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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2011

6:00 p.m.

In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for the
Orono Substation Expansion and new 115 kV Transmission
Line Project

PUC Docket Number: E002/TL-11-223

Orono City Hall
2750 Kelley Parkway
Orono, Minnesota

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1 MR. DAVE WILSON: Dave Wilson, homeowner
2 on Hunt Farm Road. So within the tolerance of the
3 route, the right-of-way could be changed at some
4 point. And the question is: At what point and when
5 do we know when that right-of-way might be changed?

6 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: When the
7 Commission makes their determination they will
8 determine the route, which may be somewhat narrower
9 in some areas, it may be the full 400 feet in some
10 areas. They will also identify an anticipated
11 right-of-way. So that's what they anticipate,
12 that's what all of the review has been done.

13 Before they construct, it could have --
14 and I don't know this project as well, in my
15 experience it tends to happen more on larger, longer
16 projects where they haven't been studied as much.
17 So there is a process. So they would also need to
18 demonstrate that they've contacted the affected
19 landowners. So I can't give you a definitive answer
20 to that question. Sorry.

21 MS. MELISSA FOGELBERG:
22 Melissa Fogelberg, I'm also a homeowner. So I
23 understand how these things are calculated; I don't
24 understand what the significance of them is. I
25 mean, so you need a right-of-way to maintain the

1 line, and that's 75 feet wide. Then what happens
2 between 75 and 400 feet, what does the route mean?

3 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: I'm going to let
4 the utility answer that because anybody could
5 propose -- and in some areas where it's very
6 constrained the route width may be the same as what
7 they anticipate as a right-of-way. It is typical
8 that the utility may ask for a somewhat wider area
9 in order to have some flexibility, either as
10 engineering proceeds or in their negotiation with
11 landowners. I don't know that that's the case here.

12 There are some instances such as a
13 transmission line that I worked in Northern
14 Minnesota where it was 70 miles long, they get out
15 there and find, for instance, some cultural
16 artifacts where they would need to deviate. Or the
17 landowner may want them to be moved a little bit,
18 maybe, further from the highway and just so their
19 view is different.

20 But I'll turn that over to Xcel Energy,
21 if you could introduce yourself.

22 MR. CHRIS ROGERS: Chris Rogers, siting
23 and land rights. I think I know what you're getting
24 at. Our final right-of-way where we go to acquire
25 the easement of 75 feet, I think what we're looking

1 to do is to have the flexibility within that 400
2 feet to shift the line. Now, in this case, it's
3 less than a mile long. It's pretty cut and dry. We
4 talked to landowners upfront regarding the small
5 relocation. There's really probably not a real
6 opportunity that that's going to be further than
7 that 400 feet. We've got a pretty good idea where
8 that 75 feet is going to go. We're obviously not
9 going to run over houses and those types of things.
10 So correct me if I'm wrong, but the 400 feet is the
11 route width of the easement that they will require?

12 MS. MELISSA FOGELBERG: So maybe I'm over
13 simplifying. The route might be the area within
14 which you propose to construct the line?

15 MR. CHRIS ROGERS: Correct.

16 MS. MELISSA FOGELBERG: And so the
17 75 feet will be somewhere within that route, but at
18 the end of the day you don't require a right-of-way
19 more than --

20 MR. CHRIS ROGERS: Not more than.

21 MS. MELISSA FOGELBERG: And once it's up
22 and you've got the right-of-way, the route becomes
23 meaningless?

24 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: That's correct.
25 The route disappears. If somewhere down the line

1 they need to make a modification, the concept would
2 need to be reintroduced.

3 This is a somewhat more elaborate route
4 schematic (indicating). I think there was one that
5 was out front which is pretty simple. Xcel
6 submitted their application at the beginning of
7 June. The Commission accepted it as substantially
8 complete at the end of June. We are here at the
9 public meeting phase. There's a public comment
10 period, and I'll talk about that in just a minute,
11 that runs through the end of August, August 26th.

12 After that comment period where people
13 are commenting on the information to be evaluated in
14 the environmental assessment we'll take that
15 information, I'll review it. I'll review the
16 comments and present them to my deputy commissioner.
17 They'll issue a scope. Once the scope is issued
18 we'll get to work on preparing the environmental
19 assessment.

