

APPROVED
Town of Fitzwilliam
Planning Board Meeting
February 17, 2015

Members Present: Terry Silverman, Robin Blais, Suzanne Gray, Mac Landy, Tom Parker and Nancy Carney, Selectmen's Rep.

Others present: Members of the public.

Call to Order: 7:05 PM

7:00 PM Preliminary consultation. August Waters to discuss opening a commercial recreational paint ball business on property located at 69 Turner Road, Map 10, Lot 21-4, Rural District. *Mr. Waters did not attend, nor did he submit any plans.*

7:15 PM Jennifer Hogan presentation on the impact of a proposed pipeline on town-owned land.

Silverman said he had asked Jennifer Hogan to make a presentation about the Gaseau property, Map 12, Lot 28, now owned by the Town, which the proposed pipeline would bisect. The 120 acre property was donated to the Town with this caveat: "The within described land shall be held by the Town of Fitzwilliam as open space. No buildings or other structures may be erected thereon (except for a suitable plaque in memory of Ann K. Gaseau in whose honor this gift is made). The land may be used for hiking, cross-country skiing and other recreational uses EXCEPT that no motorized vehicles such as motorcycles, snow mobiles, motor bikes, or other similar off-road vehicles shall be allowed thereon and no ski tows shall be erected or used thereon...."

Ms. Hogan noted that the Selectmen have already sent a letter to Kinder Morgan denying access to any Town owned land to perform surveys, or for any other purpose. Using the tax map and a map created for the Natural Resources Inventory, Ms. Hogan described the property as underlain by a stratified drift aquifer that serves the town. The Eversource right of way crosses the property just below NH Route 119 E and the Kinder Morgan pipeline as proposed would cross the property via horizontal directional drilling. The property is not in a conservation easement. Silverman thanked Ms. Hogan for the presentation.

7:30 PM Preliminary consultation. Eversource to present preliminary site plan review plans to the Board for the proposed Q166 line corridor, traveling east of Route 12 N adjacent to existing Eversource power line corridors from the Fitzwilliam substation to the Troy substation.

Lisa Kavarnos, Project Manager, introduced members of the Eversource team present at this meeting: Chris Howell - Project Manager, Burns & McDonnell; Joe Drouin - Lead Line Engineer, Power Engineers; David Raphael - Landscape Architect, LandWorks; Laurel Boivin - Community Relations, Eversource; Jim Jiottis - Manager of Transmission Engineering, Eversource; Chris Allwarden - Legal Department - NH, Eversource; and Bill O'Hara - Manager of Transmission Interconnects, Eversource.

Ms. Kavarnos said the purpose of the meeting is to present Options 2 and 3, which have been changed slightly to accommodate the Board's suggestions at the last meeting. The purpose of the project is to address reliability issues, address potential damage to lines, and tonight to give an overview of the project and discuss the Options.

Mr. Jiottis said determining transmission reliability involves reviewing various scenarios. The team simulates "what happens if..." a line is taken out, two lines are taken out, factoring in other possible occurrences that affect reliability. This is done every three years.

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There are three sources of electricity for this area – a line from Manchester, one from Vernon, Vermont (Vermont Yankee) and one from Keene to Monadnock. Scenarios were created taking one or more of these lines out of service to see what happened. Voltage cannot fall below certain acceptable limits. The utility has to meet certain requirements. ISO NE checks all of New England for reliability and if a problem is identified they look for solutions. They identified a problem, asked utility companies for solutions and Eversource was the only company that stepped up with a solution. ISO NE chose those the Q166 project as a solution.

Slides showing possible damages to power lines were shown. There have been 10 incidences in the last 7 years; 5 weather related, 3 trees downed, and 2 lightning strikes. Nineteen trees were downed statewide; the ROWs are kept clear but trees grow and sags in the line make the line lower making the lines more vulnerable to tree damage. Regular inspections of the ROWs are designed to minimize problems.

Silverman noted that a tree buffer helps mitigate noise from lines and from wind, and double circuiting in Option 3 as proposed would not require as much cutting. Mr. Jiottis thought Option 3 was viable, adding that both Options are technically viable.

Mr. Drouin presented an overview of the project, noting that they planned to be in service by December 2015. He said there were no major changes made since the last time they presented the Options. Option 1 is in the western-most corridor and Option 2 would run just east of Option 1, 50 feet farther back along the eastern edge of the existing 379 line corridor. He said Option 3 was similar to the last presentation, adding there are better mitigation of impacts with this Option. This is the double circuited Option.

