

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING OF PROPOSED MATHERAN PASSENGER ROPE WAY (AT VILLAGE-BHUTIVALI, TAL – KARJAT, DIST – RAIGAD) TO BE DEVELOPED BY M/S MATHERAN ROPE WAY PVT. LTD., MUMBAI**

The public hearing for proposed “Matheran Passenger Rope Way” at Village-Bhutivali, Tal-Karjat, Dist-Raigad to be developed by M/s Matheran Rope Way Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai was conducted on 31-05-2017 at 11.00 a.m. near the project site at Matheran Community Centre, Giristhan Municipal Council, Matheran, Tal-Karjat, Dist- Raigad.

Following were the panel members for conducting public hearing as per the Board’s Office Order E-40 of 2017 under letter no.BO/JD(WPC)/PH/B-2072, dated -20/5/2017

- 1) Shri Kiran Panbude, - Chairman,  
Additional District Magistrate, Raigad  
(Representative of District Magistrate,  
Raigad
- 2) Dr. A. N. Harshawardhan, - Member  
Regional Officer, MPCB, Raigad  
(representative of the MPCB, Mumbai)
- 3) -Convener  
Sub Regional Officer, Raigad-II,  
MPCB, Raigad

Sub-Regional Officer, Raigad-II was on leave due to his personal work hence Dr. Anant Harshavardhan, Regional Officer, MPCB, Raigad, Member of the said meeting welcomed Hon’ble Chairman, Project officials, Environmentalists, Journalists and General Public who were present in large and informed that, as per Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification of Ministry of Environment, Forest &

Climate Change, Govt. of India (MoEFCC, GoI) dated 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2006, as amended, on 1st December, 2009, it is mandatory to conduct prior public hearing to certain projects which are covered in the schedule

of the said Notification. The Sub Regional Office, Raigad-II, MPCB, Navi Mumbai was in receipt of application of M/s Matheran Rope Way Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai for conducting public hearing for proposed Matheran Passenger Rope Way at Village – Bhutivali, Tal – Karjat, Dist-Raigad.

The Member further informed that, the aim of conducting public hearing is to make aware, local people who can be participant in the hearing and they should know the developmental activities and environment management plan of the unit. The MoEFCC, Govt. of India has recommended the proposal for ToR in its 9<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 21-22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2016.

As per said Notification, one month advance public notice was published in the local newspapers on 29-04-2017 in Dainik Krishival for Marathi and in Indian Express for English. He said that copies of EIA report and executive summery were also made available at MoEFCC, Bhopal and at various offices of Govt. of Maharashtra i.e. District Magistrate Office, Raigad, Sub Divisional Office, Tal-Karjat, Dist-Raigad, Superintendent office, Matheran, Matheran Giristhan Municipal Council, Matheran, Group Grampanchayat office at Asal, Tal-Karjat, Dist-Raigad, Zilla Parishad, Raigad, , District Industries Centre, Raigad, Sub Regional Office, Raigad-II, , Regional Office, MPCB, Raigad, and at Head Office of MPCB at Mumbai, Environment Department, Govt. of Maharashtra, Mumbai. The public in general were appealed to send any objection / suggestion regarding the above project. The office of Sub Regional Officer, Raigad-II, MPCB, Navi Mumbai is in receipt of suggestions/objections. The concerned persons are informed to attend this meeting. Member of the meeting appealed Chairman of the Committee to allow to start the proceedings of public hearing.

Shri Kiran Panbude, Chairman of Committee welcomed all and informed officials of the project to explain the details about pollution control devices and environment management plan of the project in local language Marathi. He further appealed general public to give objection / suggestion if any, about the project after technical presentation of the unit.

The Environment Consultant appointed by the company gave the presentation of the Matheran Passenger Ropeway project.

After completion, Chairman of the Committee and Member appealed general public to give their objections/suggestions for the proposed project.

- 1) **Shri Shivaji Shinde, Corporator, Matheran Nagar Parishad** said that since 2003, the people of Matheran are waiting for the project. The livelihood of Matheran is totally depended on tourism. Due to rope way, there will be increase in tourists. But at other side, the civic issues will raise in alarming conditions. There will be increase of solid waste in the Matheran, also the area will face the problems of plastic wastes. The Matheran Nagar Parishad is already facing paucity of funds. Hence it is suggested that the project proponent should transfer 25% of their profit to Matheran Nagar Parishad in every financial year to cope up the civic issues. The Project Proponent shall transport solid waste by rope-way for scientific disposal.

