

PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
JUNE 20, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Keith E. Hamilton, James A. Seveney, Kevin M. Aguiar,  
Elizabeth A. Pedro and Joseph W. Robicheau

Members Absent: Michael A. Buddemeyer and David M. Gleason

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

A moment of silence for our men and women around the world in harm's way.

**SITTING AS THE PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**

**OLD BUSINESS**

President Hamilton stated that Mr. Gleason has recused himself from this proceeding due to a possible conflict of interest.

1. PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion/Action – Request for Sound Variance of the Portsmouth Noise Ordinance by The Narragansett Electric Company, d/b/a National Grid, for the Aquidneck Island Reliability Project. / P. Lacouture & G. Watson, Robinson + Cole (The Full Report is Available for Viewing at the Town Clerk's Office)
  - a. Notice of Designation to the Town of Portsmouth Town Council to Render an Advisory Opinion by the Energy Facility Siting Board. / T. Bianco, Coordinator, Rhode Island Energy Facility Siting Board.

George Watson, Esq., Robinson + Cole, representing National Grid for its Aquidneck Island Reliability Project, introduced Endrit Fiku, the Project Manager for National Grid and the person in charge of the planning stages and execution.

Mr. Fiku stated that the infrastructure was 50-60 years old and obsolete. The 20 megawatts is too little for our future needs. The work will be done using their existing rights of way. They plan to retire the Jepson Lane substation in Portsmouth. The 92 wooden structures that are 65 feet to 69 feet tall are being replaced by steel structures 86 feet to 96 feet tall. This expects to bring \$932,000 in aggregate revenue for the Town between 2017 and 2022.

Mr. Fiku anticipates the work to be 40 hours per week, either four ten-hour days or five eight-hour days with extended hours required during certain stages, such as stringing wire, pouring cement or filling the transformers with oil. If a transmission line is crossing another transmission line or corridor, they will be forced to take a power outage.

In response to Mr. Hamilton, when filling transformers with oil, there would be just the bleeding of lines.

In response to Mr. Aguiar, it will depend on the location whether the H configuration will come down first. Also, the abutters will get two to three weeks notice prior to the work telling what will be happening and the start and stop dates. Notice will also be on a website.

In response to Mr. Hamilton, the curing limit for concrete is 20 to 30 days.

In response to Mr. Aguiar, they will not be utilizing any different access routes than normal easements allow.

In response to Police Chief Lee, noise over the 75 decibel limit would just be next to the machines. There would only be very rare occasions when noise would last until midnight and it will be finished as soon as possible.

In response to Ms. Pedro, the noise may be 85 decibels at the source, but doesn't know what it will be at the property line.

In response to Mr. Hamilton, Planner Crosby stated that he knew of no ledge in the area.

Judi Staven, 51 Long Meadow Road, addressed her concerns about no time limits for two and a half years. Also, there will need to be lights on at night which requires generators that will lead to noise. She also stated that even if the work doesn't begin until 7:30 am, the workers gather an hour earlier and they will make noise as well as the beeping of trucks backing up.

Ms. Staven also noted that work would be done in phases so the disruptions to the neighborhood would be ongoing with one crew digging holes, one crew putting in the rebar, and one crew pouring cement. That's at least two weeks per site.

Mr. Fiku stated the plan is to design the work in their 40 hour limits.

Mr. Watson introduced Dan McIntyre, a civil engineer for National Grid.

Mr. McIntyre stated that the concrete pours are done in one day.

In response to Mr. Seveney, Mr. McIntyre stated they would tell the contractors that the normal work day should be from 7 AM to either 3 PM or 5 PM with no trucks starting up until 7 AM.

In response to Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Watson stated that they were applying for the variance tonight as part of the process by the siting board for permitting. The variance is more of an advisory opinion.

Solicitor Gavin stated that the ordinance allows the Council to impose conditions for the advisory opinion required by the siting board. They make the final opinion.

Ms. Staven stated that she hopes the Council puts some parameters on this.

Mr. Fiku stated that the plan is not to be active for two years. This has to be done in phases. They must first clear away the vegetation that is in the way, fix and maintain the access roads, and then do the excavation.

In response to Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Fiku stated that the plan on how big a section will be done at once hasn't been worked out, it will depend upon the outage windows. The outage time frames are usually early spring and early fall.

