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SCOPING AND INFORMATIONAL MEETING
MOTLEY - MAY 20, 2015 - 6:00 P.M.
BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
AND DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

In the Matter of the Application of Great River Energy
and Minnesota Power for a Certificate of Need and Route
Permit for the Motley Area 115 kV Transmission Line
Project in Morrison, Cass and Todd Counties, Minnesota

MPUC DOCKET NOs. ET-2-E-015/CN-14-853
ET-2-E-015/TL-15-204

Motley Staples Middle School Cafeteria
132 1st Avenue South
Motley, Minnesota

May 20, 2015

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1 MS. TRACY SMETANA: Good evening,
2 everyone, and thank you for coming.

3 My name is Tracy Smetana, I'm with the
4 Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, and we are
5 here for a public information and scoping meeting
6 for the Motley Area Transmission Project.

7 And you can see on the bottom here I have
8 listed two numbers, what the Commission calls its
9 docket numbers. And these are sort of the keys to
10 finding information with our office where we track
11 everything related to this particular project. And,
12 also, before we get rolling here, if you would just
13 take a moment to silence your cell phones so we
14 don't have those interruptions, I would appreciate
15 it. Thank you.

16 So, briefly, we're going to have a
17 presentation to start with. I will talk a little
18 bit about the certificate of need and the route
19 permit process for this project. Great River Energy
20 will give a project summary. The Department of
21 Commerce will speak about the environmental review
22 for this project. Then we'll get to the main event,
23 which is your comments and questions.

24 I always like to start out with a little
25 information about who is the Public Utilities

1 Commission anyway, because I know a lot of folks
2 maybe haven't heard of us before, haven't worked
3 with us before, so I always like to give a little
4 introduction. We're a state agency and we regulate
5 permitting for power plants, pipelines, and
6 transmission lines. We also regulate local and
7 in-state long-distance telephone companies and
8 electric and natural gas utilities, their rates and
9 services.

10 We have five commissioners that are
11 appointed by the governor. And they serve staggered
12 terms, so they don't all -- we don't get a new batch
13 when we get a new governor. Some have been
14 appointed by our current governor and some have been
15 appointed by governors past.

16 For our commissioners it is full-time
17 employment, so a little bit different than, say, a
18 city council person in rural Minnesota or a county
19 commissioner in rural Minnesota where they have
20 probably another job and they do the city government
21 or county government sort of on the side, if you
22 will. For our commissioners it is full-time
23 employment. And then we also have about 50 staff
24 members.

25 So the first piece of this puzzle, in

1 terms of the Commission's review process, is what we
2 call a certificate of need. And so the state laws
3 and rules say if a project is of a certain size,
4 before a company may build it they have to get
5 what's called a certificate of need from the Public
6 Utilities Commission. So as you might guess from
7 the name of that, it answers the question is the
8 project needed. And so the company will bring
9 information that tells us why they believe the
10 project is needed.

11 The second piece is the route permit. So
12 if it is needed, where is it going to go, that's the
13 route permit part of it. And, again, based on the
14 size and the capacity of the project, that
15 determines whether the Public Utilities Commission
16 is the permitting authority or if it's handled at a
17 local level.

18 And on both of these slides I've given
19 you the statutes and rules that apply to these
20 particular projects, in case you're interested in
21 doing some really interesting reading later on.

22 A little bit about who's who. There is a
23 number of folks that you might interact with as part
24 of this process. The first is the applicant. And
25 that's the term that we use to describe the

1 companies that are asking for this project. So in
2 this case they're asking for a certificate of need
3 and a route permit, and there are two companies,
4 Great River Energy and Minnesota Power. So if you
5 hear the term applicant, that's who we're talking
6 about.

7 We also have the Department of Commerce,
8 Energy Environmental Review and Analysis, sometimes
9 abbreviated as EERA. They're another state agency
10 separate from the Public Utilities Commission and
11 their job is to conduct the environmental review.
12 And so we'll have a presentation on what that looks
13 like and how that works later on this evening.

14 There's another part of the Department of
15 Commerce that gets involved in this process as well.
16 They're called the Energy Regulation and Planning
17 Division, again, a state agency, and their job is to
18 represent the public interest when utilities ask to
19 change their rates or services, facilities, and so
20 on.

21 Later on in the process we will have the
22 Office of Administrative Hearings, abbreviated OAH,
23 get involved in this process as well. They're
24 another state agency, not connected to the Public
25 Utilities Commission, not connected to the

1 Department of Commerce. They will assign an
2 administrative law judge who will hold hearings back
3 up in this area and gather facts in the record and
4 provide a report for the Public Utilities
5 Commission.

6 At the Public Utilities Commission
7 there's a couple different staff members that you
8 might interact with as well. The first is our
9 energy facilities planner. Their job is on more of
10 the technical side. Reviewing the facts in the
11 record, advising commissioners on the impacts of
12 various alternatives. And then the other is the
13 public advisor, and that's me. My job is to work
14 with people, not the technical aspects, to help you
15 figure out when can I weigh in, when is there
16 another meeting, when can I send comments, what kind
17 of comments are you looking for right now. I help
18 you sort of plug into the process, if you will, stay
19 informed. In each case the Commission staff are
20 neutral. We're not for the project, we're not
21 against the project, we're not for any party, we're
22 not against any party. Our job is to work with the
23 facts and help you plug in where you need to plug
24 in.

25 So how does the Public Utilities

1 Commission decide? Well, there's a number of
2 factors that the statutes and rules describe that
3 the Public Utilities Commission has to consider when
4 they're reviewing one of these types of projects.
5 I'm not going to read through all of them, you have
6 them in your handout, you can see them on the screen
7 here. But just so you know, a lot of these are the
8 same issues that many of you are probably concerned
9 about as well. The environment, public health,
10 archaeological and historic resources, and so on.

11 Now, what the statutes and rules don't do
12 with this list is they don't rank them. So it
13 doesn't say, oh, goodness, over all else make sure
14 you avoid a certain type of plant. Or over all else
15 make sure, you know, you're concerned about the
16 impact on water. So what's going to happen
17 throughout the process is various folks are going to
18 find one issue is more important than another and
19 kind of argue the point about which things should
20 outweigh the other. And the Commission will take
21 all of those facts together and ultimately make the
22 decision on the certificate of need and the route
23 permit for this project.

24 So this is a picture of what the process
25 looks like. Kind of an overview, if you will. So

1 you can see at the top here, application accepted.
2 That's sort of a misleading term. What that really
3 means is the company submitted everything that they
4 needed to start the review process. I know accepted
5 sort of sounds like, well, it's done, you've
6 accepted it, let's go. Really what it means is
7 they've submitted everything they need to call it an
8 application and now we can start reviewing it.

9 So right now we're at the public
10 information and scoping meeting. And so we've got a
11 long way to go, as you can see, through the various
12 steps that happen here.

13 Commerce is going to talk with us about
14 the environmental aspect over here, and then we'll
15 move back into the public hearing. That's the time
16 when that judge will be back up in this area to
17 gather additional facts from the citizens in this
18 area. The judge will write that report, and
19 eventually we get down to the decision on the need
20 and the route. Again, it's the Public Utilities
21 Commission that will make that decision. And the
22 rough time frame to get from this top box,
23 application accepted, to the decision is about 12
24 months. So you can see we're pretty early on in the
25 process.

