Potato Lake Advisory Task Force
First Meeting – May 4, 2010

Meeting Notes

Welcome and introductions

The facilitator for the task force, Charlie Petersen, State of Minnesota, Management Analysis & Development, welcomed task force members and all present. He asked task force members to, in "around the table" fashion, introduce themselves and to relate one expectation that they had for the work of the advisory task force. Expectations included:

- Move route off of Highway 18
- Unknown
- Select an alternative route that has less impact on environment and property owners
- All are comfortable with the outcome
- Northern route is accepted as reasonable and impacts as few people as possible
- Solidify the primary route
- Find satisfaction for citizens
- Effective analysis of the routes and identify impacts that may change route
- Least impact on people and environment

Why we are here

Charlie reviewed with the task force, the charge of the task force and a draft plan for accomplishing the charge over the course of two task force meetings. Charlie described his role as a facilitator and documenter of the task force's work. He described the report which will be the product of the task force's work and how it will be developed. Charlie also provided ground rules for meeting logistics. Questions by task force members were discussed and addressed.

Task force members discussed meeting dates and times for future meetings. Meetings will be held in Park Rapids at the C'mon Inn Hotel (same location as meeting #1). The next meeting date is: May 18, 2010, 1:00 – 4:30 PM

State route permitting process

Scott Ek, Office of Energy Security, discussed the state permitting process and the role of the advisory task force. He discussed the criteria used by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in making a route permitting decision and issues typically covered in an environmental assessment. Questions by task force members were discussed and addressed.

Project overview

Michelle Lommel, Great River Energy, provided an overview of the proposed transmission line project and process used by Great River Energy to develop the proposed routes and sub-station location. Prior to the meeting, taskforce members were provided copies of the application. The application can also be found at: http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/resource.html?Id=26212

Questions by task force members were discussed and addressed.

Issues and Impacts Identified

Charlie led the task force through a small group discussion exercise to identify and categorize impacts and issues that should be considered in the environmental assessment for evaluation of proposed routes. The task force members responded to the question: *What land use planning and other impacts and issues need to be considered in the evaluation of proposed transmission line routes and/or substation locations?* The task force identified seven impact and issue areas to be evaluated in the environmental assessment.

Charlie then led members through an exercise to prioritize impacts and issues identified by the task force. Task force members were asked to vote for their three most important "impact and issue" categories. These issue areas and specific comments are included in the notes and table below along with the results of the prioritization vote.

The issues and impact areas identified include:

Personal property values (top priority – eight votes)

- Property – which route least affects de-valuing property
- Adjacent property owner impact
- Right-of-way impacts: private property, land values, land clearing
- Financial hardships: marketability and value in property, homes, and businesses; fear factor by home buyers
- Which side of road to put line on Highway 18 – houses too close to road; may need to zigzag across road
- Lines too close to roads; tainting ground water; difficult property areas
- Resorts and restaurants

Waters and wetlands (top priority – seven votes)

- Wetland and right-of-way impacts with the proposed alternative route; what is the impact on wetlands?
- Lakes and rivers

Aesthetics (top priority – six votes)

- Resorts and restaurants

- Mississippi headwaters
- Aesthetics
- Cultural values: pristine natural resources, lovely County Highway 18 to another Highway 34, Great River Energy not considerate to cultural values, resort community, dependent on tourism industry
- Multiple use area: agriculture, recreation, commercial development, housing development
- Potential impact clear cutting concern, within right-of-way
- Environmental – least to water ways (pollution) and sight (visual)

Human health impact (second level priority – four votes)

- Human health impact: electro-magnetic fields and treatment of poles with chemicals; alternative route should affect least amount
- Fear factor – health

Flora and fauna (second level priority – three votes)

- Eagles, trumpeter swans
- Trumpeter swans, etc. environmental impact
- Threatened species
- Wildlife impact

Future land use (third level priority – one vote)

- Future road construction

Current technology and resources (third level priority – one vote)

- Where to current distribution lines go on highway 18 and 230th street?
- Technology to place lines underground

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Identification of Impacts and Issues - *What land use planning or other impacts and issues need to be considered in the evaluation of proposed transmission line routes and/or sub-station locations?*

Personal property values (top priority – eight votes)	**Waters and wetlands** (top priority – seven votes)	**Aesthetics** (top priority – six votes)	**Human health impact** (second level priority – four votes)	**Flora and fauna** (second level priority – three votes)	**Future land use** (third level priority – one vote)	**Current technology and resources** (third level priority – one vote)
• Property – which route least affects de-valuing property • Adjacent property owner impact • Right-of-way impacts: private property, land values, land clearing • Financial hardships: marketability and value in property, homes, and businesses; fear factor by home buyers • Which side of road to put line on Highway 18 – houses too close to road; may need to zigzag across road • Lines too close to roads; tainting ground water; difficult property areas • Resorts and restaurants	• Wetland and right-of-way impacts with the proposed alternative route; what is the impact on wetlands? • Lakes and rivers	• Resorts and restaurants • Mississippi headwaters • Aesthetics • Cultural values: pristine natural resources, lovely County Highway 18 to another Highway 34, Great River Energy not considerate to cultural values, resort community, dependent on tourism industry • Multiple use area: agriculture, recreation, commercial development, housing development • Potential impact clear cutting concern, within right-of-way • Environmental – least to water ways (pollution) and sight (visual)	• Human health impact: electro-magnetic fields and treatment of poles with chemicals; alternative route should affect least amount • Fear factor – health	• Eagles, trumpeter swans • Trumpeter swans, etc. environmental impact • Threatened species • Wildlife impact	• Future road construction	• Where to current distribution lines go on highway 18 and 230th street? • Technology to place lines underground

Identification of Alternative Routes, Route Segments and Substation Locations

Task force members were asked to work in small groups to identify possible alternative routes and substation locations. Each group was provided with a set of maps representing the Potato Lake transmission line area and asked to use markers and tape to indicate route alternatives and to describe the alternative(s), explain what impacts they were trying to avoid, and suggest what new impacts might be created. The small groups reported back; their ideas and information about alternatives and potential impacts were shared with all present. Maps depicting the alternatives identified are included in the Appendix.

Next steps

Charlie reminded task force members that their homework for the next meeting was to come prepared to continue to discuss and draw route alternatives that might address the impacts and issues identified in the first meeting. He also reminded task force members to review the various routes (both the applicants' identified routes and the routes that the task force created) and come prepared to discuss the pros and cons of the various route alternatives.