20 And once that's complete, we'll be back
21 out in the project area for a hearing to be presided
22 over most likely by an administrative law judge.
23 Following the close of the comment period, after the
24 hearing, the whole record will be referred to the
25 Commission for their final decision.

1 So this is just filling in some of the
2 timelines. The close of the comment period is the
3 26th. I would anticipate the scope of the
4 environmental assessment would be issued sometime in
5 early September and the environmental assessment,
6 which is the environmental review document, will be
7 prepared sometime in October.

8 Following that we'll be -- if you're
9 signed up on the project list, you'll be noticed.
10 There will also be a notice that appears in the
11 local paper. And I would anticipate that the
12 hearing would be held sometime probably in October
13 or earlier November of this year and that will be
14 out here. And then knowing what we know now we
15 would anticipate a final decision by the Commission
16 in December of this year. Those can change but
17 that's to give you some idea of the timeline we
18 would anticipate at this point.

19 One thing that I do want to talk about
20 and one of the reasons that we're out here is for
21 any large transmission project an environmental
22 review needs to be prepared. And one of the main
23 reasons for this meeting and for the comment period
24 is to gather information from people who are
25 familiar with the area and what they believe needs

1 to be reviewed. So we're taking comments on what
2 people believe should be evaluated in the
3 environmental assessment.

4 Under Rules the scoping decision must
5 identify alternative routes, if any, to be addressed
6 in the environmental assessment. Under the project
7 for -- under the rules for the projects under
8 200 kilovolts the utility only has to propose one
9 route but any alternatives could be thrown back into
10 the mix for evaluation in the environmental
11 assessment. Any specific potential impacts to be
12 addressed, the schedule for completion, and any
13 other matters to be included in the environmental
14 assessment.

15 This is helpful to some people, it's not
16 a done deal. But we've prepared a draft
17 environmental scope which is on the table in front
18 and so you can take a moment now or any time in the
19 next couple of weeks. And if you go to -- it's page
20 5. That is basically like a table of contents.
21 Knowing what we know about this project now what we
22 would expect to be evaluated in the environmental
23 assessment.

24 MR. DAVE WILSON: Dave Wilson, again.
25 I've got another question. The Three River Parks

1 District responded to a request that they were
2 considered as a possible alternate site, and quite a
3 few points in what they recommended be included in
4 the environmental assessment. I'm wondering how
5 this document dated November 10th of last year
6 matches up with what's included in the document
7 handed out tonight?

8 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: I can answer
9 that. What we do is we take the general concepts.
10 I believe we've incorporated them. If you look at
11 them and want to get more specific -- and I will too
12 as I'm developing the environmental assessment, we
13 get down into more detail. But this is sort of just
14 a table of contents, if it's helpful for you to
15 think of it that way perhaps.

16 There's some information on where to find
17 the documents pertinent to the project. Xcel
18 brought some additional applications, which is the
19 primary document to date. That can be found on the
20 Energy Facility Permitting website. It also be
21 found on eDockets, which serves as the official
22 project record.

23 I think for many purposes the EFP website
24 might be a little bit easier to access. There's
25 some software things with eDockets where if pieces

1 are filed in multiple parts they don't necessarily
2 show up together. Hardcopies of the application are
3 also available here and at local libraries.

4 The comment deadline is Friday,
5 August 26th. Oral comments are being taken at
6 tonight's meeting. So after tonight, I'll read all
7 of the comments. You are certainly -- please free
8 to call me if you have questions, but as far as
9 comments that are part of the record and then
10 referred to my deputy commissioner and available for
11 the Commission, the oral comments will be available
12 in a transcript. After tonight, the comments do
13 need to be in writing. There's some comment sheets.
14 You don't have to use that. You may want to take
15 some for your neighbors. That has the contact
16 information.

17 If you think -- sometimes people are
18 either not comfortable speaking at the meeting or if
19 you think of something later, you can turn the
20 comments in at tonight's meeting. Even if you
21 comment tonight, a lot of times things come up later
22 if you're thinking of things. So by mail, e-mail,
23 fax. There's also -- you can comment electronically
24 on the website, and that information is available in
25 the notice also.

1 There's my name, and then the public
2 advisor for this project is Ray Kirsch, who is not
3 here tonight. But both of us can answer any
4 questions on the process, and I'll probably be a
5 little bit more familiar with the project going
6 forward.

