

LAKES REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

103 Main Street, Suite #3
 Meredith, NH 03253
 tel (603) 279-8171
 fax (603) 279-0200
 www.lakesrpc.org

**MINUTES****LRPC COMMISSION MEETING**

New Hampton School, Academic Research Center Building
 New Hampton, NH
 January 24, 2011

PRESIDING: Robert Snelling**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 PM**QUORUM:** Yes**COMMUNITIES PRESENT:** 8**MEMBERS PRESENT:****OTHERS PRESENT:**

Robert Snelling (Holderness)	Alan Yaten (RC&D)
John Cotton (Andover)	Larissa Mulkern (Union Leader)
Stan Bean (Gilmanton)	Bob Varney (Normandeu)
Mitch Manseau (Hebron)	Senator Jeanie Forrester (District 2)
Todd Elgin (Holderness)	Julie and Murray Campbell (Bristol)
Wayne Crowley (Northfield)	Richard Leighton
Douglas Read (Northfield)	Charles Brosseau (Campton District 6)
Patricia Farley (Tamworth)	Suzanne Smith (Grafton District 7)
Karen McNiff (Tamworth)	Alden Huglon (New Hampton)
Joseph Jesseman (Tilton)	Wally Orvis (New Hampton ZBA)
Roger Murray, III (Wolfeboro)	Barbara Lucas (New Hampton Town Office)
Herb Vadney (Meredith)	Craig Pasco (Wentworth)
Anne Cunningham (Freedom)	Bill Swift (Holderness)
	Scott Stephens (Plymouth Chamber of Com.)
EXCUSED:	Max and Hilda Stamp (Bristol)
Margaret LaBerge (Alexandria)	Sue Sampson
	John and Nancy Law (Meredith)
LRPC STAFF:	Deda Newbert
Kimon Koulet	John Cunard (Wentworth)
Eric Senecal	Henry Ahern (Plymouth)
Donna Manfra	Martha Twombly (Hebron Cons. Comm)
	Other
OTHERS PRESENT:	
Kathleen Brockett, Northern Pass Comm. Specialist	
Patrick McDermott, PSNH Community and Economic Development Manager	
Brian Bosse, PSNH Project Manager	
Eric Halter (CLF Ventures)	

1. Welcome and Introduction

Robert Snelling called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone and asked those in attendance to please introduce them. He asked for a motion for those present to declare a quorum for the purpose of conducting business, a motion was made and unanimously approved.
M/S/P Bean/Farley

2. Annual Report Status

R. Snelling asked for the approval of the Minutes of the November 22, 2010 LRPC Commission meeting. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was approved. *M/S/P Farley/Bean*

3. The Northern Pass: - R. Snelling gave a brief explanation of the agenda for this evening's meeting and introduced Kathleen Brockett, Communications Specialist for The Northern Pass.

1. Kathleen Brockett explained the project in general terms and stated that this is the very beginning of a project that will go on for a number of years. She said the presentation will include an overview, benefits, the location of the proposed line, permitting and approval, and the project timeline. She noted the PSNH portfolio shows a significant percentage of partnering with other businesses to generate electricity and investing in efficiency upgrades throughout the state. She explained the project will bring 1200 mw of energy from Quebec to New England and be added to the grid, at no cost to rate payers. PSNH customers should see a reduction in cost. The project will create approximately 1200 jobs over the three year construction phase. It will increase tax revenues at the local and state level. She then introduced Brian Bosse, Project Manager of PSNH.

2. Brian Bosse displayed a map showing the route of the proposed line. He explained there are 3 major components to this 140 mile long project. A DC transmission line is proposed from Canada to Franklin NH, where a terminal will convert DC current into AC energy, then from the Converter Terminal there will be Transmission Lines (40 miles) to Deerfield to distribute the power to the regional electric grid. He explained that it is a participant funded project. The energy sold into the market will support the construction of the project and the ongoing operations. The terminals that are needed are extremely expensive. He explained the proposed route and the right-of-way easements they currently have available. He also stated there may be a slight change in the route and that it is very early in the stage to know what route is going to be best. Right now there are 8 towns and 32 miles that have existing right of ways. He also added that every mile of transmission line will add about 2 1/2 million dollars to the tax base. They still have to go through the permitting process with the Dept. of Energy and they need a presidential permit due to the international crossover. A special use permit is also required because the line is proposed to go through sections of the national forest. Meetings will be held this spring to provide more detailed information. There is a site evaluation committee and this project will go through all of the proper state agencies. Applications will be filed and whatever hearings that are needed for the process will take place. The target date for completion is 2015. Every municipality and individual property owners, as well as, abutters will be notified if they are going to be affected.

3. R. Snelling opened the meeting for questions, and a number were asked, as follows:

Question: When does the alternative route come into play?

Answer: At this point, I don't have an answer we will have to take this question back to the office and get you an answer.

Question: Does property owner also mean abutters?

Answer: Yes, I believe abutters within 15 feet of the property owners line would also be informed.

Question: Are there maps available for the alternative route?

Answer: Yes, on the Northern Pass website. If not please call us and we will provide the information for you.

Question: Regarding the Town of Campton being affected and not being discussed.

