

May 5th, 2021

In attendance at Zoom meeting: Frank Lombardi, Don Laplante, Valerie Yelton, Marsha Lombardi, Edie Worcester, Elise Lawson, Rob Christie, Eversource: Catalina Salantano?, Lauren Cote, Don Duvall?, Jeremy Fennell, Sam Harris, Tom Tetreau

Approved April 7th minutes with adjustments from Marcia Hammon.

Elise Lawson speaks about assisting commission with wetlands projects and how to use funds for those. Slideshow and general discussion about updating NRI (natural resource inventory) and wetlands studies.

Eversource discusses mitigation measures for their power line upgrade project. Frank talks about Whitefield Nature Trail which starts behind town hall as one project which could utilize mitigation funds. There are wetlands near the sewer plant which could use help. Johns River could be in need of funds. Are these the kind of projects that funding could be used for? Eversource says it's not really up to them, DES has to approve the project, but the mitigation proposal needs to be included in the wetlands application.

Two more people are requesting to enter the meeting: Anna Kendrick/McKayla? And David Smith. Both say they are Whitefield residents.

Valerie wants to see a map of where Eversource's project is located in town.

Now someone is taking over the screen and putting their own drawings up on the screen. Now there is a video being played on the screen by outside source, terrorists shooting people and throwing them into water. Historical footage of war scenes?

Frank gets out of the meeting to restart Zoom.

Back into the meeting. Frank thinks David and McKayla are the culprits of the hack.

Frank pulls up the Eversource map again, and Valerie is concerned about the highest tower height increases. She asks where the tall towers are going to be located. Lauren from Eversource says they tried to keep structure heights minimized, less than 15' increases. Structures 131 and 132 will be increased by 35' because they removed a structure in between and that causes height increases in the other two adjacent poles. Total heights of those two poles will be 79' and 84'.

Frank asks if adding the structure back in would bring down those heights, and brings up the viewshed of Weeks State Park. Would there be a way to add a pole back in, not in the wetlands, but in the space between those two poles? Valerie wants to know what other impacts exist, besides views, with tall towers? Don also suggests there may be locations outside the wetlands where a pole could be added in order to reduce heights of the other poles. Don from Eversource says it's something they can look into. When they looked at the design in this area they wanted to decrease wetlands impact. Also, the closer they get into a wetland, the pole install cost increases greatly. Commission seems in agreement that putting the pole back in, in order to keep pole heights consistent with the rest of the project, would be favorable. Eversource says they will look at that option.

Valerie asks if this project is related to Northern Pass in any way, and Eversource says no, that this is just an overdue upgrade on the old lines.

Edie asks how many poles will be above tree line. Eversource says no, as tree heights vary along the route. If there are specific locations they can look into those areas. Edie is wondering about poles 1-9, and Frank asks if they have to do a visual assessment with their application. Eversource says they don't usually do that for a project of this scope, but is looking into providing more information on that. Valerie agrees it would be helpful to know what it will look like.

Getting back to the ARM fund discussion and monies that would be going toward projects in Whitefield, Frank is hoping to work with Elise in identifying projects to work on and work with Lori Summers from the State for guidance on these projects, making sure they fit the criteria.

Looking at next meeting date of June 9th, 4:00 p.m.

Jeremy from Eversource just wants to say before they go, he doesn't know how far the \$3,000 they can give directly to the town would get the Commission on their projects, but next year there will be more funds likely available for the temporary matting, and these town project ideas may be better suited for those funds. Right now they really want to move things along by submitting their dredge and fill permit by next week. Frank says, how are they going to be changing pole heights by next week? Jeremy says they can update their application if need be after talking with engineers. Frank will check with Lori to make sure they have a project that works so Eversource can add the proposal to their application. He will get back to Eversource on that. Valerie motions Frank can be the representative to work with Jeremy and Tom on this, and Marsha seconds.

Don signs off. Eversource members signs off.

Valerie is concerned they may be overlooking something or not asking all the right questions. Elise says it seems correct, viewshed, wetlands impacts (temporary and long term). She says she doesn't know if burial is better than above ground lines for wetlands, but that's something to think about. Rob Christie from Lancaster Conservation Commission says he thinks there is a huge impact on wetlands and cost when burying a line. Frank is pretty sure the rights of way allows only above ground, which is why N. Pass may have not been allowed to even bury along their existing rights of way.

Valerie doesn't want to see us open a pathway for a future project like N. Pass to come through. Frank says, it is interesting that the location of the tallest towers would be the only ones in the viewshed. Rob says the Weeks-related people in Lancaster are very concerned. He thinks you can kind of see the power line already, and that N. Pass was a whole different magnitude, "apples and oranges". He says we need the lights to come on, and this isn't a new line shuttling power somewhere else, it's an upgrade to existing lines. Fewer poles is better for wetlands.

Frank is reiterating that it looks as though they could locate the poles out of the wetlands and keep heights down, and is it intentional that they put taller poles in so that tall poles are already in place in the future? Valerie says they are choosing between wetlands vs. views. Rob says they have to look at cost and be practical. Frank says it's just a red flag because wetlands are already greatly impacted, so it seems strange they want to take the one tower out that will impact viewshed from Weeks. Elise says you have every right to ask those questions, moving poles, what views would look like, etc. Rob says Google Earth may be a good way to look at the topography to get an idea of ground heights in different locations and what poles might look like.

Marcia Hammon logged in at this point – had Zoom issues. Commission is discussing whether people on the committee would want to walk up to Weeks State Park and get a sense of visual, current versus future with tall towers. Rob Christie says Becky More has visual photos, etc.

Motion by Valerie to adjourn the meeting, Edie seconds the motion. Not sure what time meeting adjourned?

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Frank", is written in a cursive style.