7 Joe talked about the mailing list.
8 Anybody can sign up for the mailing list. Up to the
9 notice point I think all of the notices that you
10 received have been from Xcel. From this point
11 forward Xcel may -- and also does -- send out
12 notices for project updates, but they're under no
13 obligation to do so. So people need to opt into the
14 project mailing list. If you know you want to be on
15 this, there's a sign-up sheet in front. You can
16 give me your contact information, you can also sign
17 up yourself tonight.

18 And that's it. So I'd like to open it up
19 for comments or questions.

20 MR. DAVE WILSON: Dave Wilson, again.
21 What Xcel said about that they had spoken to
22 homeowners about the route, you do recognize that
23 nearly all of your route doesn't cross individual
24 property owner's property; it's association
25 property. Be careful who you're speaking to. Do

1 farm association?

2 MR. DOUG HICKEY: I'm not part of the
3 association at all.

4 MR. CHRIS ROGERS: You're west of them?

5 MR. DOUG HICKEY: Yeah. If you look at
6 the map where the pole changes directions, that's to
7 the west.

8 MR. CHRIS ROGERS: To the west, yeah.

9 MR. DAVE WILSON: Well, could somebody
10 comment on the difference in height between the
11 poles that are there and the poles that are planned,
12 and not just the height but maybe the different
13 configurations as well. How do these differ from
14 what's already in existence?

15 MR. JOE SEDARSKI: I think I'll stand up
16 front and go to the map. I'm not sure if --
17 Suzanne, can you put the map up on the overhead?

18 MR. JEFF GUTZMANN: I'm Jeff Gutzmann.
19 I'm a transmission engineer with Xcel Energy, and
20 I'm assigned to work on this project.

21 (Indicating throughout.) I'll just start
22 with the existing line here. It comes from the
23 west. This is existing wood H-frame at this
24 location. At this location here there's actually
25 three wood poles with guy to the ground to allow the

1 line to change directions. So it takes the line
2 tension force and keeps the structure stable.

3 The line then turns to the northeast.
4 This structure right across Highway 12 and the
5 railroad tracks is again a wood H-frame. The line
6 coming from the west, these are wood H-frames coming
7 into this vicinity. Again, three wood poles, and to
8 the northeast is wood H-frames. So that's the
9 existing line.

10 MR. DAVE WILSON: And how tall
11 respectively?

12 MR. JEFF GUTZMANN: Various sites, so
13 I'll try to go through here. This structure here is
14 structure 78, it's 70-foot wood H-frame poles.
15 They're imbedded nine feet in the ground, so the
16 structure height is 61 feet. The three-wood-pole
17 structure here, the turning structure, those are
18 80-foot wood poles. They're imbedded ten feet in
19 the ground, so they net out at 70 feet aboveground.
20 And the one structure across Highway 12, those are
21 H-frame, those are 85-foot wood poles. They're
22 imbedded ten and a half feet and they net out at 74
23 and a half feet aboveground nominally.

24 The proposed structures are steel
25 structures. We are proposing steel because of

1 higher reliability. Where we come basically what
2 we're doing is we're intersecting this line here,
3 bringing the power in and out of Orono, and then
4 back on to the 831 (phonetic), that's one way to
5 think of it. The power can flow in any direction on
6 that line. So because we're going in and out on the
7 structures we want to do steel for higher
8 reliability.

9 So the structures -- I'll start at the
10 substation here, these are what we call
11 double-circuit structures. The picture -- the third
12 picture from the left in the back, that will be
13 steel poles with, we call them, davit arms or arms
14 or branches that come off the poles to support the
15 wires. And that will be the structures coming
16 basically from the substation out to this
17 intersection point of the line, it will be that
18 configuration.

19 MR. DAVE WILSON: And how high?

20 MR. JEFF GUTZMANN: Is that clear?

21 MR. DAVE WILSON: Yes, and --

22 MR. JEFF GUTZMANN: Then from this point
23 here --

24 MR. CHRIS ROGERS: Jeff, how high, how
25 tall?

1 MR. JEFF GUTZMANN: Oh, excuse me. The
2 structure here is the tallest structure because we
3 have to cross a railroad and a road and maintain
4 clearance. This structure here will be 100 feet,
5 proposed. The adjacent structure to the east is
6 90 feet. The next structure at this corner where it
7 turns, 90 feet, and we currently have 80 feet for
8 the remaining structures.

