

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

PUBLIC COMMENTS - CANNON FALLS - 1:30 - MAY 6, 2010

In the Matter of the Application by Xcel Energy for a
Route Permit for the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345 kV
Transmission Line Project

PUC Docket Number: E002/TL-09-1448

May 6, 2010

Grandpa's Event Center
31846 65th Avenue
Cannon Falls, Minnesota

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

I N D E X - CANNON FALLS - 1:30 - MAY 6, 2010

SPEAKER	PAGE
Richard Busiahn	4
Mike Collins	5
Darrell Ista	9
Lori Endres	11
Mr. Lopez	15

1 MR. LANGAN: Okay. With that, what we'll
2 do now is turn it over to you and ask that you come
3 up and provide -- ask any questions that you had.
4 Again, it can be on any aspect of how we review the
5 project, it can be on any aspect of the project
6 itself, and it can be anywhere along the project, it
7 can be in this area or a completely different area
8 of the project, and we'll answer your questions as
9 best we can. And then you can also provide your
10 comments here today on the record.

11 What I'll ask that you do is come up and
12 speak into the microphone here. That allows the
13 court reporter to -- it's easier than shouting from
14 the back of the room, and we can accurately get your
15 comments and questions down.

16 When you come up, we'll ask you to state
17 and spell your name so that we have that for the
18 court reporter. We'll ask that one person speaks at
19 a time to make life easier on the court reporter.
20 All right. And if there's anybody that's unable to
21 come and speak at the mic, just let us know that, we
22 can bring the cordless microphone back. But we will
23 ask you, if you can, to come up and offer your
24 questions here.

25 Ray, did anyone sign up?

1 MR. KIRSCH: (Shakes head.)

2 MR. LANGAN: We didn't have anyone sign
3 up on the speaker registration card. So what we'll
4 try and do is just do this by a show of hands. So
5 if you would like to ask a question or provide a
6 comment, just raise your hand.

7 Sir, please.

8 MR. BUSIAHN: My name is Richard Busiahn,
9 B-U-S-I-A-H-N. I'm here representing St. Paul
10 Church and School across Highway 52. Your
11 planning -- when you submitted your plan to whoever
12 you submit to, you showed our church and school as a
13 residence. I contacted your people and you've
14 changed that, but anything you've submitted would
15 have shown our church and school as a residence and
16 would have been considered as a residence for your
17 planning up until now.

18 We have a church and we have an
19 elementary school of over 50 students. It's our
20 plan to grow that and we have construction -- well,
21 we have plans, we don't have an immediate schedule.
22 We don't have money today, but we do have a plan. I
23 am concerned that you didn't consider that properly
24 in your planning up until now.

25 I noticed that an administrative law

1 judge has requested -- or suggested that you move
2 your line for some residences and a Buddhist temple
3 west of Hampton. If in fact that is case, I would
4 think that an administrative law judge would also
5 request that you would for a school.

6 That's my comment.

7 MR. LANGAN: Thank you very much.

8 Other questions or comments?

9 Yes, sir, please.

10 MR. COLLINS: My name's is Mike Collins,
11 C-O-L-L-I-N-S. I just represent myself. I live
12 down in Oronoco Township.

13 I noticed that your maps are a little bit
14 outdated and I know there's been quite a bit of work
15 done up to this point, so like this gentleman said,
16 anything submitted up to this date might be a little
17 outdated. I have some neighbors down around where I
18 live that I don't see here at this meeting, and they
19 may have attended other meetings, that are actually
20 in the easement outline within the 1,000 feet, as am
21 I.

22 And I was just wondering if the people
23 that you report to are going to get updated
24 information. I can think of two houses that have
25 gone up that lie within that -- those perimeters

1 that aren't shown on your maps.

2 The other question I have is, you are
3 building this high line and you're using a pretty
4 lengthy stretch of the Highway 52 easement from
5 Hampton down to just north of Zumbrota. My question
6 is, there are -- I guess my comment and question is
7 there's no two structures that have been completed
8 in southeastern Minnesota that have more greatly
9 affected the environment than Highway 52 and I-90
10 with the landscaping being altered such that it is
11 now. And the farm country that is cut up, why would
12 you not consider going all the way south on 52 down
13 to I-90 and directly into La Crosse with that path
14 already cut?

15 Thank you.

16 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. I want to
17 address your first comment slash question, if I
18 could, and this gets to your comment as well.

19 You know, sometimes when we're talking
20 about the scoping process it really is the impacts
21 on the route alternatives that we're looking for.
22 But this is a time if you're looking at a map and a
23 home is not shown on that map, if a business or
24 something is -- if anything is miscategorized on
25 that map, yes, this is a good time to let us know

1 that. And so I appreciate both of your comments,
2 it's a great time because it's before we have
3 evaluated all of the impacts. And if we get that
4 accurate information, then we can actually describe
5 the impacts or mitigation or avoidance measures
6 there are.

