

KATIVIK ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

PUBLIC HEARING INTO THE CREATION OF THE
KURURJUAQ NATIONAL PARK

Kangiqualujjuaq
March 14 and 15, 2007

Summary

A public hearing into the creation of the Kuururjuaq National Park was held in Kangiqsualujjuaq on March 14 and 15, 2007. The public hearing was organized jointly by the KEQC and the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (sustainable development, environment and parks, MDDEP) and the Kativik Regional Government (KRG). The public hearing was co-chaired by Peters Jacobs, Chairman of the KEQC, and by Johnny Adams, a representative of the Québec government appointed by the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, Claude Béchar. Over the course of the two-day public hearing, the Kuururjuaq Park Project and a number of position papers were presented. Following each presentation, a short period was permitted to clarify and add information. The public hearing was broadcast by radio throughout Nunavik.

1. Opening remarks

Kitty Annanack, Mayor of the Northern Village of Kangiqsualujjuaq, and Maggie Emudluk, Chairperson of the KRG, welcomed all the participants to the public hearing in Kangiqsualujjuaq. The representatives of the MDDEP and the KRG, the proponents of the park project, were introduced by Ms. Emudluk. Next, Johnny Adams said a few words. Mr. Adams was appointed by Claude Béchar, the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, to co-chair the public hearing on behalf of the Québec government. Finally, Peter Jacobs, Chairman of the KEQC, introduced the other members of the KEQC and explained their role at the public hearing and the agenda for the two days.

2. Presentation of the park project by the proponent

To begin the public hearing, Stéphane Cossette (MDDEP) presented the Kuururjuaq Park Project. Specifically, Mr. Cossette explained the main objectives of the future park which are to conserve and protect an area that is representative of the eco-systems of Northern Québec. He provided background information about the park project process, the territory covered by the park project, potential development of scientific research, educational and recreational activities, and visitor safety. Mr. Cossette also described the expected economic development that will be generated through the creation of direct and in-direct employment, as well as the zoning of the future park (preservation, maximum preservation, ambiance and service zones).

Next, Maggie Emudluk (KRG) indicated that the Kuururjuaq Park Project was the result of joint efforts based on an agreement between the KRG and the Québec government concerning the creation of parks in Nunavik. On behalf of the KRG, Ms. Emudluk stated, among other points, that she supported the creation of the Kuururjuaq National Park as well as co-operation with the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve. Ms. Emudluk indicated that the creation of this park, and others in the region, will not adversely affect the traditional rights of the Native populations. According to Ms. Emudluk, the creation of national parks in Nunavik will foster economic development.

3. Presentation by the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach

The representatives of the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach presented their position paper, entitled “Caribou Heaven”. The position paper identifies on the Koroc River a sacred site for the Naskapi that is an important component of their culture. The Naskapi representatives stated that protection must be offered to Native sacred sites and that the “Caribou Heaven” must be recognized as one such site. They recommended that a member of the Naskapi community be appointed to the park harmonization committee and that the sacred site be identified with signs. The Naskapi have agreed to share their knowledge for this purpose. Their representatives also indicated that the community supports the proposed park boundaries. In response to the requests made by the Naskapi Nation, the KRG agreed to meet with elders from Kawawachikamach to discuss the identification of the “Caribou Heaven”.

4. Participant questions and proponent responses

Participants were invited to ask questions and to provide feedback. Kitty Annanack, who was born and has lived all her life in the region, agreed that the planning process should be implemented carefully. Next, Johnny Etok, who is also native to the area where the park is to be created, asked why, when and by whom the location of the future park had been decided. The MDDEP indicated that the site had been chosen in 1982 to protect it from commercial, mining and hydro-electric activities. The site was also recognized as a future park zone by the KRG in 1994–1995. Several other participants asked questions and provided feedback. In summary, the issues raised concerned the potential economic impacts of the park, the potential impacts on the traditional Inuit way of life, as well as specific issues such as the type of energy that will be used to heat park shelters and the status of private cabins already found in the area. The MDDEP stated that the harvesting right of Inuit in the region will be protected and that approximately 10 full- and part-time jobs will be created in Kangiqsualujjuaq and roughly 50 outside of the community.