9 MR. DAVE WILSON: That's the exposed
10 height.

11 MR. JEFF GUTZMANN: Exposed height
12 aboveground. The structure here where the line
13 turns, this is a single-circuit coming in at this
14 point and this is a single-circuit as it heads to
15 the northeast. This is a double-circuit portion to
16 this intersection point. So this line basically
17 just needs to take a turn. We're proposing a
18 structure similar to the one shown second from the
19 left in the back. That's basically just to capture
20 the wires and turn.

21 We're also changing wire configurations,
22 and that is a change from -- the wires are in a
23 horizontal configuration. They're going to roll to
24 a vertical configuration here on that structure
25 there. And they'll maintain a vertical

1 configuration in and out from the substation, and
2 then they're going to roll to a horizontal
3 configuration over Highway 12. That's part of the
4 reason for the height, we need it to get to the
5 height where we can stack it to vertical at this
6 point. So this structure here is a 75-foot
7 structure. The existing H-frame here will be a
8 75-foot height structure.

9 MR. CHRIS ROGERS: Is that the one in the
10 park, Jeff?

11 MR. JEFF GUTZMANN: The one in the Baker
12 Park will be 75 feet. Virtually the same as the
13 H-frame that exists today.

14 MR. DAVE WILSON: Dave Wilson, again.
15 Can you help us visualize what's going on in the big
16 box now where the substation -- the new substation
17 is planned? We go by there every day and we know
18 it's there now. What's going to be there under your
19 proposed plan?

20 MR. JEFF GUTZMANN: I'll let my coworker
21 take that one.

22 MR. ED SMITH: Ed Smith, substation
23 engineering with Xcel Energy. Basically -- well,
24 what's happening is right now we have this 69 kV
25 transmission line that goes right through here, and

1 here it taps off and feeds the existing 69 kV
2 substation (indicating).

3 The existing substation has a -- just one
4 transformer, and I think it has two feeders in there
5 for distribution. Those two feeders go underground
6 and then go up to distribution poles along Sixth
7 Avenue.

8 What we're going to be doing here is due
9 to studies that our transmission planning people
10 have done is we're increasing the whole reliability
11 by having a larger transmission line, a 115 kV
12 transmission line. It's basically going to be going
13 from here all the way to 494, I-494, in Plymouth.
14 And it's going to connect to the Gleason Lake
15 substation. It's going to connect to the Hollydale
16 substation that Xcel Energy has, it's by the water
17 tower at 101 and 55.

18 MR. DAVE WILSON: Question: You
19 mentioned the other substations. Are there other
20 substations that would be similar to that that we
21 could see? You mentioned Gleason Lake and others,
22 if you want to visual what this might look like,
23 could you send us someplace?

24 MR. ED SMITH: I could. The one I'm
25 thinking about is the Basset Creek substation. It's

1 on the south side of Medicine Lake. If you're
2 familiar with 55 where the --

3 MR. DAVE WILSON: 55 and 169?

4 MR. ED SMITH: It's northwest of there.
5 If you're on 55, do you know where the Holiday gas
6 station is, just west of there?

7 MR. DAVE WILSON: Um-hmm.

8 MR. ED SMITH: If you just go north at
9 that intersection and then take your first left you
10 end up going into the -- I think it's the city of
11 Medicine Lake. And so it's on the south side of
12 Medicine Lake, and that's where the Basset Creek
13 substation is.

14 MR. DAVE WILSON: Is there something
15 right at the intersection of 55 and 169? There's
16 not a substation there, is there?

17 MR. ED SMITH: No, not that I can recall.

18 MS. MELISSA FOGELBERG: It's
19 Melissa Fogelberg, again. This thing is huge. And
20 I have gone and looked at the Basset Creek
21 substation and I was astonished at how much larger
22 it is than what's in the current location. So it
23 seems to me that for the Commission to fully assess
24 the impact of this proposed plan, I would think it's
25 not that Xcel Energy is going to do this, it's what

1 Xcel proposes to do. So don't get your cart before
2 your horse.

3 I would think that for the Commission to
4 fully assess this that what you would need is
5 more -- what do you call it? Line sight drawings or
6 something that you could look at that would
7 visualize the size and, you know, the
8 substantialness of the structure. And I think they
9 should do it before and after. I think there needs
10 to be some sort of a vertical drawing that says
11 here's what it looks like now and here's what it's
12 going to look like after.