1 Here's a list that shows essentially the
2 same information, but also includes some estimated
3 dates. And keep in mind, the key here is estimated.
4 This is our best guess for where we're at right now.
5 So, again, you can see we're here in May of 2015 at
6 the information and scoping meeting. And all of
7 those steps we talked about a moment ago, we get
8 down to a decision, we're guessing, in February of
9 2016. So, again, we're early on in the process,
10 there's a long way to go.

11 And along the way there will be some
12 opportunities where you can participate by attending
13 a meeting like this, or sometimes we'll open it up
14 for written comments along the way as well. And so
15 this is a sample of what a notice of comment period
16 would look like. So any time we're accepting
17 written comments on any aspect of the project as we
18 move through the process, we will issue a notice
19 that looks something like this to tell folks, hey,
20 we want your input and here's what we want your
21 input on. So I just want to point out a couple key
22 elements if you see a notice like this you know what
23 to look for.

24 So the first is the docket number.
25 Again, that's sort of the key for everything at the

1 Commission, that's how we record everything, is by
2 docket number. The next is comment period. So it's
3 not going to be an open-ended question all the time.
4 As you can see, this particular comment period
5 closed April 13th of 2015. So this particular
6 comment period has come and gone and the questions
7 that are listed at the bottom as topics open for
8 comment have already been asked and answered. So if
9 we receive comments now on any of these topics, the
10 Commission has already made decisions on that. So
11 it's important to pay attention to what those topics
12 are because you're going to get more of a bang for
13 your buck, if you will, by focusing on the topics
14 that are listed in a given notice. So like the
15 notice that you saw for today's meeting had a list
16 of topics and so it's most important to focus on
17 those particular topics today.

18 So kind of a summary of the keys to
19 sending comments. Include the docket numbers. Stay
20 focused on the topics listed. You don't need to
21 submit your comments more than once. So if you
22 speak today, you don't also need to mail in those
23 same comments. Once we have them in the record,
24 they're in the record. Oral and written comments
25 carry the same weight so you don't get extra credit

1 for speaking. If you're not a public speaker and
2 you prefer to just have them in writing, they count
3 the same.

4 The decision that the Commission will
5 make is based on the facts in the record, not based
6 on how many people like A or how many people like B.
7 It's based on the facts. The comments that you
8 submit are public information. I always like to
9 point that out. We have sort of an electronic file
10 cabinet that is available on the Internet and so
11 anything that you submit in a public comment is
12 going to be in that electronic file cabinet on the
13 Internet. So don't put sensitive information or
14 things that you don't want published on the Internet
15 in your public comments. The Public Utilities
16 Commission needs to receive comments by our close of
17 business when we have an open comment period and for
18 us that's 4:30 p.m.

19 Now, if you're wanting to stay up to date
20 on this project there's a number of ways you can do
21 that. One is, as I mentioned, we have this
22 electronic file cabinet on the Internet and that's
23 available for folks to look at if you like. These
24 are the instructions. It's called eDockets and
25 these are the instructions that you would follow to

1 locate information.

2 Many of you picked up the orange card in
3 the back to sign up for the Commission's mailing
4 list for this project. I always like to point out
5 that just because you got today's meeting notice
6 doesn't necessarily mean that you're on our project
7 mailing list. For this meeting we sent out
8 information to a broad area of folks and then we
9 kind of narrow it down from there. So for folks
10 that wish to remain on the mailing list, I would
11 suggest you fill out that orange card and hand that
12 to me at some point tonight.

13 We also have an e-mail subscription
14 service. So if you're a fan of e-mail, this is a
15 subscription where you can just go out onto the web
16 and enter the information yourself and sign up to
17 receive e-mails. For folks that aren't super fans
18 of e-mail, this might be too much e-mail for you.
19 It does send you a notice every time something new
20 comes into that electronic file cabinet and so
21 sometimes that can be a little bit much. The
22 mailing list that I mentioned on this slide, we'll
23 send you information either by U.S. mail or by
24 e-mail, but it will be a limited amount of
25 information. It won't be everything that happens.

1 It will be opportunities for you to participate
2 either with a comment period or meetings or when the
3 environmental report is done, those types of things.
4 So it won't be every little thing as the
5 subscription service is.

6 With that subscription service, I always
7 like to give you a little picture of what that looks
8 like. Folks often say it's not super user friendly
9 so I like to show you what it should look like when
10 you get to that screen so you know what to fill in
11 when you get there.

12 As I mentioned, there are two different
13 folks that you might interact with at the Public
14 Utilities Commission related to this project. The
15 first is me, my name is Tracy, I'm the public
16 advisor. And then my counterpart, our energy
17 facilities planner is Tricia DeBleeckere, and as I
18 said before, she deals with more of the technical
19 aspects of the project.

20 And with that I'm going to turn it over
21 to Great River Energy.

22 MR. RICK HEURING: Thank you, Tracy.

23 My name is Rick Heuring with Great River
24 Energy and I'm representing tonight the applicants,
25 Great River Energy and Minnesota Power.

1 The proposed project has been submitted
2 to address electrical system overloads that are
3 occurring and will continue to occur in this area,
4 particularly because of the existing electric system
5 is fed primarily by a 34.5 kV system that was built
6 many decades ago and it is reaching its maximum
7 capacity. So with increased load in the area, along
8 with an anticipated pump station project at the
9 south end of the project, we recognized the need to
10 upgrade the system, and the most logical and
11 economic way to do that is to tap into a 115 kV
12 system that's available just north of Motley.

13 There are several components to the
14 project. The Dog Lake Substation would be modified.
15 Dog Lake Substation is located just a little bit
16 northwest of Motley, it's a facility owned by
17 Minnesota Power, and there would be some
18 modifications made to that substation to make it
19 more beneficial and reliable.

20 Then the transmission line project
21 itself, proposed, has some components to it.
22 There's a west and an east option that have been
23 proposed to connect to the existing Minnesota Power
24 115 kV system. There's the east option, which
25 generally follows 51st Avenue and finds its way down

1 to the Crow Wing River. And then there's a west
2 option that generally follows 57th Avenue, also
3 finding itself going across the Crow Wing River down
4 to Azalea Road. Both of these options are submitted
5 equally. There's not any preference given to one or
6 the other. I think part of the process that we're
7 going through right now is to evaluate the benefits
8 and attributes of both of those options and
9 hopefully come up with the one that would best
10 satisfy the needs of the project.

11 And then continuing on with what we call
12 the common route segment. It's about 10 miles in
13 length and would continue west along Azalea Road
14 until it reaches Highway 10. And then the project
15 continues south along Highway 10 all the way down
16 into Scandia Valley Township in Morrison County
17 where the proposed pumping station -- (technical
18 difficulties.)

19 (Off the record.)

20 MR. RICK HEURING: Can you hear me? Is
21 that working? Okay.

22 All right. So then we have what I call
23 the common route segment, about 10 and a half miles
24 in length, traveling generally along Azalea Road
25 from east to west and then south along Highway 10

1 down to Holt Road where the new pump station and a
2 new Crow Wing Power distribution substation would be
3 constructed.

4 And the substation I referred to to be
5 built by Crow Wing Power would be called the Fish
6 Trap Substation. And along with that, there's
7 another improvement to the system that would be
8 done. There's an existing substation operated by
9 Crow Wing Power at Azalea and Bugle Road that's
10 called the Motley Substation, that currently is
11 provided power through the 34 and a half kV system
12 that I mentioned earlier. It is becoming marginally
13 overloaded and so that substation would also be
14 modified to operate at the new 115 kV voltage.
15 Consequently, that would be a much more reliable and
16 robust source of power for that whole area. I know
17 in the past there's probably been some outage
18 issues, maybe not so much in the last year or two,
19 but some years prior to that there was some problems
20 with outages and this should substantially improve
21 that situation.