7 So if anyone else has been looking at a
8 map and there's incorrect information in one way or
9 another on there, this is a great time rather than,
10 you know, down the road in this review process to
11 discover that. It's one of the valuable -- very
12 valuable pieces of us asking for public input early
13 in the process so that we get our information
14 correct. So I appreciate both those comments.

15 Tom, is there anything you wanted to
16 address in his comments or questions?

17 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, I can address the
18 second part of your question about the 52/I-90
19 suggestion. Very early on in our development of our
20 project we did look at 52, and like you said, we are
21 following 52 for our preferred route in the north
22 part of our project.

23 As we looked at 52 going through the city
24 of Rochester, what we found through the city of
25 Rochester is that recent MnDOT projects have used up

1 just about every foot of their right-of-way. You
2 can see the retaining walls and the noise walls that
3 pretty much fill that area into Rochester. So
4 there's very little available space on 52 through
5 the city of Rochester.

6 So instead of going through Rochester, we
7 studied routes that go around Rochester on the north
8 side and then head down to I-90. And we did fully
9 study those routes along I-90, that route to
10 La Crosse.

11 And once you gets really close to
12 La Crosse, there're some engineering challenges that
13 prevented us from following I-90 all the way into
14 La Crescent. So instead of that, we did have a
15 segment of route that did go south of I-90 through
16 the area that I talked about before.

17 And that route that you described, except
18 for the part through Rochester, was studied by us
19 and it is presented in the permit application in the
20 appendix. And like I said before, the analysis that
21 we did showed that the route through La Crescent or
22 to Winona, they didn't stack up very well against
23 the one to Alma.

24 MR. LANGAN: Other questions or comments?

25 Yes, sir.

1 MR. ISTA: My name is Darrell Ista,
2 D-A-R-R-E-L-L, I-S-T-A. I live along 52, I'm just
3 south of Hampton.

4 And I see on this one map that we were
5 mailed a while ago that you're kind of zigzagging
6 across the highway to miss houses and stuff like
7 that. Now, do your poles set in the right-of-way,
8 the present right-of-way that the highway has or
9 outside of it or what?

10 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, the lines that you
11 see on the maps are preliminary alignments that we
12 use to study these routes. And the reason for going
13 across the street is to avoid pinch points where
14 maybe there's a house real close to the highway.

15 MR. ISTA: That's in my case.

16 MR. HILLSTROM: Right. So where we see
17 that, we try to go to the other side of the road.
18 What we like to do when we build lines is to place
19 those poles very close to the boundary of where the
20 private property ends and where the road
21 right-of-way begins. And that keeps it out of -- in
22 the case of agricultural land, it keeps it out of
23 the middle of the field and it keeps it as far away
24 from houses as we can get without obstructing the
25 use of the road right-of-way.

1 But that final alignment, where that line
2 actually would end up, would be determined after the
3 route would be approved by the state, assuming that
4 they approve it, down Highway 52. Then our
5 engineers would have to take a detailed look at
6 where the poles would actually would be.

7 We also have to meet with MnDOT, and if
8 our line overlaps with the highway right-of-way,
9 we'd have to get a permit from MnDOT. So there's
10 still a lot to be determined before we know exactly
11 where the poles would go.

12 MR. ISTA: Okay. Thank you.

13 MR. LANGAN: Thank you for your question.

14 Other comments or questions?

15 UNIDENTIFIED: I just have a question
16 about the size of the base of the towers.

17 MR. LANGAN: The base of the towers?

18 UNIDENTIFIED: The base of them.

19 MR. LANGAN: The 345 line?

20 UNIDENTIFIED: (Nods head.)

21 MR. HILLSTROM: Okay. The 345 line and
22 the 161 line, they both use a similar construction
23 methodology, and that consists of a concrete
24 foundation. And the way that's installed is a big
25 auger drill rig drills a big hole into the ground

1 and rebar is put into that hole and then it's filled
2 with concrete in a form. And the diameter of that
3 foundation is in the neighborhood of eight feet
4 diameter. And then the pole itself, the steel pole,
5 is bolted on the top of that concrete foundation,
6 and the diameter of the steel pole is, I'm guessing,
7 maybe four feet.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: Okay.

9 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Other questions or
10 comments?

11 Yes, please.

12 MS. ENDRES: Lori, L-O-R-I, Endres,
13 E-N-D-R-E-S.

14 What's the cost of the project per mile?
15 And when you make a 90-degree bend versus a
16 180-degree bend, the cost of changing it from one
17 side of the highway to the other side of the
18 highway, for instance? And to get back to the
19 foundation, the concrete foundation of the poles,
20 how deep do they go?