13 And likewise, these pictures of the
14 poles, I mean, those don't look so bad. But if you
15 don't have a drawing that illustrates how tall the
16 current structures are you don't really have an
17 opportunity to appreciate how much larger these are
18 than what's already there.

19 So it seems to me for the Commission to
20 be able to fully assess what this is -- and maybe
21 they're professionals at it because they do this all
22 the time -- but it seems to me you need additional
23 drawings in this application so you can look at it
24 and visualize the before-and-after and the
25 significance of this, the scope of the -- of the

1 change that they're proposing. So that's something
2 I think needs to be included.

3 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: The application
4 is what it is, and then moving forward -- but I
5 think that's a comment that we can try to address in
6 the environmental assessment.

7 I don't want to -- did you have --

8 MR. ED SMITH: Well, I can briefly -- I
9 can just address, we are not -- basically this --
10 personally, I think the substation's going to be
11 very well hidden. And the reason I'm saying that is
12 because we are leaving exactly -- this berm is going
13 to be pretty much the same way it is right now and
14 we're going to be quote/unquote cutting into the
15 hill so it's going to be hidden.

16 I mean, you're going to have higher hills
17 I think on the west side and potentially here a
18 little bit on the south and we're going to have a
19 retaining wall here. So we are cutting into the
20 hill to try to hide it also.

21 MS. MELISSA FOGELBERG: Maybe that would
22 be another advantage of including visuals because if
23 you're doing something to mitigate the impact on the
24 neighborhood and you could put it in a drawing that
25 would enable someone to look at it and to visualize

1 what the mitigation efforts will be, you might --

2 MR. ED SMITH: Yeah, and we are --

3 MS. MELISSA FOGELBERG: Whatever you're
4 doing to mitigate, if you could put that in a
5 visual, then it could -- maybe it would get us more
6 comfortable with what you're doing. But I don't
7 think you can really appreciate the impact or the
8 mitigation efforts if you don't have some visual
9 thing you can look at that shows you what it's going
10 to be.

11 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you. And
12 that's -- I think that's fine. Because we kind of
13 started in on a comment, I didn't go over the ground
14 rules, and that's introducing yourself so the court
15 reporter has a record and then speaking one person
16 at a time.

17 As I mentioned, we will be back in the
18 project area, and so talking about what the actual
19 effects would be, that's something that we should
20 have a better idea of when we're back in the project
21 area.

22 I know that there are other people here
23 and we're here as long as you need tonight but I
24 just want to make sure if somebody else has a
25 question that we can try to address them if somebody

1 needs to move on.

2 If you could just identify yourself.

3 MR. DOUG HICKEY: Doug Hickey, property
4 owner to the west. If you put the map up again, I
5 just want to comment on the route and the route
6 right-of-way as far as I'm concerned. Part my
7 property exists where the existing power pole is,
8 that's number 78 I believe. The route -- as long as
9 the route follows that new route going off, I would
10 have no problem with that at all.

11 But with the 400 foot right-of-way if you
12 brought it into the property another 400 feet, then
13 there's a lot of the old-time oaks that they would
14 have to cut down and I would have a big problem with
15 that. But as long as the route stays the same, I'm
16 happy with that.

17 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Okay. And then
18 Xcel, can you comment on do you intend to assume the
19 same right-of-way or would it be different?

20 MR. CHRIS ROGERS: Chris Rogers, with
21 Xcel siting and land rights. We do, we would not
22 plan on -- we'd use the existing right-of-way that's
23 there today, so that's correct.

24 MR. DOUG HICKEY: Okay.

25 MR. DAVE WILSON: Dave Wilson, again.

1 Two questions on the substation. Can you express
2 the difference in the footprint between current and
3 proposed: X times?

4 MR. ED SMITH: I'm sorry. I don't have
5 that number with me. We can definitely figure that
6 out and calculate it as far as an acre basis.

7 MR. DAVE WILSON: It's going to be ten
8 times more.

9 MR. ED SMITH: I mean, the substation is
10 designed to have two or potentially three
11 transformers here in the future to -- we're going to
12 be grading this, we're going to be grading it to its
13 ultimate size. We're going to be fencing it in to
14 its ultimate size, but as the need for electricity
15 grows in this area, in the future -- at some point
16 in the future we can put in these other transformers
17 to satisfy the customer needs.