22 And then, finally, there is a future
23 substation anticipated by Crow Wing Power that would
24 be located somewhere down in the Shamineau Lake
25 area. The exact site has not been determined, but

1 this proposed transmission line would be the source
2 of power for that new substation.

3 And this is going to be hard for you to
4 see, but just very quickly, each one of these boxes
5 represents a mile in size. There's sections of
6 land. So you can see the west option here in a bit
7 of a reddish color, the east option being more
8 purple, and then the common route segment is blue
9 extending down to the proposed Fish Trap Substation.

10 There is a couple of elements -- a couple
11 components to what we call, you'll hear these terms
12 used a lot, route and alignment. We prefer not to
13 use the term corridor, but it kind of helps you
14 visualize, perhaps, what it is, but the application
15 we have submitted is for a route permit. And the
16 route permit is that wider corridor, a term I
17 shouldn't use, but it's the wider corridor, in most
18 cases it extends to both sides of the road and, if
19 approved, it would give us certain latitude to
20 construct the transmission line on one side of the
21 road or the other and still have it fall within the
22 boundary of the route.

23 And then within the route there would be
24 an easement acquired. And we refer to it as a
25 right-of-way. And the typical right-of-way for a

1 power line of this voltage would be 100 feet in
2 width, 50 feet on each side of the power poles.
3 There would be exceptions in some cases. There
4 might be a need for additional right-of-way or
5 easement, in some cases there could be less
6 required. But generally speaking we're looking to
7 get a 100-foot right-of-way.

8 We would generally want to locate our
9 power poles just outside a road right-of-way on
10 private property. We would negotiate and acquire
11 easements from each respective property owner. And
12 if you think about that 100-foot-wide easement, if
13 it's along a road, bear in mind that a good portion
14 of that 100-foot easement would be overlapping the
15 existing road right-of-way if we're positioning our
16 poles just a few feet outside of the right-of-way.

17 Assuming we get a permit for the project,
18 we would initiate negotiations and discussions with
19 landowners, easement documents would be presented,
20 and offers of compensation for those easements.
21 Along with that we would develop more of the details
22 having to do with trees to be removed, how we might
23 get access, certain construction practices would
24 also be discussed and agreed to.

25 This project will facilitate the use of

1 single wood poles ranging in height from 60 to 90
2 feet above the ground. Again, there would be
3 certain areas where there could be exceptions to
4 that, but generally they're going to be wood poles.
5 Those poles are going to be ranging between 250 to
6 400 feet apart. In those instances where there's an
7 existing line, typically it would be a Crow Wing
8 Power distribution line, and along Azalea Road
9 there's an existing 34 and a half kV line, if those
10 wires are transferred and attached to the new poles,
11 that span length will generally be a little bit
12 shorter, closer to 250 feet just because of all the
13 extra weight that would be supported by the pole.

14 In one case I can think of, the river
15 crossing, the Crow Wing River, there could be a need
16 to install a two-pole A-frame structure, and I do
17 have a picture I'll show shortly. That's because of
18 the additional west option, I think we're looking at
19 a 1,000-foot span to get across the river, and on
20 the east option it's more on the order of 500 or 600
21 feet.

22 So this is a typical single wood pole,
23 115 kV, we've got three energized conductors
24 attached to insulators. Up here, hard to see, but
25 there's a shield wire up there. That's multiple

1 use, it's for lightening protection and it would
2 also carry some fiber-optic for communication
3 purposes for the utilities. This is an example of
4 the 115 kV structure with the distribution
5 underbuild. So you take a line that currently
6 exists, put in a wood crossarm, attach it to the
7 pole, and then those wires attach to that. And
8 another picture, it's not real easy to see, but this
9 is the H-frame. It's got some cross bracing here
10 and a big crossarm. There again you see the three
11 energized conductors hanging from insulators. So
12 those are the structures that you would expect to
13 see on this project.

14 The process, once, you know, a permit is
15 acquired, once easements are obtained, would begin
16 with the staking of the clearing limits and
17 establishing the right-of-way and easement area, and
18 then -- where was that pointer?

19 MS. TRACY SMETANA: On the other side.

20 MR. RICK HEURING: Oh. And then a
21 clearing of vegetation for the right-of-way. Power
22 poles would then be delivered and begun to be set
23 up, after which time the electric conductors would
24 be attached to the power poles. And then, finally,
25 energization of the system, restoration, and

1 cleanup.

2 Again, my name is Rick Heuring, I'm one
3 of the couple people at Great River Energy that has
4 been sending information to you. Some of you I've
5 met, some of you I've spoken with on the phone.
6 There's my contact information. And along with me
7 tonight is Mark Strohfus. He had a bunch of the
8 application process that we put together.

9 So, with that, I'll turn it over to Rich.

10 MR. RICH DAVIS: Okay. Can everybody
11 hear me? All right. Thanks, Rick.

12 As Rick mentioned, my name is Rich Davis,
13 I'm the environmental review manager for the
14 Minnesota Department of Commerce. Our unit is the
15 Energy Environmental Review and Analysis Unit. We
16 are within the Energy Division of the Department of
17 Commerce. Our role -- I should point out, that is
18 my contact information. My business cards are back
19 there on that table. I'm the point of contact for
20 any public comments that you might have on the
21 project, anything along those lines. Again, my
22 e-mail address, and you may call on the phone.
23 There's some forms back there to provide written
24 comments as well.

25 Our role, basically, in doing the

1 environmental review, we provide an objective
2 analysis for the project. We don't advocate for the
3 applicant, we don't advocate for a certain agency,
4 we don't advocate for an individual landowner. We
5 pull all the facts, all the information together and
6 we provide a technical analysis and input to
7 Commission staff that they can take on to the
8 Commissioners when they make that decision regarding
9 the certificate of need and the route permit.

10 In this case, as Tracy mentioned, there's
11 a certificate of need -- I lost the sound there --
12 and a route permit that are being considered. When
13 we do our environmental review, we will create an
14 environmental assessment report -- thank you. And
15 in this case, since there's a certificate of need
16 and a route permit, both of those have to be
17 included in the environmental assessment and the
18 environmental review by our agency and they'll be
19 completed in one document. We won't separate those
20 out, they'll be housed together, which, hopefully,
21 in the next couple slides I can help to clarify some
22 of that and some of what you're looking at in those
23 two different options, in those two different
24 documents.

25 Tonight is pretty much our first step in

1 creating that environmental assessment. We want to
2 get an idea from -- I've already mailed out the
3 application that GRE/Minnesota Power have submitted,
4 it went out to state agencies, federal agencies.
5 But we also are holding this meeting, the scoping
6 portion of this meeting that I want to know from you
7 folks in the room if there's something out there
8 that you have a concern about. For human impacts or
9 environmental impacts, is what it's saying.
10 Basically, when we develop the scope for the
11 environmental assessment, we're developing the table
12 of contents. And if you have something that you
13 would like us to look at that you know about or
14 would like us to analyze or look at in a certain
15 way, by all means, let me know.

16 I've already said the part there. We're
17 looking for input from agencies, other state
18 agencies, federal agencies, local governments, and
19 also the public on this.

20 Here's where I'll try to separate them
21 out a little bit.

22 The first part is a certificate of need
23 for the project. We need to look at human and
24 environmental impacts, strategies to mitigate those
25 impacts, and alternatives to the proposed project.