21 So average cost per mile, and then
22 average cost per mile going across country on
23 section lines versus right-of-way.

24 MR. HILLSTROM: Those are really good
25 questions for our project manager, who is an

1 engineer, he's more qualified to answer those than I
2 am. I'm going to turn it over to Grant Stevenson.

3 MR. STEVENSON: If you give me a second,
4 I'm going to look in our application and get you a
5 good number. I can go into some more detail. The
6 cost per mile depends on the type of construction.
7 The single-circuit 345 -- Lori, you're talking about
8 the 345 because you live up on this end?

9 MS. ENDRES: (Nods head.)

10 MR. STEVENSON: Is in neighborhood of s
11 million and a half dollars per mile. When we go to
12 multiple circuits, it can get in the neighborhood of
13 \$2 million per mile. So there are some places in
14 the project where we're proposing just to install
15 one 345 circuit initially, there are other places
16 where we're proposing to double-circuit with other
17 existing lines. So that's a rough range.

18 And there was another question other than
19 the cost?

20 UNIDENTIFIED: How deep was the base?

21 MR. STEVENSON: Oh, how deep the
22 foundations are. It depends on the soil, but it's
23 not uncommon for them to be 30 to 50 feet deep.

24 MS. ENDRES: How about when you make a
25 turn, the corner post?

1 MR. STEVENSON: Oh, you asked about
2 crossing the road. At this voltage, crossing the
3 road can be quite expensive. It could add \$200,000,
4 a quarter million dollars when you cross the road
5 and come back.

6 And that also depends on some
7 circumstances, and I have some detailed examples
8 where I asked our engineers precisely that. And to
9 you and I, they probably look to be very similar.
10 Both of these examples were over in Wisconsin. One
11 of them, his answer -- this is the design
12 engineer -- was \$249,000 and another one was over
13 \$300,000, and it had to do with the styles of the
14 poles. So there's going to be a range there as
15 well.

16 Did I get to your answer?

17 MS. ENDRES: Does a 90-degree bend cost
18 more than a 180?

19 MR. STEVENSON: The 90-degree poles
20 definitely cost more. Tom gave an example of pole
21 diameters, those are the straight ones with no angle
22 on them. The 90-degree angles can be much larger,
23 they might be ten feet in diameter in some cases.

24 So the poles are quite bit a more money
25 when you -- the larger the angle you make. And the

1 reason is we're proposing to use no guy wires, since
2 most people tell us they don't like guy wires. They
3 are an obstacle, either they go into a farm field or
4 they go across a highway. So we're making the poles
5 self-supporting. So when you get to a 90-degree
6 corner, it has to be much stouter to stand with that
7 unbalanced load and no guy wires.

8 MS. ENDRES: Would the 90-degree bend
9 cost more than a 45 degree?

10 MR. STEVENSON: Yes.

11 MS. ENDRES: Do you know how much?

12 MR. STEVENSON: I don't have precise
13 numbers. If you want to sit with me afterwards, I
14 can try to -- I can see if I have some information
15 that will help inform you a little bit more about
16 that.

17 MS. ENDRES: And the right-of-way versus
18 section lines question.

19 MR. STEVENSON: What's the right-of-way
20 versus section lines --

21 MS. ENDRES: How much does it cost using
22 the right-of-way going down 52 versus not using the
23 right-of-way?

24 MR. STEVENSON: It depends on -- the
25 question is what's the right-of-way cost difference

1 going along Highway 52 where we share right-of-way
2 versus going down a section line.

3 It depends on how close we are to the
4 road right-of-way. If the poles can be set five
5 feet off the road right-of-way on the private side,
6 it's an 80-foot easement strip we need to purchase
7 compared to a cross-country it's 150. So you can
8 kind of use that 80- to 150-foot ratio as a guide.

9 MS. ENDRES: Thank you.

10 MR. STEVENSON: You're welcome.

11 MR. LOPEZ: Question, before he leaves,
12 I've got questions for him.

13 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Do you want to ask
14 them up in the front right now?

15 MR. LOPEZ: Not really. Matt, the last
16 name's Lopez, 5908 303rd Street Way.

17 I've looked at your map, how it goes.
18 I've talked to him a little bit, I've talked to a
19 little bit of everybody. The question I have is, I
20 see you're diverting on Highway 19, Highway 52,
21 you're taking a 30-degree angle, a sharp 30-degree
22 angle, because you've got the entrance ramp, the
23 exit ramp, so I'm guessing you can't be inside of
24 them, is that correct, the entrance ramp on 52 to go
25 south?

