

**TOWN OF CHARLOTTE
SELECTBOARD MEETING
MAY 21, 2007 7:00 PM
CHARLOTTE TOWN HALL
VELCO STAGING**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Russell, Chairperson; Jenny Cole, Winslow Ladue, Ed Stone, Frank Thornton.

VELCO REPRESENTATIVES: Tom Dunn, Bob Hoover, Tom Snyder, Kim Johnson, Greg Walsh, Lori Pendergast(?)

ATTENDANCE: Peter Demick, Patrice DeMarco, Peggy Jansch, Mark Patane, Larry Keyes, Peter Kahn, Kevin McGarghan, Judy Bast, Lynne Jaunich, Dorrice Hammer, Alen Kadic, Jason Hackerman, Peter Sholler, Hylah & Chris Patton, Sylvia Knight, Dorothy Pellett, Jim Laberge, Richard & Patricia Yandow, David Miskell, Clark Hinsdale III, Roelof Boumans, Catharina Sikkes, Steve Denton, Dan Rosen, David & Pat Lagerstedt, Stephen & Bette Byers, Rachel Gill, Larilee Suiter, Mary Van Vleck, Amy Magyar, Eliza Pillard, Marjean van den Belt, Ken French, Jessie Bradley, Jeff McDonald, Kelly Devine, Robbie Stanley, Craig Palmer, Gary Pittman, Nancy Sabin, Don Jackson, Dylan Olsen, David Waller, Dorothy Waller, Sarah McGarghan, John Hammer.

CALL TO ORDER

Charles Russell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

Written statements and information were submitted by: Peggy Jansch on behalf of neighbors and property owners: statement and articles; Sylvia Knight: 5/21/07 list of concerns; VELCO: *Project Laydown area for the NH-QC Project.*

Peggy Jansch read a statement, dated May 21, 2007, on behalf of Concerned Charlotte Citizens, Affected Neighbors and Property Owners, regarding the proposed VELCO staging area in Charlotte. Concerns included: Environmental impact; Community impact; and VELCO's process of finding a staging area. The Citizens requested that VELCO contact John Dunleavy at the Agency of Transportation regarding potential use of the AOT land in North Ferrisburgh. They asked that the Selectboard take an active role in determining a suitable location, informing residents, and working with neighboring towns so Charlotte would not bear more than its fair share of the project impacts.

Tom Dunn, VELCO representative, stated that staging areas are part of the 4-year process. A site is needed for construction equipment, hardware, vehicles, 400 wood poles, and 33-35 steel poles. This is a temporary feature that would take a week or two to complete— construction duration 1-1 ½ years. VELCO has not selected a site, and has made no legal agreements, and is looking for a 15 acre site that does not have extensive wetlands. VELCO was initially looking for a site along the railroad to accommodate rail cars, but no sites have proven to be viable. They are now looking for a site near Route 7, centrally located, where it is the least intrusive—where construction traffic and cost can

be minimized. Tom stated there will be no rock crushing, no storage of toxic chemicals, and no contamination of groundwater. VELCO has just finished construction of the transmission line between West Rutland and New Haven. Site preparation includes creating an access road of gravel on Geotech fabric. Poles will be placed on dunnage/cribbing. Vehicles delivering poles will be police escorted, and permitted by the State of Vermont with restrictions (must stop for lunch, cannot travel in bad weather or at night). Site would have its own curb cut. Tom stated that the Public Service Board is the entity likely to have jurisdiction over review of the staging areas, although this has not been done in the past. VELCO would like to identify a site the community can support, and have poles delivered in the not too distant future. VELCO needs a staging area with no wetlands, endangered plants or archaeological issues.

Patrice DeMarco cited information from the Department of Health and Human Services about pentachlorophenol, and expressed concern about PCP evaporation from treated wood surfaces.

Bob Hoover stated that “penta” replaced the use of creosote, and is the environmental choice. He has talked to the leading expert at the National Environmental Association and to Minnesota pole manufacturer, Bell Pole. Tom Dunn stated that the Public Service Board had a docket considering the use of creosote treated poles, and it was determined that penta was safer for workers.