David Raphael of LandWorks in Middlebury, VT presented several views of the proposed lines and poles. He said Option 2 required minimal clearing that leaves a tree line in front of the line. The weathering steel monopoles are less visible than other poles. He described the visual impacts as minimal.

Mr. Raphael said Route 12 is a mixed use corridor and it is not an officially described or protected roadway, nor are there scenic pullouts. He added that the visuals presented are leaf-off visuals and the views will change as the seasons do. He described the visuals as very accurate based on what is visible now, adding that the various Options will have a minimal impact.

Mr. Raphael said mitigation measures, like co-location, weathering steel poles and a substation landscaping and planting plan, coupled with selective clearing and vegetative management, will help.

Abutter Dana Pinney noted that the visuals do not show several poles that are present in his view shed. Mr. Raphael said his job is to determine the real impact to the scenery from the public perspective, adding that there is nothing here officially designated as scenic, apparently nothing has risen to the level of an official designation. He said the changes won't make that much difference.

Silverman said we haven't done that in town, but we all take exception to his characterization of town, since we all feel it is a scenic place. Mr. Raphael said many towns have moved to protect scenic views. Blais said she felt the view is valuable, but understands his point that there is nothing in the Master plan or Natural Resources Inventory that speaks to that. Mr. Raphael said they look first to see if a town has designated its valuable scenic

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places to protect them.

Mr. Ford, an abutter, asked for a visual presentation of views as one enters town from the north and views taken of the area from above.

Gray noted that one can see the lines, poles and substation from many areas in town. She said that when Eversource came into town for the substation, the board talked about buffers and view sheds, and now abutters have been very verbal about these concerns. She added that as a Board member she has a duty to see that abutters are protected.

Mr. Raphael said he was not asked to evaluate the substation visuals; but did a view shed map for Options 2 and 3, adding that the substation view does not change.

Parker noted that things said by Eversource when they came for the substation have not materialized. He asked how the Board can be confident that Eversource will keep its word now. His concerns include cutting and its effect on scenic natural resources that attract visitors and the impact on the economy of the town. He said Eversource must convince the Board that this time will be different.

Mr. Raphael said his job as a landscaper is to insure the representations he makes are fulfilled as planned.

Tracy Tarr showed a slide comparing the impacts of Options 2 and 3. Option 2 requires that 6.35 acres of land will be cleared; Option 3 requires 2.72 acres be cleared. She said that Option 2 is the preferred Option because it has the lowest permanent wetlands impacts. Option 3 poles are at a higher elevation, appearing to be taller and more visible, because the lines will be double circuited.

Gray asked to review the wetland impacts. Tarr said the impacts are related to the 6 foot wide pole foundation footprint. She added there will be no structures or roads only natural shrub cover. Timber mats will be laid so no equipment will be in the wetlands during construction, the process will be monitored and regular reports will be issued.

Mr. Pinney noted that Option 3 is closer to his property and with the land elevation the towers will be higher and with clearing the noise will increase. He said he has pictures of lots of poles that can be seen from his home now and he'd like them depicted in the slides.

Mr. Ford asked why Option 3 was not preferred by Eversource. Mr. Jiottis said that since it is a double circuited line, two lines would have to be taken out of service to fix either or both if damage occurred, adding that it complicates reliability. Mr. Ford added that he is concerned about the sequential destruction of property, first with Eversource and then with the pipeline.

Mr. Pinney asked about electricity traveling through the ground if a bad event happened. He felt that with a pipeline, it could be a disaster. Mr. Jiottis said they were not thrilled that the pipeline may be so close. Landy asked about tornado and hurricane damage, speculating that if the lines were separated the probability of damage would be less.

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Gray asked how close the nearest abutter is to Option 3 lines – Ms. Tarr replied ‘hundreds of feet.’ Gray noted that if the noise from the substation is still occurring then more cutting will exacerbate the problem.

Mr. Howell said that if there is an increase in noise with cutting, then it will be worse with Option 3. He added that for Mr. Pinney, Option 2 would be preferable to screen noise in general and the trees by the substation would remain.

Tracy Tarr said they would like to know the Board’s preferred Option so the company can come back with a plan. Pinney said he’d like someone to come to his property and take pictures to determine visual impact from that viewpoint.