18 MR. DAVE WILSON: Dave Wilson, again.
19 The top of your substation illustration has the
20 graphics there. I'm not clear what those are, are
21 those towers? Within the box, within your red box,
22 what are those?

23 MR. ED SMITH: These are what we call
24 dead end structures. So basically you have the
25 transmission line going from -- they're stacked up

1 vertically and then they rotate in, they're
2 horizontal in the end at this dead end structure.

3 MR. DAVE WILSON: How high are those?

4 MR. ED SMITH: I don't know.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: 65-ish?

6 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: That is actually
7 something that we need to carry forward in the EA.
8 I just want to make sure that we get people's
9 comments on what needs to be evaluated. What we
10 have now is Xcel's proposal, and we'll be evaluating
11 that and other alternatives and other mitigation
12 going forward.

13 MR. ED SMITH: Pretty much, they should
14 be identical to -- or very similar to what's at the
15 Basset Creek substation.

16 MR. DOUG HICKEY: One other question.
17 Doug Hickey. Is the voltage and current to the
18 power line going to stay the same?

19 MR. ED SMITH: No. We're going from a
20 69,000-volt to a 115,000-volt transmission line. So
21 basically the conductors are going to be higher.

22 MR. DOUG HICKEY: I mean, the power line
23 there currently is 115,000 volts, the power line
24 that's coming from the west, the existing line?

25 MR. ED SMITH: Yes. The existing line --

1 there's two lines in play here. There's the 69 kV
2 GRE line which was feeding the existing substation,
3 and then there's the proposed -- there's the
4 existing 115 kV line and we're proposing to divert
5 that into the substation, in and out, and go back.

6 MR. DOUG HICKEY: Okay.

7 MR. GENE KOTZ: I would like to add
8 something. My name is Gene Kotz, I'm the project
9 manager for the overall effort once it is permitted.
10 Those are great questions you have, Ms. Fogelberg,
11 Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Hickey. One thing we do have is
12 we have a number of samples that we could e-mail
13 you. So it would be great if you're on the roster
14 so we have your e-mail. We can send you samples of
15 existing properties that have this voltage and just
16 similar representations of what we've done all over
17 the city.

18 The issue with, kind of, the substation
19 in general is it's currently fed 69 kV. That's an
20 old voltage. It's kind of a rural voltage. And
21 unfortunately, or fortunately depending on how you
22 view it, your city has grown, your capacity needs
23 have changed, your protective needs have changed,
24 and we to have upgrade this existing property. But
25 we can provide some samples of what we do for

1 screening, what we've done typically in cities and
2 areas like yourselves.

3 But we can do that, and we can get you
4 great pictures and everything. But the purpose of,
5 really, this project is to take care of a poor
6 performing substation. Okay. This substation does
7 have issues. We want to improve reliability and,
8 just, performance for the public. And we don't just
9 build these for the heck of it. We have to upgrade
10 these sites eventually and this is where we're at
11 now.

12 But we can get you great samples and
13 pictures and representations of what we plan to do
14 with regards to berming, screening, and all that
15 good stuff. So make sure you get on the list and we
16 get your e-mails so we can correspond with you
17 effectively.

18 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: I'd just like to
19 clarify. The list that's out front is just the
20 project list. So that's to be put on the mailing
21 list. We do not provide your contact information to
22 Xcel. And then secondly, I think that that's great
23 if Xcel wants to send you that, but from what I'm
24 hearing we need to make sure that's in the record.

25 So correspondence between you and anybody

1 else is not a part of the record, but what I'm
2 hearing from this is that's something we need to get
3 into the record and probably the environmental
4 assessment is the best place to do that.

5 MR. CHRIS ROGERS: Suzanne, Mr. Wilson, I
6 don't know if your question was answered about the
7 difference in footprints. The current fenced area
8 versus what's proposed, I've put Jeff's glasses on
9 here, the existing fenced areas that's there today
10 is 86 by 51; 86 north and south, 51 east and west.
11 The proposed would be -- it's not a square, but
12 roughly 241 by 240. And that would be the fenced
13 area and, of course, that all sits within the
14 16-acre marker that we own.

15 MS. MELISSA FOGELBERG: Melissa
16 Fogelberg, again. And I guess I've got a number of
17 questions I've just jotted down, I don't know if
18 it's appropriate to include them in the scoping or
19 not. But if it is I'd like to have them answered,
20 and if it's not I'd still like to have them
21 answered.