1 That's one of the biggest clarifications I need to
2 make. When it comes to a certificate of need, we're
3 talking about alternatives to the entire project.
4 It's not a route alternative, it's that this project
5 would be completely replaced by something else.

6 Am I getting feedback or something? I'm
7 not playing basketball.

8 And when we're looking at that, we've got
9 this bullet in here, size, type, and timing,
10 specified in the Minnesota Rule 7849.1400. And I'm
11 going to read it just because everybody loves to
12 hear Minnesota rules read to them. A person
13 desiring that a particular alternative or possible
14 adverse impact of the project be considered shall
15 identify the alternative or impact to be included,
16 provide an explanation of why the alternative or
17 impact should be included, and submit all supporting
18 information a person wants the Commissioner to
19 consider. Again, this goes back to the certificate
20 of need. This is specific to the entire project.

21 And going forward, if you have a route
22 alternative that you would like to suggest, this
23 isn't where that falls in. This would be a system
24 alternative to the entire project. And by all
25 means, if that's not clear to anybody, you can talk

1 to me later, you can bring it up as one of my
2 speakers that comes up, however you'd like me to try
3 to clarify it for you.

4 This is more for considering alternatives
5 to the project under the certificate of need.
6 Again, you have to have a specific impact that
7 you're looking to mitigate. Aesthetic, land use,
8 natural resource, or other type of impact. But in
9 doing that, the alternative that you bring up or
10 suggest for the project still has to meet the need
11 of the project. So you still have to hit all the
12 bases of what GRE and Minnesota Power need to
13 accomplish with this project to make it a legitimate
14 alternative.

15 Next, moving on to the second part, is
16 the route permit. For that, again, it looks at
17 environmental impacts, strategies for mitigation,
18 and alternatives to the proposed route. This is --
19 this one I'm not going to read. But this is
20 probably what most of you in the room are concerned
21 about, is looking at route alternatives. And if you
22 want to look at a particular portion of that, of the
23 route that's being proposed and would like to
24 suggest an alternative for that portion, I am more
25 than happy to listen to those suggestions and we can

1 consider them in the environmental assessment. But
2 the thing that we need everybody to remember, it
3 doesn't necessarily just have to be a route
4 alternative even for the rule that's listed up here,
5 it could just be a particular impact along the route
6 that you'd like us to look at. But we need to know,
7 if you're going to suggest an alternative route, we
8 need to know what impact is being mitigated by that
9 shift and how your alternative that you're
10 suggesting is going to offset that impact or
11 minimize that impact or reduce it in some way.

12 It's not necessarily that I just want you
13 to come up and tell me I want you to put it over on
14 my neighbors, that doesn't really work very well.
15 This is getting specifically to that alternative
16 routes. This is where you can provide me comments
17 on the route permit itself, where you'd like to see
18 shifts in that route that Rick pointed to, and I'll
19 use the word corridor, that doesn't bother me any.
20 But I need you to tell me what the specific impacts
21 are that are being caused or that you're seeing with
22 the route as it's being proposed and what your
23 alternative does to offset those impacts. That's
24 what we're going to look at in our environmental
25 assessment. The aesthetic impacts, land use,

1 natural resources, or others.

2 And this is where I'll point out a couple
3 documents, those pieces of paper that are on that
4 back table. This right here is a public comment
5 form. If you want to handwrite what your comment
6 is, if you have a concern regarding a certain impact
7 or a certain route alternative that you would like
8 to suggest. There's some bullets on here that
9 direct you as to what kind of information I need on
10 that. The human or environmental impact that should
11 be studied. Any specific methods that you would
12 suggest on how we would look at that impact or how
13 we could possibly mitigate it or reduce it in some
14 fashion. Again, any route alternatives you could
15 list on here. And, again, that's on that back
16 table.

17 And if you are going to suggest or
18 provide a comment on a route alternative, GRE has
19 some information sheets back there on that same
20 table, and I would greatly appreciate it if you
21 could draw something on a map as to where you would
22 like to see that route alternative go breaking away
23 from what's been proposed. And I don't ask that to
24 be difficult, I ask it to make sure there's clarity.
25 It's really tough for me sometimes to take a comment

1 letter, a comment form that has a description of an
2 alternative with no drawing with it and try to kind
3 of wrangle that in and be able to look at it.
4 Because when I do my environmental assessment of the
5 project, I have this map, so I'm looking at it
6 inside those bounds of the proposed project and
7 that's what I'm going to sit down and look at. So
8 if you have an alternative route you would like to
9 suggest, it's greatly appreciated and it helps me
10 out a lot if we can put something on a map, and if
11 you send that in with it, that would be great. If I
12 have any questions, obviously I'm not afraid to give
13 anybody a call and have some back and forth. I want
14 to make sure that I have your proposed alternative
15 down, how you want to see it and how you want me to
16 take a look at it. Because if that's not accurate
17 going in to my assessment, the end product is not
18 going to be very accurate for anybody. Again, the
19 alternative routes that are suggested goes back to
20 the same as the certificate of need. Recommended
21 alternatives have to meet the need of the project.

22 On the providing public comment, we'll be
23 taking verbal comments tonight. This form, that is
24 back there. This is a list, so if you'd like to
25 speak tonight, I need to have your name and city

1 that you're from, at least, on there. And once I
2 grab that clipboard back there I'll make sure that
3 everybody has had their chance to put their name on
4 there, again, if they'd like to, or if you've got
5 your name on the list and had your question answered
6 you can take yourself off if you don't want to speak
7 any longer.

8 Again, I mentioned before the public
9 comment form, that's back there on the table.
10 You'll notice it does have my name and address on it
11 already on the back side so you just have to fold it
12 up and send it back to us.

13 You can comment online as well. This is
14 our -- this is DOC-EERA's website address right
15 here. If you go to that -- I don't know if I have
16 it on my card or not, it's not directly on my card
17 anyway -- but if you go to that address and you pull
18 it up, this project will have its own specific link
19 on that front page, on our cover page, about a third
20 of the way down, and you can click right on there
21 and you'll be routed to a page where you can submit
22 a public comment. You can mail them to me, e-mail
23 them. And probably for the more important parts
24 right here, the comment period on this, on the
25 scoping, right now ends on June 3rd.

1 I want to go over this slide quick and
2 then we'll go back. Kind of a recap of what our
3 environmental assessment is and what the point of
4 this scoping meeting is tonight. It's to help us
5 develop the scope for what we're going to look at in
6 our environmental assessment. We have -- we
7 obviously have specific things that we are charged
8 to look at and to consider, but we want you, the
9 public that lives here, to give us some comments as
10 to things that you think we might not know about.
11 Even if we've got them on the list to look at, if
12 you think it's an issue that should be considered,
13 by all means come up and share it with us. Or if
14 you don't like speaking in front of everybody, go
15 ahead and submit it to me or shoot me an e-mail.
16 But it's letting us know what we need to include in
17 our scope of our study that we look at when we do
18 the assessment and what we need to analyze so that
19 we can consider all the potential impacts of the
20 project. Human, environmental. If you have some
21 ideas on strategies for mitigation of impacts, if
22 that's something that you think can be done by
23 reducing or removing an impact by changing the route
24 in some fashion, if you've got an alternative you'd
25 like to suggest, please do so. These two points

1 down here, again, this is alternatives to the
2 proposed project. That's for the certificate of
3 need. This is alternatives to the proposed route,
4 which is the route permit.

5 And I'll go back to this one. This is
6 kind of the rules for speaking tonight. I'll have
7 one speaker at a time come up. When you come up,
8 even though you've written your name on the list,
9 but please state and spell your name for my lovely
10 court reporter here so that she knows who you are,
11 where you're from, so that she can have it in the
12 record.