Peter Kahn stated that it was an airborne issue as well as water. It was noted that there may be a difference between a single pole and stacks of poles. There was further discussion about the number of staging areas located near residential areas during the construction of the 345 kV line, distance between staging areas and residences, and the use of agricultural land for staging.

VELCO representatives described the attributes they look for when identifying sites—access, size, and absence of wetlands. Wetlands may not be evident. They try to get off the main road, and consider vistas and residential areas. Sites must pass the first “drive by.” If the landowner is not willing, the site is taken off the list.

There was discussion of the use of conserved land. Kim Johnson said VELCO has worked with the Land Trust on many parcels. The Land Trust would be extremely reluctant to allow the use of conserved land unless other options are exhausted.

Dan Rosen stated he was disturbed by the process, and lack of time, with VELCO’s repeated desire to get the project done this summer. He objected to the Public Service Board, a State agency, “overriding democracy of local control.”

Charles Russell explained that if the issue does not go to the Public Service Board, and instead goes to local boards for Conditional Use Determination and site plan review, it could be denied or accepted with conditions. The advantage of going to the Public Service Board is that the big picture would be considered—not just Charlotte. Neighbors, as well as the Town, have the ability to have party status.

Tom Dunn stated that the project was needed for reliability, to avoid blackouts. VELCO has created detailed maps showing access roads to structure locations on file—as public record.

Sylvia Knight asked about permits required for the staging area. Tom Dunn replied that ideally they would avoid wetland and storm water issues. He stated VELCO has not gone through this process before for staging areas. Sylvia said she noticed poles on the ground, instead of on cribbing, adjacent to a staging area for the construction of the 345 kV line. She would like VELCO to be up front about what really happens.

Jessie Bradley questioned whether affected properties should be reassessed, and the community compensated.

Clark Hinsdale described how he was approached by VELCO for potential site locations, and stated his dissatisfaction with how he has been treated by neighbors. Pete Demick stated that no one knew what was going on. He does not feel the site should be next to wetlands.

Kim Johnson stated that VELCO would not lease a parcel when there are wetlands.

There was further discussion about the proximity of the Thompson's Point sites to wetlands and Thorp Brook, potential contamination of water, and the wetness of the land on the parcel south of Thompson's Point Road. Dick Yandow expressed concern over contamination of Thorp Brook.

Angie () questioned how this will effect the entire community, the future of Charlotte—and the message this is sending about what the town is willing to protect. She expressed concern over the aesthetic impact in the East Thompson's Point Road area.

Peggy Jaust stated that the neighbors should be kept informed in a timely way. The Selectboard requested that e-mail addresses be added to the sign-in sheet.

Mark Patane asked about the potential use of conserved land for staging areas, and whether conservation should override residential uses or land with other values. He asked whether VELCO would acquire a site by eminent domain. VELCO representatives replied “no.” Discussion followed about the possible use of State-owned land in North Ferrisburgh. This property is zoned commercial/industrial and has a steel gate. Kim Johnson stated that in a previous discussion with the Agency of Transportation, VELCO was told that the State may have permitting for its use as soon as January 2008, and VELCO would have to leave. VELCO needs a one-year lease with an option for up to 18 months. She indicated that they will happily contact the Agency again to inquire about the site. Mark requested that VELCO provide to the Selectboard a list of sites that have been considered, and information on chemicals used to treat poles.

Clark Hinsdale III stated that there is a site near the railroad on the Laberge Farm. He spoke of the “politics” of the removal of conserved land from consideration, and suggested that conserved land may be the right spot and should not be rejected out of hand. There may be more impacts with the Land Trust land “off the table.” Part of the determination by the Land Trust is whether the farm can benefit from the use. He felt it would be beneficial to have the poles located closer to where they will be used to reduce traffic on roads. He suggested that it was the role of the Selectboard to minimize the impact.

Nancy Sabin questioned whether the Mack land was what was being considered. She stated that land given to conservation should be conserved, and the Land Trust should keep its word.