Shri Shinde further suggested that the local people are expecting the concession in the ticket tariffs and job opportunities.

- 2) **Shri Ajay Kashinath Sawant, former President of Matheran Nagar Parishad** opined that there were discussions since last 16-17 years for the Matheran Passenger Ropeway. The project proponent has sent the proposal to State Government in 2002. But Ministry of Environment & Forest, Govt. of India (i.e. MoEF, Gol) has issued a Notification on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2003 and notified Matheran and surrounding region in the State of Maharashtra as the "Matheran Eco-Sensitive Zone" and directed Government of Maharashtra (GoM) to prepare the Zonal Master Plan for the Eco-Sensitive Zone. He said that the residents of Matheran feels pitiable as the Neral-Matheran Mini-Toy railway service has not been resumed since last year. Hence the local people have no alternative than to use the road. On 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2005, due to heavy rain railway service of Mumbai Region was totally stopped and then people

of all walks of life have started to think about alternate transport system. The nearby cities like Navi Mumbai, Thane, Pune are trying to become Smart Cities and the population of the cities are increasing, but the recent census shows 10% decrease in the population of Matheran. This is due to severe civic problems, non-availability of medical and education system and job opportunities. The livelihood of Matheran is totally depended on tourism. It is believed that due to this project, the socio-economic development of this region will start.

Shri Sawant said that the local youths are hard working. If the local boys & girls are given technical training, they will help project proponent to succeed the project. Hence the local youths be given practical training and 90% job opportunities be given to local boys & girls students. He advised that i) various permissions required to local people, traders viz hotel permission, renewal of lease properties, consent to operate should be given with minimum hardship. ii) Various companies should fulfil their corporate social responsibility.

- 3) **Shri Deepak Shah, President, Businessmen Corporation, Mathern** expressed the opinion that the local people should be given 50% concession in the tickets and a cabin should be reserved for local people. Goods transport shall be allowed by rope-way. Project Proponent informed that the tariff would be decided considering interest of the local residents. During operations 'ATITHI-DEVO-BHAVA' principle will be followed. Except building material, all luggage will be allowed subject to rules, hygiene and safety standards . But reserving separate cabin is not viable. He queried about the completion period of rope-way.
- 4) **Shri Santosh Gangaram Aakhade, President of Matheran Dhanagar Samaj (Shepherd Samaj)** informed that the first stage of proposed Rope Way Project will be built from Bhutavali village to Garbate Plateau. There is road which is totally destroyed. If the station is built, there will be rush of people. If the road is closed, the poor Tribal people. Project officials informed that a station with modern technique will be built. Any road will not be closed. Shri Aakhade further informed that the

local people are not against the Ropeway project, but local dweller should not be disturbed.

- 5) **Shri Vasant Narayan Kadam, resident of Matheran**, member of Shivsena opined that the promises made in this meeting should be implemented by the project proponent. The Rope Way Project is pending since last 12-15 years. He requested Chairman of the Public Hearing Committee to grant the permission to start the project as early as possible.
- 6) **Shri V. Sunanda Reddy, an Environmentalist from Hyderabad** suggested that project proponent should first earn the confidence of local people for completion of project. He opined that sustainable development should be made of Matheran. As he was reading the written submission, Chairman of the Committee informed that the views and suggestions are already with the Committee. Written objections and suggestions shall be incorporated.
- 7) **Shri Sagar Patil of Swabhiman Sangathana, Matheran** expressed the opinion that local students of school and colleges be given concession in the Rope Way tariff.
- 8) **Shri R. G. Shaikh, President of Senior Citizen Sangh, Matheran** opined that local senior citizen should be given concession in the fares.

Project proponent informed that they are aware that without co-operation of the local people, the project will not succeed. Chairman of the Public Hearing Committee here appealed general public not to raise the issues which are earlier answered.