13 Please try to limit your comments to a
14 few minutes. Let's all play nice, don't be mean to
15 anybody. And direct your comments or your questions
16 towards the scope of the environmental assessment.
17 Obviously we can take some questions or comments
18 regarding the project. Specific details, I'll
19 probably turn those over to GRE and let them field
20 those questions. But, otherwise, for whoever is on
21 the list here, if you wouldn't mind coming up here
22 and having a seat, I'll hand you a mic and you can
23 state your questions or comments.

24 I have a Ted Sullivan on the list. If
25 you're comfortable, please stand up here. And I'm

1 sure this one is going to work fine.

2 MR. TED SULLIVAN: Do you need a correct
3 spelling on that? It's T-E-D, S-U-L-L-I-V-A-N. And
4 I live on the proposed east line.

5 And I guess my question is, and this may
6 be not to an environmental question, but why do we
7 have an east option, and has the plan A been annexed
8 already, or where does that lie? You know, there is
9 no other options on the rest of the line with the
10 exception of the very first couple miles. So what's
11 going on there.

12 And I guess my other question would be,
13 is if you have, let's say, across the road your
14 neighbor is being compensated for right-of-way, what
15 compensation do you have if you, let's say the line
16 isn't on your property but it's across the road and
17 now you have to live with this transmission line
18 going through your property but, you know, it may
19 not be on your property, but it's just across the
20 road. So I guess those are my two questions that
21 I'd like somebody to answer for me.

22 MR. RICK HEURING: The east route option
23 was developed shortly after we conducted the open
24 house meeting in September 2014. And, you know,
25 again, the open house was to solicit feedback, get a

1 sense of, you know, what some of the issues might
2 be. And I know if -- I'll walk over to the map here
3 and I'll try to talk loud.

4 Again, from earlier, about the crossing
5 of the west option, a crossing of the river being
6 upwards around 1,000 feet in length. And if you can
7 kind of see the river channel running diagonally,
8 you know, this represents quite a bit of a skewed
9 crossing. So this is a challenging crossing, it's
10 long in nature. And I think what we failed to
11 recognize early at that time of the project was
12 that, you know, there was another opportunity to
13 cross the same river using the east route option.
14 And this crossing, a couple of things about it, it's
15 shorter, much shorter, again five or six hundred
16 feet in length, but there's also an existing line
17 there. And in permitting projects like this, one of
18 the criteria, one of the real important criteria
19 that we're charged with is to follow existing
20 corridors. So given the fact that there's not a
21 crossing of the river here that exists, an overhead
22 crossing, but there is one that does cross here,
23 does put some value I think in the east option. And
24 that's just one item.

25 We also recognize the fact that there's a

1 little bit more development along this west route
2 option here, perhaps more tree removal associated
3 with that one here, here, different areas are more
4 heavily wooded.

5 So we really recognized after the open
6 house in September that perhaps this was equally a
7 good option for us. We could certainly have a more
8 conducive crossing of the river following an
9 established corridor, so to speak, and then
10 utilizing roads from here all the way to here.

11 So both of them have merit, both of them
12 generally follow existing corridors until you get to
13 the river. But that's kind of the nuts and bolts of
14 how we got from just one to having two.

15 And with regard to compensation for an
16 easement, if you live across the road, you own
17 property across the road, there is no compensation.
18 There's no purpose in getting an easement from
19 somebody across the road, we only would get an
20 easement for that 100-foot right-of-way. So there's
21 no case law that I'm aware of where someone has been
22 paid because they have to look at the power line
23 across the road.

24 MR. RICH DAVIS: I guess to speak to the
25 environmental assessment side of things, both of

1 those, as far as I'm concerned and our environmental
2 assessment document is concerned, both the west and
3 the east options are definitely still on the table.
4 They're both going to be analyzed that way, and the
5 combined route down to the south, so they're still
6 proceeding forward.

7 At this point, you know, we don't have
8 the technical analysis of anything done to say that
9 we would recommend one over the other for any
10 reason. And the aesthetics is looked at as a
11 potential impact, you know, view shed, but to the
12 extent that it might be looked at to meet what you
13 brought up, you know, your concern with being across
14 the street, I don't know that it would go that far
15 to that point.

16 Troy Gullikson.

17 MR. TROY GULLIKSON: I'm good.

18 MR. RICH DAVIS: Oh, you're good?

19 Okay. Joel Lewis?

20 MR. JOEL LEWIS: I'm good.

21 MR. RICH DAVIS: You're good?

22 Adam Loberg?

23 MR. ADAM LOBERG: Yeah. Is there a way
24 you can pull up the map up there, the full map?

25 MR. RICH DAVIS: This one?

1 MR. ADAM LOBERG: Yeah. I'm Adam Loberg,
2 L-O-B-E-R-G.

3 A question maybe for GRE is, if I
4 understand it correctly, one of your goals is the
5 Motley distribution and substation, right? To
6 strengthen that? So is there a possibility -- and
7 I've got a few questions but this is the first one.
8 Is there a possibility of minimizing the route? If
9 you come down 64, it's fuzzy, and then come straight
10 down 10 with just a sidearm off to that substation,
11 you would cancel out somewhere between 6 to 9 miles
12 of transmission line if that's a possibility. That
13 would speak to the aesthetics as well as probably
14 some of the environmental and other concerns, and
15 whether or not that's been considered. I don't know
16 if that has been considered or ruled out yet.

17 MR. RICH DAVIS: I'd probably turn that
18 over to GRE, but I imagine their first concern would
19 be meeting the need for the Fish Trap pump station
20 supply.

21 MR. ADAM LOBERG: Sure, but if you come
22 all the way straight down -- it's easier to show you
23 on this map here. If you come straight down here,
24 which is a fairly -- it's a state highway, if you
25 come straight down 71st, which is also 64, right

1 into Motley and continue right down 10 and come
2 straight off, you know, you can have a little
3 sidearm over to catch the other substation. But you
4 would cancel out all of this. I believe this route
5 is about 6 miles saved, this would be about 9 miles
6 saved. Total.

7 MR. RICH DAVIS: You're still talking --
8 I thought you were talking about cutting that
9 portion out of it.

10 MR. ADAM LOBERG: No. Yeah, it would
11 catch here, coming straight down -- like I say, it's
12 hard to tell with this map -- but if you come
13 straight down Highway 64, come right into Motley and
14 then come straight down 10 and come off the side and
15 catch your Motley substation and continue on where
16 you have to go.

17 MR. MARK STROHFUS: I can answer that.
18 Mark Strohfus, Great River Energy.

19 I work in the environmental services
20 department. You know, Rick made some comments about
21 the river crossing earlier. The river crossing to
22 me in my role of this project is more significant, I
23 just want to make that additional point here, that
24 utilizing an existing river crossing corridor will
25 be important to state agencies like the Minnesota

1 DNR, and federal agencies like the U.S. Fish and
2 Wildlife Services. That's my two cents pitch.

3 With respect to your suggestion here, we
4 did not actually look at a direct connect right from
5 64 all the way down. We looked at alternatives from
6 the Dog Lake Substation and some -- a couple
7 different routes to get in through here. So, first
8 of all, on the distance issue, if we tapped in at 64
9 on this, we would have one -- again, each of these
10 is a section, it's one mile. One, two, three, four,
11 five, six, seven miles of transmission line, plus
12 the roughly one, two, three, four, I think it's
13 about another seven or eight down to here. So we
14 can ignore the common route. Over here we have one,
15 two, three, four, five, six, seven, so it's
16 essentially equivalent, slightly longer because of
17 the angle of this line, so we're not actually saving
18 any distance.