In response to Peter Roberts, 80 Ormerod Road, the footer's size will be five to ten feet wide and 10 to 50 feet deep.

Mr. Roberts stated that a lot of slate rock is there and it will have to be dug with stone breaking material machine which makes a lot of noise. They could put all the foundations in first, set the poles and have the new substations in first.

In response to Mr. Hamilton, Mr. McIntyre stated that a Casson Drilling Machine would be used but not in times other than 7 am to 5 pm. There would be power outages for the drilling because it will be right under live lines.

When asked for a guarantee that there would be no noise after 9 pm, Mr. McIntyre stated that it is an understandable concern, but they have deadlines to meet.

In response to Mr. Seveney's request that the noise be from 7 am to 5 pm unless there is a compelling reason, Mr. Watson stated certain activities will exceed the permitted hours. The filling of a transformer takes 24 hours.

Mr. McIntyre stated that vegetation management and the building of the access road would be done during normal hours.

Mr. Hamilton addressed his concerns about drilling ledge.

Ms. Pedro addressed her concerns about the lights at night.

Tarney Waring, Crossings Court, stated that the source of noise creates other aggravations like smoke and odors.

Mr. Watson stated that any noise outside the 7 am to 9 pm will require notification to the fire chief and police chief and direct abutters.

Solicitor Gavin will prepare an Advisory Opinion requesting certain conditions based on the motions by the Town Council.

A motion by Mr. Seveney, seconded by Ms. Pedro, that a condition be that all the construction activities National Grid is executing happen between the hours of 7 AM and 9 PM. All voted in favor of the motion.

A motion by Mr. Seveney, seconded by Mr. Robicheau, “that any occurrence or requirement for construction to take place outside of those hours, National Grid needs to provide an extended community outreach to those effected in the work area so that you have, for instance if you’re working past nine o’clock for three days, or something, somebody knows as far in advance as you can program your work, so it’s not just the normal outreach stuff, it’s specific communication with those specific households that are going to be affected by that work outside of the 7 to 9 timeframe and town hall (Town Administrator’s office), police, fire, all that.” All voted in favor of the motion.

In response to Ms. Pedro, Mr. McIntyre stated that the crews are going to only work 10 hours a day and then will go home. If there is an outage coming up and they have to make up the time they may have to work extended days.

A motion by Ms. Pedro, seconded by Mr. Robicheau, that there will be no drilling after 9 PM. All voted in favor of the motion.

In response to Mr. Aguiar, Mr. McIntyre stated that line stringing needs to get done during the “outage windows of opportunity” so they may have to work multiple nights in a row past 9 PM.

Mr. Aguiar asked if they envision working multiple days and nights past 9 PM, setting poles because you are paying for a crane.

Mr. McIntyre stated that they will have to set up a pulling rig with a reel on it at one site for multiple days.

Mr. Fiku stated that the sections of wire are strung, and then they are connected so it won't be a continuous wire strung for miles.

In response to Ms. Pedro, Mr. McIntyre stated that the loudest activity is Casson drilling and vegetation management.

A motion by Ms. Pedro, seconded by Mr. Robicheau, to allow no vegetation cutting after 5 PM. All voted in favor of the motion.

In response to Mr. Seveney, Mr. Watson stated that with the exception of near the substations, the right of way is 100 feet wide. The easement is 100 feet, but there are portions that are fee-owned by National Grid alongside the easement.

A motion by Mr. Seveney, seconded by Ms. Pedro, to have 72 hours advance notice to abutters if they are going to go past 9 PM, if practicable. All voted in favor of the motion.

Mr. Watson noted that this is one of many proceedings, he is will also be coming before the Zoning Board and Planning Board and the same is true for Middletown.

A motion by Mr. Seveney, seconded by Ms. Pedro, to close the public hearing. All voted in favor of the motion.

A motion by Mr. Seveney, seconded by Mr. Robicheau, to adjourn. All voted in favor of the motion.

### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

June 27 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting

July 11 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting

July 30 11:00 AM – Town Council Meeting – Prudence Island (Saturday)

### **ADJOURN**

Time: 8:45 PM

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Joanne M. Mower, Town Clerk