Answer: This meeting is focused on the Lakes Region Area. We have spoken with the owner of the Owl's Nest golf course and have answered many questions. It is very early in the stages to state the exact route.

Question: Concerning the right of ways – are you going to put in new towers for this line and not use the wooden poles that are already there.

Answer: Yes, there will be new lines along the route of the old poles.

Question: Are the right of ways going to be 800 feet wide? Is there a map to show this?

Answer: No, that number was misinterpreted. Most of the new lines will be within the existing right of way.

Question: We would like to see all the scheduled meetings on the calendar on your website.

Answer: Given permission from the organizations that invite us to present their meetings, we certainly could arrange to have that information posted.

Question: Would the property taxes collected be on the tower structure themselves and not the land. Do the towns collect property taxes on the existing lines?

Answer: The tower, the lines and the land are taxed. PSNH is one of the largest property taxpayers in the state.

B. Varney, of Normandeau Associates, added that the federal and state agencies are looking to minimize impacts wherever they can. The applicant is looking for a situation where they can stay within the footprint as much as possible. Keep in mind, however, the narrower you keep it the more pressure there is to go upward.

Question: Regarding whether this is the best way to go for renewable energy or should there be discussion on other sites and whether or not they should stay operating.

Answer: Yes all that has been considered.

Question: Have you considered the use of the DC lines through Vermont?

Answer: That right of way is not substantial enough to support this line. It is not wide enough.

Question: Presently, New Hampshire is exporting their excess energy so aren't you just increasing the amount of energy going to be exported? Also, how will it compare to the national price structure?

Answer: Currently, it will be very competitive low cost power and it will have a positive impact. This is a 40 year project. Right now the economic benefit is good but it can be even better in the future.

Question: There are a lot of small hydro and biomass products out there and there are grumblings that you are planning to cut them out of the loop and this will put them out of business. What is the plan? Currently you are required to buy power from them but are you planning to cut the cord?

Answer: Any producer can sell their product in NH. A few years ago the prices were different and now the prices have dropped and that is what is driving the market right now. The flip side of that is, should PSNH subsidize these plants? We have done that before and in the end we all pay for that and so, right now, we have decided we don't want to go down that road again.

Question: Are you billing this project all in the usage fees to your participants and not in transmission fees? Who are your participants? Where are they located? Who is going to pay for this project?

Answer: It is not our participants. It is Hydro Quebec's. We are building the line. Where the power is going we don't really know that yet. One of the options is that Hydro Quebec can sell this power into the market, just like you as a producer can sell your power. There may be some transmission fees billed to help pay for the lines. PSNH may, in the future enter into long term direct participants contracts where those users can be billed but in any event it will only be billed to those getting the use.

Question: I would like to see some flow charts explaining where the money to build this project is coming from. I would like to see just who is going to pay.

Answer: The users are the ones who are going to pay.

Question: Would it be possible for PSNH to renegotiate the closing of the Bow Power Plant and using that for this project instead? Is hydro power reliable?

Answer: It may be possible but that is not the way we are headed right now. We need it all right now and the Bow Power Plant will not be replaced by this.

Question: The eight miles that you need to widen on the existing line would require new easements, if the property owners resist granting the easements can you force eminent domain?

Answer: After the State of NH Site Evaluation Committee moves on the project and they determine that the project would be in the public good, at that time, if eminent domain would have to occur, it would be done through the public utilities commission. We don't want to have to go that route.

Question: You mentioned \$15-20 million in new annual taxes to NH. Explain the specifics of the tax.

Answer: We pay property taxes on the land itself. The underlying property owner still pays taxes on the land because it still has a value. The easement has a value. The \$15-20 million is incremental. That would be an amount comprised of the new easements, the lien, and the converter stations.

Question: Curious about the 1200 jobs. When do they start and are they permanent?

Answer: They are construction jobs. It is an average over the three years of construction. No permanent jobs longterm other than the maintenance for the transmission lines.

4. R. Snelling closed the question session, thanked the presenters and advised attendees to follow up on future meetings to get all of their questions answered. He then introduced Eric Halter Program Manager, Conservation Law Foundation, Ventures, Inc.

4 The ETAP Program: Helping NH Communities Save Energy and Money – E. Halter gave a presentation explaining the program. It is a \$2 million program and is the 3rd piece of the State puzzle.

The U.S. Department of Energy has put money into the program to give technical assistance and engineering to help determine, evaluate and increase the level of energy efficiency in all the towns and counties in New Hampshire. We don't charge the towns for our help. We design an energy efficiency program for you. Peregrine Energy out of Boston helps us with this venture and we are also working with LRPC. We provide an energy inventory of municipal buildings within the town such as Libraries, City Hall, DPW garages. First you do an inventory and then we help you supplement that and assess what you need. We help you develop a roadmap of how to get started and where to go for grants to help get the projects done. We don't provide the funds for the projects. We began in June 2010 and have 50 out of 240 municipalities receiving our help. The Lakes Region Communities we are working with are Freedom, Sanbornton and Sandwich, Moultonborough, Center Harbor, Laconia and Bristol. We work in conjunction with LRPC.

5. K. Koulet advised everyone that both presentations from this meeting will be on the LRPC Website for further review. He thanked New Hampton School for the use of the building for the meeting and reminded everyone that the Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 27, 2011.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm