

Chairman Brown thanked the Legislators for their time, and she concluded the discussion at 8:33 p.m.

EverSource – Moving Transmission Line from Sudbury to Hudson – Discussion

Present: Eversource Community Relations Specialist Joanne O’Leary, EverSource Transmission Line Project Manager Beverly Schultz, EverSource Project Outreach Specialist Mark Kimball, EverSource Representative Denise Bartone

At 8:33 p.m., Chairman Brown recused herself from the discussion regarding an EverSource transmission line project from Sudbury to Hudson, due to living in close proximity to the project. Vice-Chairman Iuliano opened the discussion and welcomed the EverSource Project Team to the Meeting. The Board was previously in receipt of copies of the PowerPoint slides for tonight’s presentation entitled, “Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Reliability Project,” and copies of two revised slides were distributed tonight.

EverSource Transmission Line Project Manager Beverly Schultz stated the project team has met with Sudbury’s Director of Planning and Community Development Jody Kablack about the proposed project, as well as the Town Manager. Ms. Schultz explained the ISO-New England, the independent system operator for New England, concluded there are inadequate transmission resources to serve the electricity needs in the Greater Boston and Southern NH area. Thus, the ISO has directed utilities to implement a series of transmission projects, and one of these is a proposed new 115KV transmission line between the existing substation in Sudbury and the Hudson Power and Light Plant. Ms. Schultz stated the line would provide power to Hudson Light & Power in two directions, and it would support and improve capacity and reliability. She explained evaluations were performed to determine the preferred and potential alternative routes between Sudbury and Hudson, and are proceeding with a transmission line project within the Mass Central rail corridor. It was further noted an underground alternative along this route has been requested by Sudbury officials, and it has been noted as a “Noticed Variation Design.” Ms. Schultz stated rail trail proponents have especially requested the transmission line be underground.

Ms. Schultz summarized the recommended Preferred Route as utilizing an existing abandoned MBTA railroad bed which is adjacent to the Sudbury substation and runs for approximately 7.6 miles (4.3 miles in Sudbury and 4.6 miles 3.3 miles in Hudson/Stow/Marlborough), and an additional 1.3 miles in Hudson being underground within Hudson street limits. She stated the total length of the new line is estimated to be 8.9 miles (4.3 miles in Sudbury and 4.6 miles in Hudson and small portions in Marlborough and Stow). Ms. Schultz explained as part of construction, a 12-foot wide access road (Mass. DOT standard gravel road) would be created, which could be used after construction is completed as a bike path. She stated it has been discussed and determined that it will not be necessary to rebuild bridges along the proposed path, as Eversource will be able to reach the transmission line from either side of a bridge. Ms. Schultz stated there will be outreach to keep many interested groups informed of the project’s progress and plans, including the Sudbury Valley Trustees, the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (Sudbury), Sudbury Greenways, Assabet River Rail Trail (Hudson) and the Track Road Committee in Stow, and she displayed a few photo simulations slides.

EverSource representative Denise Bartone summarized the environmental permitting which will be needed for the project, including working with the local Conservation Commissions, and the relevant State and Federal reviews and permitting, including looking at wetlands impacts and stormwater management construction.

Ms. Schultz stated EverSource will sponsor an Open House for all project Towns to gather community input (tentatively) on March 3, 2016 at the Hudson Town Hall [Editor’s Note: the Open Housing has been scheduled for March 16, 2016 at Sudbury Town Hall], and abutters within 300 feet of the proposed route will be mailed notices. She also summarized the Energy Facilities Siting Board process, which will include public

comments, and it is anticipated to take about a year. Ms. Schultz stated that, if all goes smoothly, construction could begin in 2018 and the transmission line would be in service in 2019. She reviewed a list of project stakeholders and what communications would be used with the public and with municipalities.

Vice-Chairman Iuliano asked if the Siting Board would determine whether the preferred or alternative route is constructed, and what role the Town could have in these discussion. Ms. Schultz stated the Siting Board is very fair in its evaluation and that it would review many factors (both pros and cons) related to both routes, in deciding with which one to proceed.

Selectman Woodard asked what the difference in cost would be for an overhead versus an underground route. Ms. Schultz stated the overhead route is estimated to cost approximately \$46 million, and the underground route has been estimated to cost approximately \$100 million. Selectman Woodard asked for confirmation that, if an overhead route is chosen, it would require approximately 82 feet of clearing for approximately seven miles. Ms. Schultz stated this is her understanding.

Selectman Haarde stated 82 feet of clearing could potentially come very close to abutters' properties in some locations. Ms. Schultz explained the 82 feet is the full width of the railroad right-of-way, which includes both sides. Selectman Haarde asked if it should be considered to have an Open House in Sudbury, since 4.3 miles of the estimated 8.9 mile-route travels through Sudbury.

Selectman Simon asked how Sudbury officials and residents can make their wishes known. Ms. Schultz stated anyone could contact the Siting Board directly and attend the Siting Board's Public Hearing (likely to be scheduled in May 2016), and it can choose whether it wants to be involved as an interested party and/or as an intervener. Selectman Simon emphasized it is Sudbury's preference for this to be an underground project, noting there would be significant benefits by doing it underground. He asked if Hudson has made its preference known. Ms. Schultz stated Hudson also wishes it to be an underground project. Selectman Simon asked what the surface is intended to be for the access road. Ms. Bartone stated it is proposed as a Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DOT) specified gravel surface. Selectman Simon asked if it would be acceptable if the Town wanted to put a hard surface over it in the future. Ms. Bartone stated a sub-base would be used which would accept asphalt at a later time, if that is what the Town wanted.

Town Manager Rodrigues asked if the project will have an impact on reliability in Sudbury. Ms. Schultz stated it may improve conditions, which are currently reliable.

Vice-Chairman Iuliano stated Sudbury will look forward to continuing these discussions because there are significant concerns regarding visibility, access, environmental issues and proposed route-clearing. Ms. Schultz stated Director of Planning and Community Development Jody Kablack has been very helpful in making the Project Team aware of Sudbury's concerns.

Selectman Haarde reiterated his request for EverSource to consider scheduling an Open House in Sudbury.

Selectman Simon asked if transmission reliability would be better underground versus as an overhead line. Ms. Schultz stated she is unaware that one is considered better than the other. She also stated this type of information would be available in the petition which would be available online once their application to the siting board is submitted. Selectman Simon suggested to Town Manager Rodrigues that tonight's PowerPoint slides should be posted on the Town website.