Dorrice Hammer asked about the “two issues” mentioned previously. Bob Hoover stated that they are impact to wetlands and waterways, and different interpretation of risks by experts. Kevin MaGarghan requested that VELCO provide to the Selectboard the material safety data sheets for the treated poles.

Pete Demick questioned the impact of the construction of the parking lot, and the effect of the use of chemicals (in poles) on wildlife. He also expressed concern about contamination of drinking water, safety in the neighborhood with construction activities, and impact on Thorp Brook. He questioned why this was the #1 choice. Another resident spoke of several concerns related to the Thompson’s Point Road locations.

Bob Hoover indicated that they have talked with 22 property owners and would check with Mr. Donleavy regarding the AOT parcel. He thought the Roadhouse parcel was surrounded by houses. They are hoping to find a win-win situation.

Peggy Jaust brought up security at the site. VELCO indicated that lights and fences do not work to prevent crime. There would be no fence around the perimeter and no lights, poles would be stored away from houses and road, and valuables would be locked out of sight.

There was further discussion of travel distances and environmental impact, and the regulatory process. Tom Dunn stated that it was their intention to go to the Public Service Board for approval, and that ideally they could arrive at a location the town could support. If there is no agreement, he could see it taking longer than June for the process.

Sylvia Knight questioned compensation to the town for any damage to the roads. Peter Kahn suggested focusing on areas that are zoned commercial already. Charles Russell stated that VELCO has said they will comply with road weight limits, but the mechanism to manage damage to roads has not been determined.

There was a request for information about sites and why they would not work, and on chemicals used to treat poles. Bob Hoover stated he would provide a list of sites to the Selectboard. Further questions and discussion followed, including whether it was

necessary for all the poles to be stored in one place, the percentage of poles that would be used in Charlotte, the use of the Lavalette property and railroad, use of state land near the railroad station in Charlotte (not large enough and Class 2 wetlands present), traffic on Greenbush Road and in the village with use of the Lavalette site, lack of notification with the earlier proposal to use the Mack land, total transportation miles for delivery of poles, and efficiency of truck vs. rail transport. Bob Hoover and Tom Snyder felt that rail was preferable because it caused fewer disturbances to surrounding areas. There was further discussion of rail transport, and what was done in Salisbury and Leicester with use of both truck and rail. It is anticipated that a convoy of 4-7 trucks would arrive two times a week. A suggestion was made to use the unused strip of interstate highway in South Burlington.

There was discussion of the next steps, what was to come out of the meeting, other locations to consider, whether application will be made to the Public Service Board. It was suggested that the Selectboard should begin to set up a process to meet with VELCO and discuss options.

Poles are transported from Minnesota to Vermont. A suggestion was made that the lease with Foster Farm (Middlebury) be renewed for staging.

Community members in attendance requested that they be kept informed by e-mail. Tom Dunn requested that minutes be sent to VELCO.

Discussion continued with Selectboard questions:

1. Whether poles could be delivered to several locations—Tom Snyder responded that this is difficult because there are 66 varieties of poles delivered unsorted, and having 2 or more separate orders does not work;
2. If other, or smaller sites would work— There was discussion of Charlotte Farm and Mills property, the Flea Market land and land south of it, and the Laberge land;
3. Whether Land Trust lands should be considered;
4. The use of rail transportation vs. road transportation— Tom Snyder stated there are safety issues with the use of cranes and rail transport;
5. Whether the use of the AOT site and surrounding property is feasible;
6. Whether two locations could be used, one for poles, and one for other uses. This could work—10 acres is needed for poles, 5-6 acres for show-up site;
7. VELCO was asked to look at the locations in Ferrisburgh as requested earlier in the meeting (AOT parcel and land near the Roadhouse Restaurant);
8. Whether the railroad spur used during the construction of the 345 kV section of the line could be used again for delivery of poles by rail.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 PM

Respectfully submitted by Jenny Cole

These minutes are subject to correction by the Charlotte Selectboard. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Board.