19 MR. ADAM LOBERG: You don't have to add
20 it from 64 to the east takeoff point?

21 MR. MARK STROHFUS: Right. No, we would
22 tap right into the 64 and come down. Similarly, on
23 the east route option, that one is going to be about
24 8 miles. So you'd save a mile off, if we were to
25 compare to the east route. I think the problem we

1 had, and we discussed some of that with these other
2 route alternatives, is getting through the town of
3 Motley itself. We need a 100-foot right-of-way.
4 Highway 10 through Motley's downtown area is
5 extremely crowded, we didn't consider that a viable
6 build option, so we had to somehow skirt around the
7 town. So often one option for that is to go out
8 more into the country.

9 MR. ADAM LOBERG: Sure.

10 MR. MARK STROHFUS: So that specific
11 option we didn't include, but we had some more
12 options that we included and rejected. And the
13 application talks about all of those rejected routes
14 that we considered.

15 MR. ADAM LOBERG: Sure. Okay.

16 MR. MARK STROHFUS: Does that answer all
17 your questions?

18 MR. ADAM LOBERG: That one.

19 MR. MARK STROHFUS: Okay. Do you have
20 more?

21 MR. ADAM LOBERG: I do. Actually, a few
22 others. So I live in Motley, right behind some of
23 the other gentlemen that had their names on the
24 list. And, actually, my wife and I walk quite a bit
25 and my concern is environmentally on the west route,

1 I'll point it out over here. So some of the other
2 gentlemen that had their name on the list live right
3 down here off 57th on the west route, and there's a
4 pretty substantial wetland that comes through that
5 area draining quite a bit of the area to the north.
6 And in that larger wetland area, currently
7 there's -- what is there, two nesting eagles, bald
8 eagles; two Trumpeter Swans, they're out there
9 daily; cranes, Sandhill Cranes. What else did we
10 have out there?

11 UNIDENTIFIED: You name it. Otters,
12 beavers.

13 MR. ADAM LOBERG: There's quite a bit of
14 wildlife that goes through that area, that uses that
15 area. Last year we had -- was it the last -- the
16 last two years we had some mountain lions come
17 through that were there actually for quite a while.
18 Hadn't seen them through deer season, but all
19 through the summer season. A couple of them, there
20 was actually a mother and a young yearling, I
21 believe. So there's quite a bit of wildlife that
22 uses that area consistently, lives there, if not
23 comes through there. That's a concern with that
24 area for sure, that western route, that would need
25 to be looked at in the environmental assessment.

1 As well as I think there's a -- and I'm
2 not sure where out there, I believe there's an old
3 Ox Cart Trail, that, if not Indian mounds, but I've
4 heard that some of that has historic value, but I'm
5 not sure. There are property owners that are out
6 there that aren't able to do anything with their
7 properties because of that and I don't know how that
8 affects some of these things.

9 MR. MARK STROHFUS: Okay. First on the
10 issue of the wildlife. Again, one component of this
11 project is that we will be soliciting comments from
12 the state and federal regulatory agencies.
13 Specifically, again, the Minnesota Department of
14 Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
15 Service. So they will review the project.

16 The information that you have is probably
17 valuable enough and it will be included in the
18 report here that Janet is putting together. So
19 that's good information for everybody to understand.

20 It's not uncommon for us to -- to be
21 exposed to wildlife with transmission lines.
22 Transmission lines are everywhere, as well as
23 distribution lines. Wildlife generally survives
24 well with respect to transmission line projects. If
25 there's a major migratory pathway for birds, the DNR

1 will specifically ask us to put up what's called
2 flight diverters. And it's quite often just like a
3 coil of additional wire that adds some
4 dimensionality to the wire when the birds are flying
5 over it and it's easier for them to see. So there
6 are mechanisms to mitigate impacts to migratory
7 birds.

8 Now, you're not the first to mention the
9 migratory birds and, again, because of the new
10 crossing of the river, that we do have some concerns
11 with that on the west route, but I think it's still
12 a viable route.

13 MR. ADAM LOBERG: So there is actually
14 conservation for endangered or other species
15 specifically looked at on what's out there right
16 now?

17 MR. MARK STROHFUS: Absolutely. We will
18 request a data search from the Department of Natural
19 Resources and they will tell us about all listed
20 threatened and endangered species in the area, both
21 animals and plants, and we'll be expected to address
22 any potential impacts to those species if they
23 occur.

24 MR. ADAM LOBERG: So is that a report
25 that says just consider those species, or is it a

1 matter of are those species here, let's specifically
2 address it this way?

3 MR. MARK STROHFUS: The DNR will
4 specifically identify species that have been already
5 identified in the area. So they don't come out and
6 do a survey. Typically that's often how these
7 things are found, a survey is done. But also just
8 stakeholder involvement, people are out, you know,
9 you're hiking and you call your DNR agent and say,
10 hey, I saw this eagle nest near my house, you know,
11 what's the importance of that. Right now eagles are
12 no longer an endangered species, they are still a
13 protected species under the Bald and Golden Eagle
14 Protection Act, though. So, you know, again,
15 transmission lines are everywhere, it's going to
16 cause some impact, you know, it's just unavoidable.

17 MR. ADAM LOBERG: Sure. I guess part of
18 the -- my looking east versus west route, I see a
19 lot of water, a lot of wetlands that are used by a
20 lot of animals, and even some protected species,
21 whether that's the Trumpeter Swans that are out
22 there or whatever. Whereas, the eastern route, at
23 least aerially it doesn't look to have much water at
24 all that affect it. So I guess I'd like to make
25 that statement so it's known, is that I see a lot

1 more wetlands and wildlife being affected by the
2 western route.

3 MR. MARK STROHFUS: Sure. And with
4 respect to wetlands, we work with the U.S. Army
5 Corps of Engineers and we will have to evaluate our
6 wetland impacts. And if it's over an acre of
7 impacts, and it's pretty detailed how we calculate
8 what that acreage is, what the volume of the acreage
9 is, but then we would have to have consultation,
10 potentially, with the Corps of Engineers to evaluate
11 what that impacts.

12 Now, with respect to the west route
13 option and that area south of your home, we are
14 proposing to stay on the east side of 57th Avenue
15 because we recognize that the crossing of the
16 wetlands on the west side was a greater distance,
17 which is a cost impact and a construction hurdle for
18 us. So we'd prefer to build on dry ground, not on
19 wet grand.

20 MR. ADAM LOBERG: Right. And there's a
21 pretty substantial wetland just east of 57th.

22 MR. MARK STROHFUS: Yes. We've seen
23 that, we recognize that, that's why we've drawn up
24 the alignment on the east side of the route.

25 Your other question about the Ox Cart

1 Trail, we've already had archeologists out looking
2 at the river crossing area. They've done what's
3 called a Phase 1 assessment, and that's where they
4 will get the library of historical files to figure
5 out where historic sites are. There are a number of
6 historic sites identified along the Crow Wing River
7 along the area where we originally proposed to cross
8 and also on the east route option.