- 9) **Shri Prasad Vishwanath Sawant, Group Leader, Matheran Nagar Parishad** informed that progress and problems are two sides of same coin. There will be merits and demerits of any project. He said that Project Proponent has already promised to extend concession in the tariff of Ropy Way to local people. Also promise is made that except building material, other luggage will be allowed. He opined that as Project Proponent is trying to get NOC from 2001 for the project, he is

appealed to obtain NOC for Valley Crossing. It will be beneficial to local people. As the first stage/section of Ropeway will be from Village Bhutivali to Garbat Plateau, precautionary measures should be adopted as there was land slide incidence at Garbat Plateau. He appealed the Committee to relax Eco-Sensitive Zone norms of Matheran and surrounding area. The Project Proponent informed in the presentation that 20 trees will have to be cut. However the proponent will carry out afforestation on barren land.

- 10) **Shri Girish Pawar, President, Vansavraksha Jamin Sangh (Forest Land Protection Sanch)** asked about the liability of the forest land which will be occupied by the Project. He suggested to inform the methodology of scientific disposal of plastic waste of Matheran and surrounding area. Project Proponent informed that modern technology will be installed for valley crossing. Also the plastic waste will be closed and transported for scientific disposal. If at all any medical emergency occurs, the Rope Way System will be operated at night time also. In 2003, it would have required to cut at least 900 trees. Now due to advance technology, though 20 trees will have to be cut, the wholehearted efforts will be made to replant all the trees at other place.
- 11) **Shri Santosh Pawar, local journalist** expressed the opinion that as per the information, if at all the Tata Group acquires the company with mutual agreement, then whether the promises made here will be binding to Tata Group. Colonel Ravi Ghodke of Tata Group informed that Tata Group has earned the reputation in the World for dedication in socio-economic upliftment projects. Dr. Harshawardhan, Member of the Committee informed that only pollution control and environment management plan issues be discussed in the meeting.
- 12) **Shri Santosh Shelke, President, Matheran Taxi Seva Union** informed that since last generation, the taxi services are provided to tourists and local people. Due to project of Ropeway, more than 300-350 personnel's will be job-less. The taxi services are used by locals in emergency at odd hours also. Hence they are opposing the project and


the written objection is submitted to MPCB. He further opined that Impartial Enquiry should be made against the permission granted by the Forest Department to Project Proponent for construction of Ropeway, as the Taxi Union several times asked permission for road repairs which is always rejected by the Forest Department. He further blamed that malpractice might have been adopted for getting permission from Forest Department for Rope way.


- 13) **Shri Suryakant Karande, resident of Matheran** remarked that construction of Rope Way is New Way towards development of Matheran and surrounding area.
- 14) **Shri Kuldip Baburao Jadhav, resident of Matheran** opined that nobody will become jobless due to Ropeway. There would be job opportunities to local people.
- 15) **Shri Janardhan Shankar Parte, resident of Matheran and Senior RTI Activities** suggested that any office of Hotel should not be allowed near the Rope way station. Also if at all any mishaps happens, the tourists and local people should be covered under the Insurance Scheme. He further suggested that Amusement Park which is planned should be constructed at Matheran only and not at base station of rope-way.
- 16) **Shri Nitin Vishawanath Sawant, resident of Matheran** expressed that as there was no alternate transport mode rather than road, the Matheran and surrounding area remained backward. But the question arises in the mind of local people that why the Rope way should be constructed on a particular site only and as the Project Proponent is a private company, the commitment made in the meeting should be given in an affidavit form. He said that it is not made clear by the Project Proponent that whether part of Historic Garden of Hutatma Bhai Kotwal will be broken for the project and what will be the cost of the project. Project proponent informed that the project cost definitely arises which was mentioned in the 2001. The project will be of Rupees 50 crores.
- 17) **Mrs. Prerna Prasad Sawant, President of Matheran Nagar Parishad** opined that except the starting point of the project at basement, the

project passes through totally green area of Matheran. Hence project proponent should bear the cost of civic amenities. The people Matheran supports the project.

After detailed discussions, Chairman of the Committee Shri Panbude while concluding the meeting appreciated local people for their studious objections. Chairman of the Committee further informed that the written suggestions, objections received by the Committee and MPCB office will be sent along with the proceedings of the meeting with objections, suggestions and video recording will be sent to Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India.

Chairman of Committee concluded the meeting extending thanks to all.

  
(Dr. A.N. Harshawardhan)  
Member and Regional  
Officer, MPCB, Raigad

  
(Kiran Panbude)  
Chairman of the Committee and  
Addl. District Magistrate, Raigad