Johnny Adams began the March 14 afternoon session with a question about the restrictions to apply to snowmobile use in the park. The MDDEP indicated that restrictions will apply only to park visitors, and not to beneficiaries of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA) from Kangiqsualujjuaq. This topic led to further questions and feedback. One resident felt that certain subsidies should be made available for snowmobilers in the region since these vehicles are very expensive. The MDDEP reiterated that the future park will place no additional constraints on residents. The park represents an economic development opportunity for the community since Kangiqsualujjuaq will be the gateway to the park.

Several residents mentioned their concerns regarding the arrival of more float planes in the area. They indicated that with increased outfitting operations in the region, planes have been observed. The MDDEP responded that visitors to the park will have to register before entering the park, and that permission will be required to land airplanes in the park. The park director will ensure that these rules are followed, the park wardens will monitor plane activities, and nearby outfitters will be informed of these new rules.

Edith van de Wall (KEQC) asked about the possible impacts of the interpretation centre on life in Kangiqsualujjuaq. The MDDEP stated that the interpretation centre will be located in the village and that park visitors will have to register there. As well, an harmonization committee will be created to ensure that the park is managed in accordance with the interests of the community. Through the harmonization committee, the community will be able to control the development of the park. The committee will comprise representatives of the local landholding corporation, the Northern village, the KRG, the Makivik Corporation and the MDDEP. The committee will be responsible for ensuring that harvesting activities are not negatively affected. Visitors will be directed away from hunting zones. A calendar that takes into account hunting activities and the zones to be used remains to be developed.

Daniel Berrouard (KEQC) inquired about the biological, physical and social impacts of the Kuururjuaq National Park. The MDDEP indicated that an increased number of visitors are expected. Specifically, within 10 years at least 800 individuals are expected to visit the more than 4000-km² territory annually. This estimated number is based on the number of registered visitors to similar parks in Nunavut. The construction of shelters will result in a small loss of vegetation. As well, there will be more visitors to Kangiqsualujjuaq. Through the park harmonization committee, the community will be able to determine the number of individuals that they want to receive in the region each year. The KRG pointed out that there is currently no control over the number of visitors to the region or over their safety. With the creation of the park, visitors will be required to register and this will contribute to improving their safety.

Ms. van de Wall asked the project proponent to explain how the park boundaries had been determined. The MDDEP responded that the park boundaries mark the watershed of the Koroc River, except for the downstream portion of the river where it cuts across Category I lands. Because Category I lands are private, they have not been included in the park.

Putulik Papigatuk (KEQC) inquired about how the construction materials for the proposed shelters will be transported, from where and at what time of the year. The MDDEP stated that this issue requires further study, but that the materials would probably be transported by float plane in summer and by snowmobile in winter. The KRG added that future construction work will be discussed with the community in order to identify the best solution. Mr. Papigatuk asked the project proponent to explain the expected negative impacts of the park. The MDDEP reiterated that the expected negative impacts relate to the increased number of visitors to the community and to the region, and that no additional constraints will be placed on residents. Although the number of visitors will be greater than in the past, their visits will be better controlled. Visitors will not be permitted to travel wherever they like at anytime of the year. The KRG added that this control will make it possible to mitigate the negative impacts resulting from the increased number of visitors, while at the same time protecting Inuit harvesting rights.

David Okpik (KEQC) asked the project proponent to explain the purpose of the maximum preservation zones. The MDDEP indicated that these zones will protect a stand of white birch at its northern-most range in Québec, as well as areas with lichen growth. Only JBNQA beneficiaries from Kangiqsualujjuaq, and scientists with appropriate authorization, will be permitted access to these zones.

