

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2011

6:30 p.m.

In the Matter of Route Permit Application for the
St. Cloud Loop 115 kV Transmission Line Project in Sauk
Rapids, Minnesota

PUC Docket Number: E002/TL-10-1026

Sauk Rapids-Rice Middle School
901 First Street South
Sauk Rapids, Minnesota

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SPEAKER

Lonny Wild
Ken Schwinghammer
Terry Douvier
Lonny Wild

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1 MR. SCOTT EK: Thank you, Joe. So now
2 we'll just go to -- actually, I have a question. I
3 see a lot of folks from Xcel here. I'm just
4 curious, just a show of hands, who are our citizens
5 here at the meeting? So we have four -- six folks
6 here. Okay. Six folks.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: I'm with Xcel, too,
8 though.

9 MR. SCOTT EK: Okay. So we have six
10 folks. All right. Well, this is our question and
11 comment period of the evening where you can ask
12 questions about the project to myself, to Joe, to
13 the other Xcel people here. You can also provide
14 comments on what you would like to see studied in
15 the environmental assessment, and so on and so
16 forth.

17 So if anybody does have questions,
18 comments, please, come up to the mic and that way --
19 just so Christine can see your lips moving if she
20 can't figure out what you're saying. It helps her
21 out a little bit.

22 But does anybody have any questions or
23 comments on the project tonight at all?

24 MR. LONNY WILD: What's your target date
25 for construction?

1 MR. SCOTT EK: Could you come up to the
2 mic, or maybe I could just bring it over to you,
3 sir.

4 MR. LONNY WILD: What's the target date
5 for Xcel for construction?

6 MR. SCOTT EK: If you could state your
7 name.

8 MR. LONNY WILD: Lonny Wild, W-I-L-D, no
9 E.

10 MR. GENE KOTZ: Lonny, thanks for that
11 question. It's based on getting the permit
12 completed. As was mentioned in our previous
13 presentation, we're looking at getting the permit
14 established by year end of 2011, first part of 2012
15 here.

16 We will start engineering some of the
17 work prior to the permit being completed but we
18 don't want to induce any risk and waste design time
19 because we never know if the state might have some
20 alternatives for us to add to our design.

21 But as far as construction time, we'll be
22 looking at first quarter of 2012. It takes, for
23 this kind of line, it's about three weeks a mile to
24 build. So being that it's five miles, you know,
25 give or take, it's going to take about 15 to

1 20 weeks based on weather.

2 You know, there are factors with the
3 weather. You know, being this year was kind of a
4 tough winter and we'd be working during the winter
5 that can kind of slow us down. But we pretty much
6 predict about a three-week-a-mile construction
7 period, so we'll try to get it done before June.

8 Even though we get until the end of the
9 year, this line is projected to go pretty fast
10 because we've got a wide open corridor, Highway 10
11 looks pretty good, access is pretty decent. So it
12 should go pretty quick once we're allowed to start
13 the project.

14 MR. SCOTT EK: Thank you.

15 Any other questions, comments?

16 Yes, sir. If you could just state your
17 name.

18 MR. KEN SCHWINGHAMMER: Okay. My name's
19 Ken Schwinghammer. I'm curious on what is an
20 easement? And I can see along the highway where the
21 easement is, but down right -- just about where it
22 begins, there's a very large loop around Waste
23 Management and the two buildings to the north, why
24 is that line around that whole area? And I was
25 wondering if any modifications to the land can be

1 done in there, or once you build that line you need
2 access to that whole area?

3 MR. SCOTT EK: Thank you. So you're
4 talking -- I think I spoke to you on the phone,
5 Mr. Schwinghammer. You're talking about this photo
6 right here (indicating), correct?

7 MR. KEN SCHWINGHAMMER: This goes around
8 like this (indicating), you will only be using this
9 land in this area, anybody along here, it will not
10 affect us actually?

11 MR. SCOTT EK: Correct. Correct. What
12 the yellow part here -- the yellow shaded area is
13 what's called the route width. And now because of
14 the substation that's already located there,
15 there's -- this is very typical that you're going to
16 have -- companies are going to ask for an expanded
17 route width because they may not know which way
18 they're going to be able to come in to the
19 substation at this time. So they ask for a larger
20 route width. This is also the yellow, the route
21 width, but the actual easement is the blue line.

22 MR. KEN SCHWINGHAMMER: So could this
23 area move into this -- part of this area
24 (indicating)?

25 MR. SCOTT EK: Yes. Actually, that would

1 be something, a comment, that I would be looking for
2 that you would want to send to me that we would look
3 at in the environmental assessment that says, you
4 know, can the line be moved up to a certain area on
5 your property? That would be called an alignment
6 alternative, I suppose, is what we call it.