9 Now, we've had the archeologists on site
10 to do some preliminary field investigation. They
11 don't believe that the project would significantly
12 impact any of those sites. We consider that our
13 impact simply consists of boring a hole in the
14 ground, sticking a pole, we have very limited
15 surface area that we're impacting and subsurface
16 area where all the sites will be located. So we've
17 looked at that, we'll have the State Historic
18 Protection Society Office, State Historic -- SHPSO,
19 whatever that is, review the project as well.
20 Similarly to like what the DNR and U.S. Fish and
21 Wildlife Service will do. So we would get their
22 concurrence, and if there's anything identified
23 during the construction process, specifically, if we
24 start boring down a hole and start pulling up bones,
25 then we have to stop the project, call the State

1 Historic Preservation officer, get somebody out on
2 site and they'd have to do an investigation to
3 determine what that site consists of. And, yeah,
4 there is an Ox Cart Trail through there and we've
5 been made aware of that.

6 MR. RICH DAVIS: With respect to the
7 areas that you've brought up, I appreciate you
8 bringing those up, because a lot of times eagle
9 nests haven't been reported or surveyed since about
10 2007 or 2008 by the Minnesota DNR because they're
11 not a state listed species, they've turned it over
12 almost entirely to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
13 Service. So that helps to give me some perspective
14 from the public out in the area so I know areas that
15 I need to discuss with biologists at the Fish and
16 Wildlife Service because they still track them, but
17 they don't have the staff or time to get out and
18 survey everywhere. So I'll be in contact with them
19 specifically on that.

20 But, also, from the Trumpeter Swan
21 standpoint, that's an important one as well. The
22 DNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service both have
23 fairly active staff in that, with regard to
24 specifics to that species because of the potential
25 for collision with the transmission lines. As Mark

1 has brought up, one of the ways it appears to be
2 working from a mitigation standpoint is it will put
3 in flight diverters and establishing them on the
4 line. But I'll reach out to -- it's actually a
5 different staff person at the regional office for
6 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that handles
7 Trumpeter Swan issues, and I'll get ahold of them
8 and their local ecology office in Bloomington as
9 well.

10 MR. ADAM LOBERG: And as long as somebody
11 is going out there, it would be good just to look
12 around and see what's out there. Because there are
13 quite a few different species through that area.
14 And it has been awhile since anybody has been out
15 there looking at things or taking note of whatever.
16 It is, like I say, it might not be a bad idea.
17 Troy, you guys know the land better than anybody out
18 there, it may not hurt to even walk around with some
19 of these guys.

20 MR. RICH DAVIS: Is that on your
21 property?

22 MR. ADAM LOBERG: On Troy's and Joel's.

23 MR. RICH DAVIS: Okay. If I line
24 anything up, or GRE does, we'll definitely be in
25 touch with the landowners out there because they

1 know what's going on.

2 MR. ADAM LOBERG: Appreciate it.

3 MR. MARK STROHFUS: Thank you.

4 MR. RICH DAVIS: Is it Neil Trout or
5 Truet? Neil from Motley?

6 UNIDENTIFIED: He might have left.

7 MR. RICH DAVIS: That completes the list.
8 So I guess I'll open it up, if anybody would like
9 to -- that's not on the list, by all means, if you
10 would like to come up, just a raise of hands or
11 anything like that and we'll just kind of go in
12 order.

13 MR. DEAN JOHNSON: I didn't get on the
14 list. I'll show you where I live here.

15 MR. RICH DAVIS: Come up here and state
16 your name and tell us where you're from.

17 MR. DEAN JOHNSON: Dean Johnson, D-E-A-N,
18 J-O-H-N-S-O-N. I live on the north end of the west
19 option. Me and my wife have a beef cow operation
20 there.

21 And on the building site here, they're
22 going on the west side of the road, which I was told
23 back five years ago, they redid our road and it's a
24 55-foot right-of-way. And in front of our building
25 site they only went 50 feet to clear and grub it.

1 So if they go, I was told a couple feet beyond the
2 right-of-way, and then add another 50 feet, it will
3 be taking a lot of our nice oaks through there that
4 we want left there for the road noise and just to
5 have a little privacy.

6 Now, we own this land on the east side,
7 too, so I was asking if there's a way to switch it
8 over to the east side when they get to 124th Street.
9 We own the land on both sides.

10 MR. RICH DAVIS: Okay. I don't know why
11 it would be an issue on our side to make sure that
12 both sides are considered in the environmental
13 assessment so that that would be an option to open
14 that up. I don't know if GRE has any comments
15 specific to that area as to why one side was looked
16 at versus the other, but...

17 MR. RICK HEURING: I had spoken with
18 Mr. Johnson fairly recently, and he did inform me
19 that when the road was reconstructed he worked with
20 Crow Wing Power at that time, and Crow Wing Power
21 operates a three-phase distribution line which
22 crosses to the east side at that location. And
23 given the fact that he owns property on both sides
24 of the road and we're not dumping it on someone
25 else, I said there's a very good likelihood that we

1 could work with him.

2 It does entail some additional burden on
3 us trying to build over a relatively new three-phase
4 distribution line, it adds additional costs to the
5 project, but if he can make a case, you know, if we
6 can recognize that there's valuable oak trees on the
7 west side of the road that could be saved without
8 adversely, you know, removing a lot of trees on the
9 east side, you know, that that's probably a pretty
10 good case for making an adjustment like that.
11 Fortunately for me, I think he owns the property on
12 both sides and this is his proposal, so I'm open to
13 that. So we'll work with him when we get to that
14 point, but I think it's important that he make the
15 point tonight that there are oak trees there.

16 MR. DEAN JOHNSON: There is a lot less
17 oak trees on the east side.

18 Then another question I had. The lines,
19 they go through our property up here, too, the
20 connecting line.

21 MR. RICH DAVIS: Oh, line 24?

22 MR. DEAN JOHNSON: Yep. Okay. Now, when
23 it's really damp out, like, say, Sunday, you go
24 there and you can be a couple hundred feet from them
25 and there's a steady hum and buzz continuously.

1 Now, is that line going to do the same thing?

2 MR. MARK STROHFUS: The noise you're
3 probably hearing is an artifact of what we call
4 corona discharge. It's kind of an electric
5 discharge that oxidizes air particles around the
6 line. It's usually associated with defects in the
7 power line, you know, little nicks, or there's a
8 number of wires, wrapped around wired, sometimes
9 they fray up a little bit or lose connections on the
10 transmission line system.

11 We don't normally seem to hear much for
12 noise complaints on 115 kV systems, so I would say
13 it's unlikely that the new line is going to make
14 noise. I cannot guarantee that it would not in the
15 right conditions, but it is typically when there's
16 wet, you know, really damp, either a light, misty
17 rain or perhaps a foggy morning or something like
18 that, but we normally would not expect any noise
19 associated with a new line.

20 MR. DEAN JOHNSON: So that line will not
21 discharge that noise like those two?

22 MR. MARK STROHFUS: Possibly. I'll
23 connect up with our partners on the project at
24 Minnesota Power and make a mention to them and they
25 can have somebody come out and inspect the line for

1 loose connections. On a 115 kV I think our normal
2 assumption is there's a loose connection somewhere
3 and getting arcing.

4 MR. RICK HEURING: There's a 230 line
5 there also.

6 MR. MARK STROHFUS: That's a good point.
7 Yes, the 230 would be more likely to be associated
8 -- the higher voltage is going to cause higher
9 corona discharge. I think -- are we putting
10 oversized conductor on this one too, Paul?

