MEETING MINUTES
ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
March 25, 2019

Present:  Jeff Lingham
         Carl Hakansson
         Cathy Van Lancker
         Greg Wands
         K.G. Narayana
         Maeghan Dos Anjos (Agent)

Absent:  Gene Crouch (Chair)
         William Moulton (Vice Chair)

Call to order:  7:09 P.M.

Mr. Lingham called the meeting to order. The meeting was broadcast live on WACA-TV.

7:09  Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant Program

The Agent discussed a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant Program. The Agent stated that the program is a status for cities and towns within the Commonwealth. The status from the program is recommended as some state grant applications receive more points if the status is from the town. The program allows communities to assess climate change resiliency, and for implementing some projects.

7:13  Review of the March 11, 2019, Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the Meeting Minutes from March 11, 2019.

Mr. Narayana made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lingham, to accept the March 11, 2019, Meeting Minutes as amended. Motion passed 5-0-0.

7:15  95-926, NOI/SMP, Eversource Hopkinton to Ashland Transfer Line, gas line replacement from Hardwick Rd to Cedar St continued from 2/25/2019

Mr. Richard Paquette (Representative- TRC), Mr. Matthew Waldrip (Applicant- Eversource), Mr. Sean Berthiaume (Applicant- Eversource), and Mr. Jack Lopes (Applicant- Eversource) were present for the hearing.

Mr. Paquette stated that revised documents were submitted, and included revised plans, cover letter, and supplemental information for the Stormwater Management Permit. Mr. Paquette explained the project as a replacement project for the gas existing gas line. He further explained that the pipe would be increased in size (from six inches to 12 inches).

Mr. Paquette said that Eversource has identified pressure drop that limits the company’s ability to serve the demand. The easement is 20 feet wide throughout the Town, except for in the...
Ashland State Park where it is 30 feet wide. The length of the pipe in Ashland to be replaced is 2.76 Miles. Mr. Paquette stated that the line crosses through wetlands and a NOI and SMP was filed with the Ashland Conservation Commission, because of the area of disturbance.

Mr. Lingham asked about the scheduling of the project. Mr. Paquette said that a phased approach is proposed and work will take place over the span of five years, during construction summer months. Mr. Paquette said that the line starts at Pennock Road, and explained the location of the pipe by way of streets and roads within Ashland.

Mr. Hakansson asked about the “Preferred Route” versus the “Alternative Route”. Mr. Paquette explained that a petition is being documented and reviewed by the EFSB [Energy Facilities Siting Board], and that the Town of Ashland has filed for Intervenor Status. The EFSB requires alternative routes. Mr. Paquette further explained the differences between the two routes.

Mr. Lingham stated that one thing that the Commission has spoken about is the peer review, which will be a discussion for later on tonight.

Mr. Narayana asked if people in Ashland will be effected. Mr. Berthiaume said that the line provides gas to other communities, and that customers are noticing a drop given other gas providers, so the project is a resiliency project. Mr. Berthiaume further stated that no one in Ashland will lose service during construction.

Mr. Paquette stated that revisions were given to the Conservation Commission based on comments from previous Conservation Commission hearings on this project. Mr. Paquette reviewed the responses to comments.

Mr. Narayana further asked about impacts to the Town of Ashland. Mr. Paquette stated that there will be no impacts to Ashland.

Mr. Lingham asked if there are other projects of this scale that are currently being worked on, because one concern is how Eversource will be able to do work within a 20 foot wide easement. Mr. Berthiaume stated that there is no similar projects taking place, but there may be photographs available from a project that was done 20 years ago.

Mr. Waldrip stated that the line was put in the ground in the 1950s, and that current technology, construction methods, and other measures provided Eversource with the confidence that they can do the work within the easement.

Mr. Hakansson stated that Eversource checked off on the Limited Project section within the Notice of Intent. He said that Eversource needs to have alternatives if filing as a limited project. Mr. Waldrip clarified that this was only in the case of when projects are not in front of the EFSB.

Mr. Hakasson also spoke about a site walk that he did along the right of way, and asked Eversource if they are aware of an exposed pipe off of Old Country Path/ Wayside Lane area. Mr. Waldrip stated that the Ashland Police Chief, the Ashland Fire Chief, and the Department
of Public Utilities have been notified. Mr. Waldrip stated that it is not an immediate concern, and believes it is from erosion by the stream. Mr. Waldrip explained that the carrying capacity of the bank is not impacted, and the bank is stable. Mr. Berthiaume said that Eversource is aware of the exposed pipe.

Mr. Hakansson asked about the Order of Taking when the easement was created. Mr. Hakansson gave the Taking document to Eversource. He stated that the Taking Document shows that there should only be one pipe, and should be buried, and would not be at a depth that would not interfere with cultivation of the land. Mr. Hakansson stated that he thinks that this current NOI is not compliant of the Taking Document, given that one pipe would be abandoned in place, and another would be installed. Mr. Berthiaume said that this is new information for them. Mr. Waldrip said that they would give it to Eversource’s counsel.