7 This is not necessarily the exact
8 placement. Depending on what the Public Utilities
9 Commission permits for this project, if and when a
10 permit is received, and this is indeed the route
11 width, yes, they have flexibility to move that blue
12 line, you know, north or south within this yellow
13 shaded route width. This is what they're being
14 permitted for, the yellow route, and they can move
15 that blue right-of-way up or down within that route
16 width.

17 MR. KEN SCHWINGHAMMER: Okay. The people
18 that own the land under this line, can they build
19 under the line?

20 MR. SCOTT EK: I'm going to ask one of
21 the Xcel folks on that question when it comes to
22 standards on building under lines and so forth.

23 MR. GENE KOTZ: Thank you for the
24 question, Mr. Schwinghammer. Yeah, what we have is
25 this affected area for the route of the existing

1 line or the new line we are planning to propose. If
2 there was an existing line there already we try to
3 reuse existing corridors so that way we don't affect
4 new customers. But we can modified our route within
5 this affected yellow zone based on where it makes
6 sense in a best-use of property, so we can deal with
7 that.

8 As far as what we're requesting for an
9 easement, it's looking like about 75 feet, about 37
10 and a half from the center, both sides.

11 MR. KEN SCHWINGHAMMER: What I'm curious
12 to know is if the line is moved over some property
13 where there are buildings now, can this land still
14 be used?

15 MR. GENE KOTZ: Typically when we do
16 acquire an easement, sir, we're going to ask that
17 the landowner who we're getting an easement from not
18 build in the easement area because that's what they
19 call an encroachment. So we try to keep the
20 landowner away, out of the easement area.

21 But we'll work with the landowner as
22 we're acquiring easements and say what makes sense,
23 where could we go so if you do have future plans
24 that you're aware. So we wouldn't want you to build
25 within the easement area, but we'll work with you on

1 routing this so it's not going to affect your future
2 plans.

3 MR. KEN SCHWINGHAMMER: Thank you.

4 MR. GENE KOTZ: My pleasure.

5 MR. SCOTT EK: Thank you,
6 Mr. Schwinghammer.

7 Any other questions, comments?

8 Yes, sir. Why don't you state your name.

9 MR. TERRY DOUVIER: Terry Douvier. I'm a
10 landowner on County Road 29. Now, you're saying
11 75 feet worth of easement you need. Now, would that
12 be from the center of County Road 29? We're right
13 up here, County Road 29. We are from here to there
14 and from there to there (indicating) approximately.
15 So it's more than a quarter mile of the proposed
16 route that we are adjoining landowners.

17 Now, I'm curious to know what the
18 easement is, it's from the center of County Road 29?

19 MR. GENE KOTZ: I'll just use this
20 (indicating), okay. If we plan to build the line on
21 the south side of 29, we are going to have -- where
22 the structure is placed, we're going to ask for 37
23 and a half feet, essentially, to one side of that
24 structure.

25 So it's placed at the edge of road

1 right-of-way. We're going to probably build it a
2 couple feet in private, okay, and then need another
3 37 and a half feet. So in this case, it would be 37
4 and a half feet south of the south side of Route 29.

5 MR. TERRY DOUVIER: Okay. I think the
6 easement for 29 is a 59-foot from the center of the
7 road. So you would go, what, 37 feet beyond that?

8 MR. GENE KOTZ: If I'm understanding what
9 you're saying, sir, there already is an easement
10 now, and you said, fifty --

11 MR. TERRY DOUVIER: I believe it's 59
12 feet. The road easement is 59 feet from the center
13 of the road to the south.

14 MR. GENE KOTZ: Okay. However that
15 calculation works, we're going to -- from the side
16 of the road, the edge of that road easement, we are
17 going to look at trying to be a couple feet in on
18 private. And then we'll need an additional 37 and a
19 half, approximately, for our needs for the easement,
20 additional easement.

21 MR. TERRY DOUVIER: Okay. So you would
22 be clearcutting that?

23 MR. GENE KOTZ: We would need to remove
24 trees as applicable, yes.

25 MR. TERRY DOUVIER: And then what was the

1 towers there, is that -- 115 kV, is that comparable
2 to the towers they're putting up along I-94 right
3 now?

4 MR. GENE KOTZ: No. Those are part of
5 another project called CapX 2020. That's a 345 kV
6 line. Those structures are a lot taller, more
7 robust, and no, they are nothing like that.

8 MR. TERRY DOUVIER: Okay. The next
9 question is along the west side of the property, how
10 much would you need to go into the woods there?

11 MR. GENE KOTZ: Being that this is new
12 corridor, we're cutting through that parcel here,
13 the whole corridor width will be that 75 feet. So
14 if you're -- if that's the property line, we would
15 be asking for that 37 and a half feet on the edge of
16 your property. It's just as we would need it on the
17 other folk's property as well.

