regulators and agencies will need to be advised of group discussions and who will liaise with them and build effective means of communication with these bodies.

Technical Experts

The role of Technical Experts
- Provide technical feedback to the community working group on an ad hoc or ongoing basis.
- Provide advice to the community working group on applicable regulations and policies.
- Maintain regular communication with administrative assistant and facilitator to apprise of updates or additional feedback for the community working group.
- Participate in developing and implementing appropriate solutions.

HOW TO PROCEED

Ground Rules
The establishment of ground rules at the outset of the initial meeting is vital to ensuring a positive tone for group interactions. Begin with a few examples and solicit additional guidelines from the group that would ensure they feel safe sharing in the group environment. Once all items are listed, request agreement from the group. If any participants do not agree with the ground rules, discuss as a group what the difficulty might be. Below are some suggested starting points:
- Only one person speaks at a time.
- All ideas are good.
- Share discussion time with other participants to ensure everyone has a chance to speak.
- Be respectful of others' opinions or thoughts – we are here to work together.
- Keep input about the issues – do not make it about another person.
- Cell phone use (discuss with group what is appropriate).

Beginning the discussion

Identify the interests and issues

As a group, discuss the interests of community members regarding the future of their community and the impact of current and anticipated oil and gas activity on their lives. Not all community members may be experiencing the same degree of impact, making it important to keep the conversation focused on interests rather than allowing the issues to dominate the discussion.

Community members must feel their concerns are being understood and not minimized. It is important at this stage to listen. There should be no debate, defensiveness or quick answers. This step is to seek first to understand.

Be aware that site-specific issues affecting certain individuals may arise during group discussion. Establish understanding of how these will be moved outside of the group discussion and addressed with the individual.

Assess the issues and consider proactive interests

To help refine your brainstorming list, ask some filtering questions such as:
- What are the concerns/interests you have that may impact the future of your community?
- Which of these issues are currently being addressed by another organization or by the appropriate regulator?
- Which of these issues are being experienced by the greater community?
- What are the opportunities for mutual learning?

Prioritize the interests and issues

In areas with many issues, you may need to prioritize which ones are addressed first. Review your list of issues and ask the following questions:
- Do any of the issues require resolution immediately or in the near future (e.g. safety hazards)?
- Which issues require information and education (e.g. community members want more information on how water use is being managed during drought season)?
- Which issues have the potential to impact the most people (e.g. emergency response planning)?
- Which issues might be less complex to resolve and more quickly addressed (e.g. land owners identify a company that consistently leaves the gate open)?
- What interests can be addressed that are most likely to prevent future issues?

Based on the answers to these questions, the group will adapt upcoming agendas to best address the issues being considered. The group will need to use the same process on an ongoing basis to identify and prioritize issues as they arise.

Recommendations and Actions

The goal of a community working group is to arrive at recommendations and actions by consensus using a collaborative approach; finding common ground for all stakeholders, rather than going with what the majority of the group wants. However, while it's not common for community groups to use a majority rules approach, sometimes, when it comes to making decisions and determining group direction, it is necessary to use the majority rules approach.

A facilitator can guide the working group through an effective consensus process by following these steps:

1. Introduce and clarify the issue(s):
- Provide a clear agenda so everyone understands the process.
- Ensure all relevant information and sources are available to participants.
- Determine concerns and relevant questions.
- Ensure everyone understands the issue from a technical perspective, including regulations and requirements.

2. Explore the issue and look for interests:
- Gather initial thoughts and reactions to the issue.
- Identify individual and shared interests.
- Probe the group with open questions.
- Collect ideas for solving the problem – welcome all ideas.

3. Look for emerging solutions that address current and potential future interests:
- Evaluate options against individual and group interests.
- Look for options that weave together the best elements of ideas garnered, and address key concerns.
- Keep the discussions focused on where solutions can be found and what can be done.

PRESENTING RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations resulting from the working group's discussions will need to be presented to the regulators and agencies who have the best ability to take action. This will require the working group to decide who will liaise with regulators, agencies and industry for the purpose of building effective means of communication.
- Determine regulator/agency responsible to manage issues being discussed.
- The liaison should establish working relationships with all provincial regulatory bodies and industry representatives to ensure concerns are effectively communicated and action items followed up.

ASSESSMENT OF WORKING GROUP EFFECTIVENESS

Regular assessments of the working group will be required to ensure the group remains effective and on course with its original intent.
- Are group needs being met?
- Are participants remaining engaged in discussions or experiencing fatigue?
- Is the community experiencing positive changes as a result of recommendations they are providing?

- Will adjustments need to be made to the frequency of meetings or how the meetings are managed?
- Is there still a need for the group to continue? Should other options be considered, such as adding other participants to the group?
- What avenues are available for future input from community working group participants if the group does not formally continue?