Mr. Waldrip spoke about the Environmental Impact Report. Mr. Hakansson stated that the comments were generic, and that the purpose of the EIR is for environmental protection. Mr. Waldrip explained the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act process. Mr. Hakansson emphasized on the impacts to the wildlife and habitat.

Mr. Hakansson displayed an exhibit outlining the wetland system within the Ashland State Park in the area of work. Mr. Hakansson explained that the NOI lists impacts to wetlands of over 9,000 square feet; however, the work in the state park may actually impact about 43 Acres, as the wetland system extends toward Main Street across from the Kidde Fenwal building.

Ms. Van Lancker inquired about how they would cross the streams, and wetlands. Mr. Waldrip, and Mr. Paquette described the use of swamp mats, daming of the stream, and restoration of the stream bed in response to Ms. Van Lancker’s question. Filter bags were also discussed.

Mr. Lingham asked for the public to state their comments.

Mr. Mark Dassoni (49 Hawthorne Road) asked about the gas line, and how it is located. Mr. Berthiaume responded about the tools used to locate the pipe. Mr. Dassoni asked about how the line will be safely transferred. Mr. Berthiaume stated that the pressure in the existing line would be reduced using redundant stoppers.

Mr. Robin Hicks (11 Frankland Route) stated his concerns about the route itself, in terms of the crossing of Cold Spring Brook and impacts to wetlands.

Mr. Joel Arbeitman (28 Woodridge Lane) asked whom the pipeline would serve. Mr. Berthiaume stated that the pipeline serves 19,000 customers within six communities.

Mr. Rob Scherer (41 Bay Colony Drive) said that he is on the Board of Selectmen, and the BOS filed an Intervenor Status. The EFSB number is EFSB_18-02. He asked abutters if a public discussion would be helpful.
Ms. Debra Enos (19 Thurstone Lane) asked about public forums, and where are these meetings.

Ms. Roberta Soolman (28 Woodridge Lane) stated that she is troubled by what Mr. Hakansson stated regarding impacts to the wetland systems for this work.

Mr. David Foster (95 Metropolitan Avenue) stated that the project has been under the radar, and that he has problems with this. Mr. Foster is concerned about the impacts to wildlife as he lives within an animal corridor. He stated that when the RTD (apartment complex off of MBTA Access Road, known as “Cirrus Apartments”) was constructed, he noticed a higher level of animal traffic. Mr. Foster said that he is concerned that the pipeline will cause greater impacts to the wildlife. Mr. Foster stated that the pipeline crosses his back yard and that he is not interested in this project. He also stated that the “Preferred Route” is difficult to understand given that there is an alternative route. He further stated that he read in the paper that the Department of Public Works, Police and Fire do not recommend the preferred route. Mr. Foster said why should I, a homeowner, be impacted when an alternative route exists?

Ms. Catherine Rooney (136 Fountain Street) stated some concerns as well.

The Commission reviewed the proposals from the peer review of this work. [Note that most of the abutters left when the Commission started reviewing the proposals.]

Mr. Waldrip stated that the only concern that Eversource has is the outside review of the Army Corps of Engineers permits. He stated that Eversource prefers Lucas Environmental as they are working with the Town of Hopkinton for this replacement line.

Ms. Van Lancker made a motion, seconded by Mr. Wands to select Lucas Environmental, LLC, for the peer review scope for the Eversource NOI/SMP. Motion passed 5-0-0.

Ms. Van Lancker made a motion, seconded by Mr. Narayana to continue the hearing to April 22, 2019. Motion passed 5-0-0.

9:57  Review draft OOC 95-927, Andrew Puntini, 270 Cordaville Road

The Commission reviewed the draft OOC for Andrew Puntini at 270 Cordaville Road.

Ms. Van Lancker made a motion, seconded by Mr. Wands to issue the OOC as discussed. Motion passed 5-0-0.

10:24  Member Prerogative

Mr. Lingham and Mr. Narayana stated their vacation days.

10:04  Sign Documents

OOC 95-927, Andrew Puntini, 270 Cordaville Road, after-the-fact addition, and carport

8:28  Adjournment

Mr. Narayana made a motion, seconded by Ms. Van Lancker to adjourn the meeting.
Motion passed 5-0-0.

Documents Reviewed by the Conservation Commission on 3/25/2019

- Conservation Commission Agenda 3-25-2019
- Document entitled, Meeting Minutes 3/11/2019
- Document entitled, Eversource Energy- Hopkinton to Ashland Transfer Line Replacement Project (DEP File No. 95-926), dated March 19, 2019
- Document entitled, Request to Extend OOC #95-878, Rail Transit Apartments, MBTA Access Road, dated February 28, 2019. Submitted by Eversource and TRC.
- Document entitled, Stormwater Management Permit Application, dated March 2019, submitted by Eversource and TRC.
- Document entitled, Response to Ashland Conservation Commission Comments (MassDEP File #95-926), dated March 19, 2019
- Revised plans entitled, Eversource Energy- Hopkinton to Ashland Transfer Line Replacement Project Towns of Hopkinton and Ashland Middlesex County, Massachusetts, filed by Eversource and TRC, dated March 19, 2019