18 MR. TERRY DOUVIER: That would have to be
19 clearcut as well also?

20 MR. GENE KOTZ: Yes, unfortunately.

21 MR. TERRY DOUVIER: Okay.

22 MR. GENE KOTZ: Thank you.

23 MR. SCOTT EK: Sir, I didn't catch your
24 name.

25 MR. TERRY DOUVIER: Terry Douvier.

1 MR. SCOTT EK: Mr. Douvier, you bring up
2 some good questions. That is the purpose of
3 tonight's meeting. I suggest you grab a comment
4 form and some of the information and my card back
5 there.

6 If you do have concerns about, you know,
7 the clearcutting and the distance from the road
8 right-of-way and what's being proposed, as well as
9 the north/south sections that run -- I'm not quite
10 sure if it's through or along your property boundary
11 lines, but those are the comments and questions that
12 I'm looking for that we'd study in the environmental
13 assessment.

14 And those are also -- that's also
15 information that would be part of the record that
16 the judge would look at, and we'd have to make
17 decisions on, you know, is this the best route.
18 Considering those factors, is there another way that
19 it could be done better?

20 So what I would suggest is grab a comment
21 form, send me an e-mail or give me a call, and I can
22 direct you if you have concerns about that. Because
23 now is the time to start doing that. And that's the
24 reason for the meetings tonight is so we can get
25 your concerns into our books here at the state. So

1 thank you.

2 Any other questions?

3 Yes, sir. If you can just restate your
4 name for Christine.

5 MR. LONNY WILD: Lonny Wild, Sauk Rapids
6 Township. We have a colleague who lives near where
7 this transmission line will be built on Highway 10
8 and Quarry Road. He's not here tonight, but he's
9 right in this corner (indicating). And he wants to
10 know what kind of problems he may have with his
11 satellite TV and his wireless Internet, if any.

12 MR. SCOTT EK: That's a good question.
13 And it's actually common to all transmission line
14 projects that I myself have guided through the
15 permitting process, and it's something we
16 automatically take a look at. Even if you wouldn't
17 have mentioned it tonight, it's something that we do
18 look at in the environmental assessment.

19 We have not found transmission lines to
20 have any impact on satellite transmission. I guess
21 the only problem would be if there is something
22 directly in the way of that satellite dish, between,
23 you know, the receiver and the satellite. If there
24 is something in the way, such as a tower that's
25 blocking the signal, then there could be a problem.

1 But if it's off to, what do we say, the
2 west there a ways, no, we have not found that to be
3 a problem when it comes to cable, satellite TV, FM
4 radio, GPS signals, and so forth. But that's a good
5 question. It's something that we automatically
6 cover and we will continue to cover because there's
7 always more, better, and new information that comes
8 out all the time.

9 So no, as far as I'm concerned and all
10 the studies, all the permits that we've issued have
11 stated that no, it is not a problem unless it's a
12 direct-sight kind of issue.

13 MR. BRIAN MIELKE: I'm Brian Mielke with
14 Xcel.

15 Lonny, Duane and I have actually talked
16 about that back in August of last year. I believe
17 I've already got it in my notes to make sure to get
18 it addressed, but I'm glad you brought it up because
19 I just noted it on tonight's notes for myself to
20 look at again as we get further into the project.

21 So I'm assuming you're talking about
22 Duane on that corner, right?

23 MR. LONNY WILD: Yeah.

24 MR. BRIAN MIELKE: Okay.

25 MR. SCOTT EK: Okay. Good questions.

1 Any other questions from folks tonight,
2 comments?

3 Well, again, there are -- I don't know if
4 there are any cookies left back there. It looks
5 like there's some water left back there, I don't
6 know about the cookies. I thank you all for coming.
7 And I really do suggest to grab some of the
8 information back there just so you have it.

9 And if any questions come up, you can
10 provide it to your neighbors, provide it to your
11 friends, such as the gentleman who wasn't here
12 tonight. You can provide it to him and he can
13 contact me. And I can give all the information that
14 you need and I'm more than happy to help out with
15 anything that comes up, any question that comes up
16 about the project, about the process. Joe would be
17 happy to discuss with you the project any time, so
18 feel free.

19 And I really encourage you to pick up
20 that information. I also encourage you to sign up
21 for the mailing list so we'll keep you -- not in
22 contact, keep you in the loop of how this project is
23 moving along and when these comment periods are,
24 when these meetings are, when these documents come
25 out so you can review them to see if they're to your

1 satisfaction or if you have other concerns.

2 But otherwise, I thank you all for
3 coming, and have a good night. And thank you very
4 much.

5 (Public comment concluded.)

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