1 MR. STEVENSON: The Department of
2 Transportation's preference is that we go around
3 interchanges and not in them.

4 MR. LOPEZ: Okay.

5 MR. STEVENSON: They have a hardship
6 process where we can apply, if necessary, to put a
7 pole in the infield --

8 MR. LOPEZ: Right, of an entrance ramp.

9 MR. STEVENSON: Yeah. And in fact, I
10 talked to -- excuse me a second, I talked to a
11 landowner in the Zumbrota area yesterday and if the
12 route continued in Zumbrota, that's the place --
13 there's houses really close, we might have to have
14 poles in the infield. But it's -- it requires --
15 it's not automatic from the DOT, we would have to
16 apply and they to decide if they think there's a
17 valid enough reason.

18 MR. LOPEZ: Okay. Where I live on 52,
19 I'm the closest house to 52 --

20 MR. STEVENSON: At the interchange?

21 MR. LOPEZ: The 19 interchange. I'm not
22 the closest to 19 but I'm the closest to 52. Where
23 you turn your 30-degree angle would be right in my
24 property.

25 MR. STEVENSON: Okay. Now I know where

1 you live.

2 MR. LOPEZ: And I know the 52
3 right-of-way and the county right-of-way, you've got
4 about five feet of property that I own, that's my
5 property. I'm within 150 foot -- my house is, my
6 garage, within 150 foot where that would run. The
7 only way you'd be able to avoid it would be you
8 would have to have a pole turning right there. If
9 it's back further, then you're getting closer to my
10 house to avoid Highway 19.

11 The problem I have is, I'm right in the
12 middle -- I told them, I'm right of middle of an
13 addition, building on an addition to the house. I
14 don't want to complete it if I'm going to have a
15 buzzing and everything. I mean, this is a concern
16 to me and everybody in the neighborhood.

17 Number one is the buzzing, you've got
18 noise, you've got health and safety, you've got
19 recreation and property values, aesthetics,
20 right-of-way requirements, is all right on me. I
21 mean, I'm the closest house there, in sight.

22 I just want an answer, is my house going
23 to stay, are they going to take my house, what's
24 going on? I'm not going to wait a year to get an
25 answer.

1 MR. STEVENSON: I can answer some of
2 those -- a number of those that you mentioned.
3 Aesthetics and noise are things that the state and
4 Matt will study in the environmental impact
5 statement, he can address that better.

6 The first item, if the poles were in the
7 interchange it creates some distance to your house,
8 right?

9 MR. LOPEZ: Correct.

10 MR. STEVENSON: To me, and if I was you,
11 in your written comments, let's attach your own map
12 or have Mark help you in the back, and draw an
13 alignment that goes through that interchange. I
14 mean, one of the best ways to help demonstrate this
15 hardship -- or qualify this for the DOT is, rather
16 than just approaching the DOT individually, have it
17 happen as part of this public process.

18 Because the DOT needs to participate in
19 this process as well. And you could testify in
20 front of the judge and maybe convince he or she to
21 note that in her recommendation to the PUC. And
22 then the PUC can talk about -- get down to some of
23 those specifics, if they choose to as well.

24 As far as taking the house, in Minnesota
25 with a 345 line, if we need to get an easement from

1 you, you can elect at your option to require us to
2 buy the property. It's called Buy the Farm, that's
3 at your option. But that's for this voltage, 345.

4 MR. LOPEZ: Right.

5 MR. STEVENSON: I think the rest is more
6 environmental. I'll give the microphone back to
7 Matt. And after we're done here with the formal
8 part, let's look at a map together, I'd like to see
9 more detail.

10 MR. LOPEZ: Okay.

11 MR. LANGAN: And we did get a chance to
12 talk before the meeting about some of those
13 concerns, and so I'm glad that you got those down.
14 And from the slide up here, those are exactly what
15 you should be including in your comments about what
16 those impacts -- what those issues are of concern to
17 you and what you want the Public Utilities
18 Commission to know about, okay.

19 MR. LOPEZ: Okay.

20 MR. LANGAN: Other questions or comments?

21 Well, we may have time to hold a wedding
22 yet. Actually, if there are no other questions or
23 comments, we'll be around here if you want to -- if
24 you want to approach us individually and ask some
25 questions, want to spend more time at the maps or

1 write down comments that you have and drop them off
2 or get a map printed off, we're going to be around.
3 So feel free to do that.

4 But, with that said, thanks everyone for
5 being here today. Again, I encourage you to sign up
6 for that project mailing list if you want to follow
7 along with the process. And, again, thanks for
8 being here.

9 (Public comment concluded.)

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25