11 MR. PAUL WOODRUFF: It's just 477
12 conductors, the standard conductor.

13 MR. MARK STROHFUS: Okay.

14 MR. DEAN JOHNSON: Believe it or not, I
15 just want to make this statement. That animals
16 don't like that.

17 MR. RICH DAVIS: And as part of our
18 environmental assessment, we do look at noise, you
19 know, possible discharge. The corona that Mark
20 referenced, we do include that in our environmental
21 assessment. We look at it as part of the reason we
22 have setback distances from homes and, you know, not
23 specific to livestock, but specifically for
24 residents and whatnot. And we do look at that and
25 we'll talk back and forth with GRE to get an idea of

1 what kind of level of noise they would anticipate.
2 And like Mark said, I know they can't guarantee it,
3 but 115s tend to not have as much noise coming off
4 of them as the bigger lines do.

5 MR. DEAN JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you.

6 MR. RICH DAVIS: Do we have any more that
7 would like to speak?

8 Yes, sir. Please come up here and state
9 and spell your name and where you're from.

10 MR. BUTCH KEPPERS: Butch Keppers,
11 K-E-P-P-E-R-S. And I just wanted to ask how far
12 from the buildings are you going to stay? Take that
13 new line down Highway 10, how far do you have to
14 stay away from a home?

15 MR. RICH DAVIS: What do you guys use for
16 your standard setbacks?

17 MR. RICK HEURING: Do you want to show
18 me?

19 (AT map.)

20 MR. RICK HEURING: You know, I think a
21 couple things come into play. There's the absolute
22 minimum separation, that would be what National
23 Electric Safety Code would require for a 115 kV
24 line, and that's fairly close, actually, that would
25 be permitted to within about 20 feet of a structure,

1 Paul, right? However, we recognize that's too close
2 anyway. But in that area, if you recall, were you
3 living there when Highway 10 was built, the bypass
4 and all that?

5 MR. BUTCH KEPPERS: Right. Right.

6 MR. RICK HEURING: But MnDOT acquired a
7 significant wide right-of-way for the four-lane
8 highway. So in those places along Highway 10 where
9 we do see there's a handful of dwellings or
10 businesses that are really close to the right-of-way
11 line, we would take that opportunity to perhaps skew
12 the alignment of the power line and put it in
13 highway right-of-way to create some additional
14 separation from those dwellings or structures. We
15 also know there's billboards in some locations,
16 physical features like that, and we have to be -- we
17 have to recognize that they're there, we have to
18 provide, you know, safety code required separation.
19 But to try and answer your question without actually
20 physically seeing your home or your business there,
21 you know, I think we would want to see 50 foot or
22 more separation from any type of a structure like
23 that.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: There's an easement right
25 in front of the house. A road easement. So it's

1 like road right-of-way, a road easement, house.

2 MR. RICK HEURING: Yeah, and with that
3 being the case, you know, I don't see where we could
4 put ourselves outside of the road easement if that
5 means putting the line over your home, we just can't
6 do that. So in that case we would have to look
7 at -- and, again, I think there's significant
8 highway right-of-way, there's a big road ditch along
9 there and slopes and things like that, I think
10 there's plenty of opportunity for us to get
11 ourselves, you know, reasonable separation.

12 MR. BUTCH KEPPERS: Do you know what side
13 of the highway it's going on?

14 MR. RICK HEURING: You know, I didn't
15 mention this before, but if you look at these maps,
16 if you're interested, you'll see the light purple
17 shaded area, that represents that route, if you
18 remember that wide band we call the route. And then
19 within that wide band we have the right-of-way. On
20 these maps you'll see the light-shaded corridor, and
21 then you'll see a solid line. And that solid line
22 does represent the proposed alignment. Along
23 Highway 10, we are proposing to be on the west side
24 of Highway 10, all the way from Azalea down to Holt
25 Road. And then along Azalea Road, we are proposing

1 to be on the south side of Azalea Road all the way
2 from Highway 10 to where it reaches the river. So
3 if you're on the west side, I think that's what you
4 showed me --

5 MR. BUTCH KEPPERS: Yeah.

6 MR. RICK HEURING: -- we would be dealing
7 with you in that area.

8 MR. RICH DAVIS: And that's something
9 where you would have the opportunity, if you wanted
10 to provide a comment on a route alternative, to see
11 if there's any way to shift that or to move that, by
12 all means, let me know about that in writing. Or
13 obviously we have you on the record talking, so it's
14 something that I have a record of you bringing that
15 up as a concern so we can kind of flesh that out
16 more.

17 MR. BUTCH KEPPERS: What -- how do they
18 decide west side instead of the east side of the
19 road?

20 MR. RICH DAVIS: That was GRE's route
21 selection that came in their proposed route. If I'm
22 not mistaken, there's an existing -- no, there's not
23 existing on that part of it anyway. That was
24 just -- I don't know exactly what you guys went
25 through to pick west versus east on that bottom

1 part.

2 MR. RICK HEURING: You know, we recognize
3 that there's impacts to people on the west side of
4 the highway, there's impacts to people on the east
5 side of the highway. We kind of look at how many of
6 those impacts are there, you know, how severe are
7 they. We kind of give it a score, so to speak, as
8 to, you know, how many -- how much would we impact
9 people on the west side compared to those on the
10 east side. Looking at physical features,
11 constructability, wetlands, tree removal, all these
12 factors that play into, you know, how difficult and
13 how expensive it might be to construct a project
14 like this, and in this case the west side just was
15 more favorable than the east side was.

16 MR. BUTCH KEPPERS: If it wasn't for that
17 pumping station, they wouldn't be putting power down
18 there, right?

19 MR. RICK HEURING: Well, I think at some
20 point, you know, I talked earlier about the future
21 need for the Shamineau Lake Substation by Crow Wing
22 Power, so it maybe wouldn't be a project we'd be
23 proposing now, but I think in the relative near
24 future we'd be up here, we'd be proposing a project
25 that would go at least to Shamineau Lake. But

1 you're correct, the pump station is a big factor in
2 this project. It's a huge electric load, it has to
3 be served, and it's located in the Crow Wing Power
4 service area. And so, you know, they're somewhat
5 obligated to provide that power, and we being the
6 wholesale provider to Crow Wing Power, we're
7 obligated to figure out how to get the transmission
8 system to deliver to that substation by Crow Wing
9 Power.

10 UNIDENTIFIED: Where we're at it is Todd
11 Wadena. Does that have an effect?

12 MR. RICK HEURING: Are you on Todd
13 Wadena's system?

14 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

15 MR. RICK HEURING: We serve Todd Wadena
16 also, they're a cooperative member of Great River
17 Energy just like Crow Wing Power is. But it didn't
18 factor into the project, it didn't factor into which
19 side of the highway we elected to use. It just was
20 more favorable for us to be on the west side, it
21 just made more sense.

22 MR. RICH DAVIS: I have been informed
23 that we have to take a break here in two minutes,
24 but before we do that I guess I'd like to see maybe
25 a showing of hands if anybody would still like to

1 speak after our break? Or if we are to a point
2 where we should wrap up the meeting?

3 All right. I see no hands being raised.
4 So before I end the meeting, myself, I'm here to
5 talk to you if you have any questions or have
6 comments for me. If you don't want to come up and
7 speak in front of everybody, by all means grab my
8 arm and give me some comments if you have them.

9 GRE staff is here, if you have questions
10 on any of the maps that are up over here, there are
11 some maps over there, I know they'd be happy to talk
12 to you and discuss the project further.

13 But I would like to say thank you for
14 coming out, thank you for your comments. And
15 remember June 3rd is the magic date that the public
16 comment period closes on the scoping aspect of the
17 project that informs me as to what I need to look at
18 in the environmental assessment.

19 Thank you very much.

20 (Matter concluded.)

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