Peter Jacobs (KEQC) asked the project proponent whether or not cultural areas should be taken into consideration in the park's zoning. The MDDEP agreed that this issue should be discussed by the working committee, in particular with respect to the sacred "Caribou Heaven" site.

Johnny Adams asked if any restrictions will apply to visitor sports fishing activities and if the landholding corporation will be empowered to control these activities. The MDDEP indicated that the community's needs will be of foremost importance. The park director will be able to

limit or prohibit sports fishing in different areas of the park at different times of the year. Makivik stated that park visitors who wish to fish will be required to obtain authorization from the landholding corporation.

David Annanack (resident from Kangiqsualujjuaq) inquired about whether the community should be compensated for the lands lost due to the creation of the park. Makivik indicated that, pursuant to Section 7 of the JBNQA, lands may be compensated only if harvesting activities are negatively affected, and therefore the impact of visitors to the park will have to be reviewed in the future. Furthermore, Makivik suggested that the future park will increase the harvesting rights of Inuit. The entire park will be considered other Category II lands where Inuit will have exclusive harvesting rights.

Several more participants provided feedback. Among other points, it was noted that God had created animals to feed human beings and not for sports hunting. It was noted that, because Inuit have always had survival plans, they could contribute their knowledge to an emergency plan for the park. It was noted that, given the large size of the park, careful planning will be important, and that the territory must belong to future generations. The point was also made that the Inuit traditional way of life in the region should not be lost. It was indicated that float planes should be prohibited in the region and that local workers should be given an opportunity to work on park infrastructure construction projects.

5. Presentation by the Northern Village of Kuujjuaq (Michael Gordon) and the Nayumivik Landholding Corporation (Johnny Gordon)

Michael Gordon (municipal councillor from Kuujjuaq) presented a position paper prepared by the Northern Village of Kuujjuaq. Kuujjuaq is the closest community to Kangiqsualujjuaq and to the future park. Visitors to the park will necessarily travel through Kuujjuaq. Mr. Gordon stated that the Inuit of Kuujjuaq share the same traditions as the Inuit of Kangiqsualujjuaq and that Kuujjuamiut will also be affected by the creation of the park. Many Kuujjuaq residents come from the region of the future park. Like the residents of Kangiqsualujjuaq, the residents of Kuujjuaq support the creation of the park. It was stated that visitors to the future park will have an opportunity to visit in Kuujjuaq, which is not the case for sports hunters travelling to nearby outfitting camps. This situation will create economic spin-offs in Kuujjuaq. Mr. Gordon suggested that representatives of Kuujjuaq, Kawawachikamach and Labrador be included on the park harmonization committee. On behalf of the Northern Village of Kuujjuaq, Mr. Gordon voiced his support for the creation of the park.

Johnny Gordon (representative of the Nayumivik Landholding Corporation) completed this presentation by stating that the future park will be an attraction for the community of Kangiqsualujjuaq. He nonetheless expressed concern about the increased number of non-Natives who will be travelling to the region. Mr. Gordon added that sports fishing should not be permitted in the park, that float plane activity should be monitored, and that wildlife and Inuit traditions should be conserved.

One participant from Nunavik noted that the future park will help Northern residents in financial terms. The park will generate revenue and create employment.

6. Presentation by Azimut Exploration (Normand Champigny)

Normand Champigny presented a position paper on behalf of the mineral exploration company Azimut Exploration. Mr. Champigny stated that Azimut Exploration supports the creation of the park and the development of parks in Québec. Azimut Exploration holds mineral exploration rights at 25 sites in Québec, including 700 km² near the future park with interesting uranium potential. According to Mr. Champigny, mineral exploration activities are compatible with park activities. Mr. Champigny also recognized that the future park will permit economic diversification of the community and added that the mining industry also offers economic development. Since mineral exploration is a high-risk activity, Azimut Exploration is proposing: 1) that the lands where Azimut Exploration holds mineral exploration rights be permanently exempt from exploration prohibitions; 2) that a transparent assessment process be implemented; 3) that no buffering zone be established between the park boundaries and mineral exploration zones; and 4) that a mediation process be created for users of the territory and park management.