22 Maybe I can just kind of run through
23 them. One question would be what alternative
24 locations were considered, not just what different
25 routes through this existing parcel but what

1 additional locations were considered.

2 Because I understand that there are other
3 locations that would accomplish the same thing but
4 Xcel was most interested in this one because it
5 would cost the least and it would be easier for them
6 to work with. So whether that's in the scope or
7 not, I'd just appreciate an answer to that.

8 MR. JOE SEDARSKI: I can answer that.
9 Joe Sedarski, permitting analyst. Ms. Fogelberg,
10 we're going to have to get more information on the
11 planning review of this project in terms of our
12 amounts of the planning that you referenced. We
13 talked a little bit about it here, really what kind
14 of led where the project got developed and what was
15 looked at that time.

16 I'm not familiar with any alternative
17 substation sites that would actually accomplish what
18 we're trying to do but I'm going to have to look
19 back at some our planning documentation to see the
20 bigger world that we looked at and we can answer
21 that.

22 MR. ED SMITH: I would like to just
23 explain though that, you know, from our point of
24 view we own the land, we -- and I, as a substation
25 engineer, am asked -- you know, transmission

1 planning says we need a bigger substation and so
2 forth, so they say can you make it fit here? And so
3 I have to design it and look at it and so forth.

4 And I say, oh, yes, in this situation we
5 were able to say yes, we can make it fit here. And
6 that does allow therefore to use our existing
7 property and there's our existing distribution
8 circuits that are already there that we don't have
9 to be -- you know, get new route rights-of-way for
10 the distribution circuit and so forth. So it is a
11 more economical thing to always go with the existing
12 site if you can make it work.

13 MS. MELISSA FOGELBERG: And I understand
14 that, and I know that's your job to make it work
15 that way. But, you know, another way of looking at
16 it is you've got a problem and you're trying to make
17 your problem our problem. So, you know, sure, it's
18 easier for you to work with this and less costly but
19 now we have a problem that we didn't have before.
20 And, you know, so your solution has a price tag for
21 us.

22 I'm curious, the property just to the
23 east of yours, there's that little section right --
24 who owns that? I don't know. And if you're going
25 to have to condemn some property any way, why don't

1 you condemn that property and get the substation
2 further away from the homes and out of the wetland?

3 MR. CHRIS ROGERS: Chris Rogers, Xcel
4 Energy. We did look at some alternatives for
5 alternate substation sites. The challenge is we own
6 the property that's there today. We also need to
7 connect to the existing transmission line. Some of
8 the other sites we looked at -- and these were
9 through Michael Kuruvilla, K-U-R-U-V-I-L-L-A -- and
10 so we did look at some alternative sites.

11 One of them was owned by the gun club, we
12 had another couple parcels that were owned by MnDOT,
13 I believe. None of those sites panned out. They
14 were either not large enough or they created a
15 larger impact by placing the substation further way
16 and connecting the transmission line.

17 The substation has been there since 1989
18 and we do own property there. So for us to go out
19 and find another piece of property, it may not be
20 prudent for our ratepayers. We've got an existing
21 site here, and as Ed said that the infrastructure is
22 there. We don't want to solve one problem and
23 create another problem for someone else. And
24 condemning somebody when we own land today, I don't
25 think that's an option at this point.

1 MS. MELISSA FOGELBERG: And, again, I
2 disagree. I think the difference between this and
3 the situation of maybe some of the others is that
4 this is a substantial structure that's going in
5 someone's backyard. And many of the substations of
6 this size are more in commercial or industrial
7 areas, so you're not putting this enormous
8 structure, you know, like in Michael's backyard and
9 where the residents have to drive by it every day.

10 Another question I have is just getting
11 through some of these materials there are a number
12 of alternatives that were laid out. Some of them
13 involved going along the north side of Highway 12
14 and one of the reasons for not doing that was that,
15 oh, that would have an impact on Baker Park. And we
16 don't want to have an impact on Baker Park.

17 So it feels reading that as though the
18 impact on us is less significant than the impact on
19 Baker Park. And I think that's something that
20 should be addressed as well. You've got people that
21 live in these homes 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
22 So it seems to me that that should have more weight
23 perhaps than a park which is visited by guests who
24 come and go.