Landy asked if new trees/shrubbery can replace the trees to be removed, saying he feels additional buffering is the key – buffers do not need to be tall. Mr. Raphael said they have to be sufficiently tall to screen the view and noise. Landy suggested evergreens and Mr. Raphael said they are low maintenance, native and fast growing. Landy described the area east of Route 12 as being filled with stunning red maples and he is concerned about these swamp maples.

Mr. Ford said he can’t see a line or structure from his house, his concern is the audible hum emanating from the transformer. There was discussion about an increased load factor increasing the hum. Pinney asked about the next step, wondering if the company would go to 745 lines. The engineer responded that New England is too closely populated to use a 745 line, and a new substation would be needed. He said they have no plans to go to a larger line.

Silverman asked if construction of this new line was the time to install protectors on the line to reduce noise. The engineer said that could be considered.

Mr. Pinney noted that the noise issue has been going on a very long time and that since Thanksgiving there has been no progress, no pads, and no updates. Mr. Jiottis said they have to work around the ISO outages and March 30 is the next scheduled time they could try to install the pads. He added his group is looking at cladding but hope the pads will change the situation. Mr. Pinney noted that changing the noise level by 2 decibels will not make any difference.

Gray asked the Board if they wanted to take a formal site walk of the Pinney property. Mr. Pinney said the snow was cleared and a walk would be alright with him.

Silverman asked the Board about writing a response to the letter the Board received from the Eversource attorney regarding consideration of the pipeline at the same time the Board is considering the Eversource project. Attorney Allwarden responded that he wrote the letter and the 2 projects are not related. He added that they only know what Kinder Morgan puts out in their public materials about a pipeline. Parker said the media reports that the two lines will go side by side. He said he’d like to hear from management how the pipeline will affect the proposed Q166 line.

Attorney Allwarden noted that there is no business relation with the Kinder Morgan pipeline. He said Eversource owns land under which the pipeline is proposed to go. Eversource wants them to stay far enough

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away to prevent problems. If they cross Eversource land, Eversource will enforce building to code and insulating the line safely. He added that Eversource does not want them in the ROW – they want them as far away as possible.

He said Eversource cannot give Kinder Morgan property owner's land just because Eversource has an easement for their ROW from that owner. KM has to go to the underlying property owner and secure their own easement. Eversource cannot give KM permission to use land.

Ms. Hogan asked if Eversource had granted permission to KM to survey property owned by Eversource, Map 18, Lot 14. Attorney Allwarden said they had not been contacted by KM for that permission. He added that KM had asked Eversource to sign a non-disclosure statement regarding technical data, per a federal government requirement. He said that is not what Eversource is here tonight to discuss.

Blais asked what would happen to the properties if Option 1 is not implemented. Ms. Kavarnos said Eversource will keep the easements. Silverman asked about future plans for the substation. Ms. Kavarnos said there is the ten year plan. Silverman said he'd like to see future plans for the substation and a plan to lock up the land so it isn't used soon.

Eversource left the meeting and Silverman asked the Board if they had a preference for any of the Options presented. Blais, Gray and Silverman preferred Option 3; Landy preferred Option 2, and Parker and Carney declined to state a preference. Staff will notify Eversource regarding Options following a site walk and invite Eversource to participate in the site walk.

Minutes. The Board reviewed minutes of the January 20, 2015 meeting. Landy moved, Blais seconded and the Board approved the minutes as written.

Testimony. Silverman reported he and Susan Silverman and Eric Durmer testified before the House Municipal and County Government Committee in Concord today regarding two NHMA proposed bills that allow local regulation of mining under certain circumstances. He said they got good feedback on the bills.

Depot streets layout. The Board reviewed the proposed re-layout of the streets in the Depot. Carney described the rationale for the layout, which will be voted at town meeting. The Board agreed the layout is appropriate and it looks good. Carney emphasized that nothing will change on the ground, but the layout will allow owners some room.

Warrant article. Silverman also noted a warrant article to purchase the state owned property across the road from the boat landing. There are discussions about an additional street parking, picnic area, porta potty, and trailer parking area.

Silverman asked the Board to review the blasting application and checklist for the next meeting. Carney commented that the Board should do its due diligence on the Eversource proposal but wants the Board to be careful to keep the pipeline and Eversource projects separate.

The Board adjourned at 9:30 PM.