Edith van de Wall asked Mr. Champigny to explain how it can be ensured that mineral exploration activities have no negative impacts on the park. Mr. Champigny responded that Azimut Exploration has accepted to comply with practices that limit negative impacts. Impact studies are necessary for this purpose. As well, benefits will be generated to compensate for any negative impacts. Mineral exploration has already been carried out and further exploration will continue. One resident of Kangiqsualujjuaq indicated that he did not wish there to be conflict between the different parties and that mining activities would impact negatively on the park.

7. Presentation by the Makivik Corporation (Johnny Peters)

The March 15 morning session was opened by a presentation by Johnny Peters of the Makivik Corporation. Mr. Peters stated his concerns related to the creation of the park, in particular possible impacts on harvesting activities. He noted that it will be important to carefully manage tourism activities, and to come to an agreement on the boundaries of the park and on mining activities. The impacts of these various activities will have to be studied. Makivik is especially concerned about uranium exploration activities. A workable solution will therefore have to be found. As regards Category II lands, there is no justification for compensation. The creation of the park will only increase the rights of local Inuit, and Inuit outfitters will be able to continue to operate. Makivik feels it is important that the members of the community voice their opinions about the future park. According to Mr. Peters, Nunavik must be promoted. Makivik for example is already investing in the tourism industry. Mr. Peters concluded his presentation with two questions: Do the Inuit of Nunavik support the creation of the park? Do they agree with other tourism activities?

Edith van de Wall asked the project proponent to explain how negative impacts on the Inuit way of life will be mitigated. The MDDEP stated that the park harmonization committee will act as a link between park management and the community. The committee will support local

requests. As well, annual impact monitoring will be carried out, more control will be exercised over visitors, and park zoning may be modified according to local needs. The MDDEP reiterated that it will be possible to modify tourism activities according to harvesting activities. Public hearings will be held if such changes are necessary. Makivik added that monitoring will be carried out to determine the impact of tourism activities on traditional Inuit activities. A conflict resolution mechanism should also be created with the community. One resident from Kangiqualujjuaq mentioned that the park should be protected from mineral exploration activities and that vehicles should be prohibited.

8. Presentation by the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve (Angus Simpson)

Angus Simpson from the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve stated that co-operation between the two parks is possible and desirable. The Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve was created one year ago. The park committee comprises seven members, including two representatives of the community of Kangiqualujjuaq. Co-operation must be practised in the region shared by the two parks. The parks should be managed based on common, shared knowledge. For example, a standard emergency plan for the two parks could be drawn up jointly. Park visitors could also be co-managed since access to each park may be gained from the other. Certain responsibilities, including enforcement, could also be shared.



Martin Tremblay
Executive Secretary
Kativik Environmental Quality Commission
April 13, 2007

Appendix

Public Hearing Agenda
Kangiqualujuaq
March 14 and 15, 2007

March 14, 2007

- 10:00 a.m. Opening prayer
- 10:05 Opening remarks (Kitty Annanack, Johnny Adams, Maggie Emudluk)
- 10:15 Introductions and description of roles (Johnny Adams and Peter Jacobs)
- 10:30 Presentation of the park project (MDDEP)
- 11:15 Clarifications and additional information (Johnny Adams and Peter Jacobs)
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 Questions and position papers
- 3:00 Break
- 3:30 Questions and position papers
- 5:00 Community feast preparations
- 7:30 Questions and position papers
- 9:30 End of questions and adjournment

March 15, 2007

- 10:00 a.m. Questions and position papers
- 11:30 Closing remarks (Peter Jacobs, Johnny Adams and Kitty Annanack)
- 11:55 Closing prayer
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch