



Regular Planning Board Meeting

Minutes

Wednesday, September 18, 2024 at 6:15 pm

Meeting Location

Meeting will be at the Winslow Town Office (Parks & Recreation Room)

Meeting is open to the public.

1. Roll Call

Minutes:

The meeting was called to order at 6:17 PM.

The following Planning Board members were present: Chair Gary Owen, Vice Chair Peter Newkirk, Elery Keene, Mike Desrosiers, and Steve Gagnon.

Also in attendance: Code Officer Garrett Lower, Administrative Assistant Vanessa Cote, Winslow Residents Eldon Trimble and Jacob Lavarney, and employees from Central Maine Power.

2. Establish Quorum

Minutes:

Chairman Owen notes that 5 of the 7 members of the Planning Board are present.

3. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

Minutes:

None Disclosed.

4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

Minutes:

Ms. Cote notes a Scribner error that Chairman Owen brought to her attention, silk fence will be changed to silt fence.

Mr. Gagnon motions to accept the minutes with the appropriate changes. Mr. Newkirk seconds the motion

Motion passes by unanimous vote.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0

5. Discussion

a. Section 1 Transmission Line Rebuild Project Presentation

Minutes:

Minutes amended per the Planning Board meeting held on November 20th, 2024.

Chairman Owen opens the floor to have a member of CMP to present their presentation. Mr. Mike Banaitis introduced himself as an environmental consultant with Power Engineers, Inc. Other members of this project included Peter Hamata, Project Manager with CMP. Deborah Turcotte, Project Outreach Specialist with CMP. Erica Boucher, Permit Specialist with CMP. Lauren Roderigue, Key Account Manager with CMP. William Goggin, Manager of Environmental Programs and Projects with CMP.

Mr. Banaitis went on to go over a printed-out presentation for everyone to look over while he spoke. The Board did not see the slideshow prior to the meeting.

Section 1 is an existing transmission line, it goes from Augusta East through Vassalboro, and into Winslow. The poles are about 35-40 feet tall. The line was built in 1920 and is in poor condition due to age, and limited work area clearance. Because of this they are prone to failure and considered a liability. Once the current line is replaced there will be an improvement in the reliability of the lines. The scope of the project is included in the handout. There will be a re-route section in the town of Winslow in section 40 which is an existing right of way. There will be 3 acres of tree trimming required with this project to create clearance for the new line.

CMP is working on procurement now; construction will most likely start at the beginning of next year. Project completion should be done in Q1 or Q2 of 2026.

Mr. Newkirk asked about vernal pools within the project.

Mr. Goggin mentioned that there is only one vernal pool, and it is located in Vassalboro.

Mr. Newkirk verified that they are avoiding them.

Mr. Goggin responded yes since they all fell out of the scope of the work area.

Mr. Banaitis went on to discuss resource impact. They designed the project to avoid natural resource impacts, there is no instream work, and timber mat bridges will be used so as not to disturb streams. 12 of the poles being replaced are in protected areas, 11 poles are in residential areas, and 12 poles are in floodplain areas.

Chairman Owen asked if they had the resources to know what was below the surface when digging the holes for the poles.

Mr. Goggin says that dig safe is used, they dig a maximum of 10 to 12 feet down for poles so there isn't a huge concern.

CEO Lower asked if there was any chance they'd be blasting anywhere.

Mr. Goggin replied that they would not need to blast for this project. Typically, they only blast for substations.

Mr. Keene asked if the power lines would be going in the same place as the previous powerlines.

Mr. Banaitis replied yes except for where they've indicated rerouting in their plans. The purple line on the map is where the power lines will come out and the red indicates the replacement lines.

Mr. Gagnon asked where exactly they were putting the line.

Mr. Banaitis says the line will be going in at the southern end of Smiley Ave to where line 1 and line 40 meet and then goes through Primrose Street and Frankwood Drive.

Mr. Gagnon asked if their 100-foot right of way would increase during this project.

Mr. Banaitis said they would not need an increase since they are just adding another line.

Mr. Keene asked how wide the easements are.

Mr. Goggin responded that they are typically 100 feet right of way.

Mr. Newkirk notes that it includes areas where easements are 135 though.

Mr. Goggin says all existing rights of ways will not increase.

Mr. Gagnon says he lives near Primrose and his neighbors are worried because they think CMP is going to take trees and fences like they did last year. Could this happen again?

Ms. Turcotte let Mr. Gagnon know that they are meeting with individual land owners to go over potential outcomes. Some clearing will take place for the new line starting at Smiley Avenue. One person already knows they will be losing a willow tree, but they've been communicating opening with landowners. Easements may vary during the plan but they will not be adding new easements.

Chairman Owen stated that landowners may not know they have easements.

Ms. Turcotte replied to Chairman Owen letting him know that this is something they have run into. A woman in Vassalboro bought a house recently and had no idea about the easement.

Chairman Owen asked whether they were in fact communicating with everyone prior to any work happening to ensure they know what's going on?

Ms. Turcotte let everyone know that they have sent out over 160 letters, attended and presented at 2 Winslow Council meetings, held special meetings for anyone that will be affected, and they are putting together an informational sheet that will be on their website.

Mr. Gagnon wanted to point out that last year CMP did not let him know that they would be taking his lilac tree.

Ms. Turcotte asked how far out his easement is.

Mr. Gagnon said the easement is 50 feet from the center line.

Ms. Turcotte said that they are trying to keep the right of ways clear to the lines to limit power outages but she isn't sure why they took his lilac tree.

Mr. Gagnon said that they didn't have any reason to remove his tree, which is why he wanted to ask about the possibility of it happening to others since his neighbors had asked about it.

Mr. Banaitis wanted to know if they have met Winslow's ordinances for Shoreland Zoning. CEO Lower let everyone know that this is his first time dealing with transmission lines so he is relying on CMP to help him better understand how they've done this kind of thing previously in other towns.

Ms. Cote added that since this was already a pre-approved plan and they are not looking to create completely new transmission lines in new areas that they should be all set from the previous authorization.

Mr. Newkirk said that the Board could make a note that we have heard the presentation and see no objection to the plan.

Chairman Owen asked if someone would make that motion.

Mr. Newkirk made a motion to acknowledge that we have received their application and reviewed the information submitted. We feel that they comply with Winslow's ordinances and have no objections to the plan. Mr. Keene seconds the motion.

The motion passes unanimously 5-0.

Mr. Banaitis asked if they could receive a copy of the minutes so they have evidence that they gave their presentation.

Ms. Cote verified that they could get a copy of the minutes but that they would not be approved and finalized until the next Planning Board Meeting.

Chairman Owen let CMP know that we appreciated their time and presentation and closed this portion of the meeting.

b. Final Review of LD 2003

Minutes:

Chairman Owen stated that this is the final review of LD 2003. The items in red in the packets provided by CEO Lower have been changed. Chairman Owen has read through the changes and tried his best to understand but would like CEO Lower to weigh in on the topic. CEO Lower goes on to say that if no one else has any additions to make to the document then he would let Jessica know from the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) so she can finalize the document and a presentation can be made for the Council.

Chairman Owen clarified that this final document was created with the help of KVCOG, they made recommendations on how to best fit the required change to fit Winslow and the Board based any changes on their recommendations.

Mr. Desrosiers points out that the Board did not have a choice in accepting or denying LD 2003 since it is required by the State.

Chairman Owen agreed with Mr. Desrosiers, saying that it is our due diligence to implement the required change from the State. Chairman Owen told CEO Lower he does not envy the position this has put him in since it may not be popular with the residents. The Board has overseen these changes to ensure we understand how it will change our codes and ordinances. Chairman Owen would like to hear from other members of the Board on what they think. Chairman Owen says we can vote to accept or deny if necessary to move forward with the process.

CEO Lower asks how they would typically handle something like this if we were proposing a new ordinance?

Chairman Owen states that they have not seen anything like this, but that if we had proposed the idea then we would present it to the Council after voting on it. Since we did not propose the change we would not vote on it.

CEO Lower notes that he wanted to ensure he did his due diligence on the matter.

Chairman Owen replied to CEO Lower letting him know if he believes they should vote on the matter then they can but he doesn't believe they need to.

Mr. Gagnon points out that it's not as though we made the recommendation since it's a State requirement.

Chairman Owen agrees with Mr. Gagnon and says that it is in the purview of the Code Officer. We've made our suggestions and now it should go to the Council for discussion.

Mr. Newkirk made a suggestion regarding erosion control for the document in an email.

Chairman Owen questioned whether we should go back to KVCOG and ask about erosion