25 So if there is, you know, a preference

1 for the south side over the north side because it
2 doesn't affect Baker Park, I would like to
3 understand and have addressed the issue of why their
4 concerns are more important than the concerns of the
5 homeowners.

6 MR. ED SMITH: Well, I know that --

7 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: I don't think we
8 need to -- what I'm hearing is we don't have -- we
9 don't have to answer that, but what I'm hearing is
10 there's an interest in having other routes
11 evaluated. And the one that went through Baker
12 Park, would it be fair to say you would like to have
13 that evaluated?

14 MS. MELISSA FOGELBERG: I would like to
15 have that evaluated. I think that's something that
16 I didn't see that it was addressed and I flipped
17 through this stuff pretty quickly. I don't see that
18 any consideration was given to burying the line. So
19 why can't they bury the line instead of putting
20 these 100-plus-foot structures across the wetlands
21 and in our line of view?

22 I thought it was interesting they didn't
23 call it visual impact, they called it a point of
24 visual interest. Well, some of us would not enjoy
25 having a point of visual interest in our backyard.

1 So it seems to me that burying the line would be a
2 reasonable alternative that should be addressed as
3 well and perhaps weighed against the impact on the
4 neighbor's use and enjoyment of their property and
5 diminution and the value of their homes. So I'd
6 like to see that addressed.

7 And another one that I think would be
8 really important is that from what I've read I don't
9 think this proposed structure is consistent with the
10 city of Orono's comprehensive plan, and the plan
11 includes a number of important considerations. So I
12 would like attention paid to how this plan can be
13 reconciled against the city of Orono's comprehensive
14 plan: The affects of quality of life, you know,
15 impact on nature, the feel of the community, and a
16 number of other things that are important to the
17 environment, if you interpret environment more
18 broadly than just plants and animals.

19 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: I can only
20 answer that question in a general way. We do need
21 to look at the land use for this. So that's
22 something we will be looking at, as we would in any
23 transmission line.

24 MR. DOUG HICKEY: Question, Doug Hickey,
25 just a comment to hers. If the line was buried

1 would there be higher magnetic field exposure to
2 bury the line versus 80 feet above the ground?

3 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: I don't know the
4 answer to that question.

5 MR. JOE SEDARSKI: Did you want us to try
6 to answer that right now?

7 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: You can try to
8 answer that but --

9 MR. JOE SEDARSKI: We would have to model
10 it, but typically it's been our experience burying
11 the line doesn't mean that you're going to -- it's
12 been our experience that by burying the lines you
13 don't lower your exposure to EMF. You might have
14 increased exposure, but we would have to do some
15 modeling to confirm for this particular
16 configuration. So burying the line would maybe
17 address one concern but may not address another.

18 MR. DOUG HICKEY: Correct.

19 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Any other
20 comments or questions? I want to make sure people
21 have an opportunity to ask questions, we may not be
22 able to answer them now, and also to make sure that
23 the topics that you believe are important are noted
24 here. But I also want to respect your time because
25 it's a beautiful evening out.

1 MS. KAREN HICKEY: I do have a question.
2 It's a little beyond this project but --
3 Karen Hickey, property owner. The line heading west
4 crosses our property and at this point now where the
5 pole is located there, the pole is out of view and
6 it's in a good spot. Now if they continue upgrading
7 the line, would they change the location of that
8 pole possibly down the road, or would we get a
9 chance to have input in that down the road or --

10 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: What I can say
11 is it is not part of this project, so there would
12 need to be another process. It could be a local
13 review or it could come to the state. So the
14 concise answer is it is not part of this project but
15 any change would need to be evaluated.

16 MS. KAREN HICKEY: Would they contact
17 property owners before they made a change?

18 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: They would need
19 to contact the property owners.

20 I want to make sure people have an
21 opportunity. We'll be around to answer questions,
22 it won't be on the record. And any written
23 comments, as long as they're in by August 26th,
24 we'll look at, we'll evaluate. The scoping will
25 summarize all the comments that came in and provide

1 rationale for either why something may be carried
2 forward to the EA or why it was not carried forward.

3 I do want to make sure that people have
4 an opportunity. Going once, going twice, going
5 three times. Thank you very much for coming out.
6 We're going to be around tonight for a while to try
7 to answer any questions you have. I appreciate your
8 time and your input and we look forward to seeing
9 you in the fall.

10 (Public comment concluded.)

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