

APPROVED MINUTES ~ 8/8/2011

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD
NORTHERN PASS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
G.B. White Building, Downstairs Conference Room
8 Raymond Road, Deerfield, NH 03037
August 8, 2011**

Attendees: Mike O’Neil, Matt Reed, Nicole Ruderman, Steve Neily, Tom True
Erick Berglund, Erika Heilman, Jeanne Menard, Kathy Shigo
Recording secretary: Tom True, revised by Erika Heilman

Call to order: Erika called the meeting to order at 5:32.

Approval of July 25th meeting minutes, corrections as noted:

- Erika suggested that Nicole’s status as a new member be noted.
- Erika questioned whether the maximum pole heights should be listed as 130’ or 135’.
- Tom suggested that any handouts be noted in the minutes.
- Tom questioned if the reference to “SIC” in the last sentence of the first page were correct or if it should be “SEC”. It was determined that “SEC” was correct.
- Erika noted that the correct spelling for Deerfield’s assessor is “Avitar”.

The minutes were unanimously approved as amended. Nicole will replace the unapproved ones and provide to Leslie Boswak.

Subcommittees:

Erika explained that “subcommittees” had been informally established based on who had volunteered to do the work around a topic. She said that the main purpose of tonight’s meeting was to review the presentation for the Select Board on 8/15. A proposed presentation format was passed out to the group to consider (with topics/speakers identified). The group agreed to hear presentations and then vote on whether it was acceptable for the 8/15 meeting.

Presentation for BOS:

Introduction ~ Erika

Erika will introduce the committee and their respective role. She will reiterate the committee’s goal to complete a cost-benefit analysis. She will note that the NPT timeline has been extended allowing the opportunity for the town to plan and take further action.

Benefit/Tax Revenues ~ Erika

Erika began her presentation outline entitled “Northern Pass Transmission Project – Benefits to Deerfield”. Tom then provided updated tax calculations provided by NPT and entitled “Breakdown of Estimated Northern Pass Project Investments in Deerfield”. It was agreed that the new numbers, released that day, would be represented but would need further clarification/sourcing as the project developed: the \$18.25M assessed value would be adjusted to \$35.3M and that the annual taxes would be adjusted from \$371,387 to \$718,002 and the NPT “Benefits” document would be listed as the source. All other elements and comparisons on this Benefits sheet would be reflected to adjust this. Erick moved to accept Erika’s presentation. The vote was 7 in favor, 2 abstentions.

Costs/Property Values ~ Jeanne

Jeanne circulated the outline for her presentation entitled, “Impact of High Tension Transmission Lines on Residential Property Values in Deerfield” and stated that one of her primary concerns is the impact on values and sale-ability due to uncertainty while the project is in the permitting phase. Jeanne mentioned two reports available to the group, Thibeault and Underwood, stating in particular that the Underwood study was “disheartening” due to the small sample size and that 1 of the 4 properties was not an “arm’s length” transactions. Jeanne gave illustrations on the types of properties that would be affected beyond those on the ROW: paper subdivisions (approved but not yet built), parcels bisected by an easement, land in conservation and within view sheds. Jeanne went on to explain how a few real estate transactions in town have fallen through due to buyers’ “Prudent Avoidance” of Deerfield over NPT. There was general concern about Avitar creating a report without looking at properties. There were also numerous comments that assessed value and appraised value are two different numbers and that the appraised value is what needs to be considered in this instance. Nicole moved Jeanne’s report be accepted as amended. Erick seconded. The vote was 7 in favor, 2 abstentions.

Safety & Health ~ Steve

Steve circulated two documents entitled, “Northern Pass – Health Issues” and “International and State policies relating to EMF Regulation” Tom asked the source of this information. Steve said that it was from Dr. Campbell McLaren and the group agreed to add this to the handout, which showed a list of countries and states that have passed legislation to bury high-voltage lines based on “prudent avoidance” measures (different usage from term above). The committee discussed various aspects of EMF and stated that it should be left on the table for future consideration since the “jury was out on the issue”. Jeanne moved that Steve’s information be accepted as long as he provides sources. The vote was 7 in favor with 2 abstentions.

Other costs ~ Erick

Erick circulated a document entitled “Northern Pass (NP) Project – Impact on Deerfield?,” which Erick and Erika presented to the BOS on June 6, 2011. Erika handed out the “2009 Deerfield Master Plan Summary”. Erick pointed to a few key points from it that he wants to discuss; he also told the group there is some key data in the original town-wide survey results to let people know what’s been deemed important to Deerfield residents through the planning process. Erika moved that Erick’s presentation be accepted. The vote was 7 in favor, 2 abstentions.

Project Timeline ~ Nicole

Nicole circulated the outline for her presentation entitled, “Northern Pass Project -- Timeline” Nicole commented that she needed to add the SB2 deadline to this timeline. Erika suggested that Nicole’s timeline be adjusted to show the project timeline above, with SB2 timelines below. She said that a timeline in this format would be handy for the fall information session. Erick moved to accept Nicole’s presentation as amended. Kathy seconded the motion. 7 voted in favor with 2 abstentions.

Next Steps/Fall Informational Session

Erika stated that she envisioned the 8/15 meeting with the selectmen as the last public meeting of the committee and that the final report would be submitted by 9/15. Several people asked what would happen after that. Erika said that the committee could follow-up with the board of selectmen, DOE and other jurisdictions. Jeanne said that the committee could also be a resource for the fall information session. Some members of the committee expressed a desire to move on after the written report, conclusion of “phase 1”.

The committee discussed plans to have a fall informational meeting for residents, probably sometime in October. They further discussed that there should be representatives from all sides of the NPT project as well as a moderator. It was agreed a preview announcement would be placed in The Communicator.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08.