



REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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MINUTES

Regional Planning Commission (RPC) Regional Utility Corridor Report (RUCR) Sub-Committee Regular Meeting Thursday, 3:00 P.M., July 22, 2004

The Regional Planning Commission Regional Utility Corridor Report Sub Committee met in regular session in Room 910, One East First Street, Reno, Nevada and conducted the following business:

The meeting was called to order by Randy Baxley, TMRPA at 3:20 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

The clerk called the roll and the following Commissioners were present: Terry Herman, Steve Rogers, and Kendall Mattina.

Also present were: Randy Baxley, TMRPA; Mary Kuechler, TMRPA; Paige Menicucci, TMRPA; Linda Galli, Sierra Pacific Power Company; Bill Bennett, Sierra Pacific Power Company; Bill Roullier, Sierra Pacific Power Company; and Jeff Codega, Codegad Planning and Design.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

COMMISSIONER ROGERS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE JULY 22, 2004, AGENDA, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER MATTINA. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH THREE (3) MEMBERS PRESENT.

3. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR

COMMISSIONER MATTINA NOMINATED COMMISSIONER HERMAN, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER ROGERS. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH THREE (3) MEMBERS PRESENT.

4. CURRENT BUSINESS

1. Discussion of the background and purpose of the RUCR Subcommittee.

Randy Baxley explained the background of the Regional Utility Corridor Report (RUCR) and explained that in the 2002 Regional Plan there was a policy that required the RUCR to go through the conformance review process, it was found in conformance with the Regional Plan by the RPC on February 25, 2004, and a resolution was adopted by the Regional Planning Governing Board (RPGGB) incorporating the RUCR into the Regional Plan on April 8, 2004.

Mr. Baxley also outlined discussions regarding proposed amendments to the RUCR by Sierra Pacific Power Co. (SPPCo) and this subcommittee was formed to consider the proposed changes to the RUCR.

Bill Bennett, SPPCo, reviewed some of the proposed amendments to the RUCR in a handout he provided for the commissioners and stated that SPPCo may want to rename the RUCR to Regional Sightings Policies and Guidelines for Major Utilities. He also explained that this would conform to the bulk of the content of the text pertaining to the RUCR. Mr. Bennett explained that under Facts and Findings in the RUCR item number one (1) that Sierra Pacific Power Co. generates about 60 percent of the power used for its customers will consume on a peak day and that none of the power generated is within the Truckee Meadows. So, if no power lines were to be brought in under this policy as written, the region would be with out power.

Commissioner Rogers asked what percentage of power Sierra Pacific generates in Nevada. Bill Roullier, Sierra Pacific Power Company, responded that SPPCo generates fifty to sixty percent of peak load, which includes Tracy Clark, Valmy, and Fort Churchill; these facilities service Northern Nevada.

Mr. Bennett reviewed item 21 of the handout of inconclusive evidence relating to adverse health effects from power lines and other utilities. He stated that this item deals with Electro-magnetic Field (EMF) and SPPCo is not a scientific facility and does not conduct research relative to EMF but relies on federal and state entities to provide the information on the latest technology. Mr. Bennett explained that the information on EMF is inconclusive and undetermined whether EMF has any adverse health effects.

Commissioner Rogers asked if EMF was based on radiation content. Mr. Bennett refered to a separate handout that gave the definition of EMF, which stated that EMF's were the result of the magnetic fields flow of current through wires or electrical devices and increased in strength as the current increases. Magnetic fields are measured in units of gauss. Since most environmental EMF exposures involve magnetic fields that were only a fraction of a gauss, these were commonly measured in units of milligauss.

Commissioner Mattina asked that other than causing fluctuation in pacemakers, why would a magnetic field cause any adverse effect at all. Mr. Bennett responded that it did not and that this concern came from the early 1980's; no conclusive evidence has been found that it damages tissue. He explained that EMF was dissipated by distance; therefore, you were closer to EMF exposure when the power lines were buried.

Randy Baxley referred to some research done in the United States and in Scandinavia that implied there was a relationship between EMF and leukemia and brain tumors. Later studies have never been able to duplicate the results, so the validity of the studies were questionable.

Mr. Bennett, next referred to item F. "Design, Location, and Engineering Standards." Mr. Bennett explained that standard right of way widths were used. Mr. Bennett explained that the table was put together by SPPCo engineers and had been distributed to the public. He stated that the widths were the safest width for right of way based on the national electric safety code. Mr. Bennett stated that these right of ways recommended are more germane to the RUCR than the distances presented in the RUCR at this time.

Commissioner Mattina asked why there were such dramatic differences in the distances in an H-frame and a single pole. Mr. Bennett responded that the H-frame were two poles with a frame across the top and required more of a right of way than a single pole. Commissioner Mattina also questioned the utility corridors in California stating that golf courses and linear corridors were under the power lines. Mr. Bennett stated that there have been some variances granted by local entities to place structures within the right of ways.

Bill Roullier stated that the wider the corridors and right of ways were, the more the corridors were emphasized and becomes extreme when hillsides and slopes were included.

Commissioner Mattina asked what the voltage of the power line was on Vista Blvd. Mr. Roullier responded it was a 345-power line as well as the line from the North, which is the Alturas line. Commissioner Mattina asked for an example of a 230-power line. Mr. Roullier stated that there were none in the Reno area. Mr. Roullier and Mr. Bennett explained the differences between power lines and standard voltage lines. Commissioner Mattina stated she was trying to visualize what kind of line a 120 would resemble. Mr. Bennett explained that the proposed line from Tracy to Silver Lake, which would go through a small portion of the Sparks area, would be a 120 volt line, with a 52-65 foot single pole. Mr. Roullier stated there is a 120 volt line that follows McCarran Blvd. at the North and West end of the loop.

Chair Herman stated that he believes that there was a 120 line at the sub-station at Longley and McCarran. Mr. Roullier confirmed that and stated the line then goes underground.

Commissioner Mattina commented that the only objection that people had during the Alturas power line public review process was a couple who lived to the east of the line in Panther Valley and had to drive under the line to leave their property, which may have affected his pacemaker. Mr. Bennett stated that there was a variance granted by the City to move a trailer underneath the 345 line. Some of the set backs have created some issues for the Power Company and property owners also.

Commissioner Rogers asked if the set backs met the national standards. Mr. Roullier stated that the standards being proposed by Sierra Pacific Power met the National Electric Safety Code.

Commissioner Rogers asked if A-frame towers were used. Mr. Roullier responded that Sierra Pacific Power has not used A-frame towers recently but that may they use them in the future. Mr. Bennett explained that SPPCo has an internal policy that all designs meet certain

EMF set standards. Commissioner Rogers stated no concern about EMF due to inconclusive evidence. Mr. Bennett explained that there was no net increase in EMF exposure due to arduous labor involved to change to a low EMF design.

Chair Herman expressed his concerns about the original committee who was involved in the original RUCR, and the time that was spent on the RUCR project, and how they came up with the set backs and the EMF standards. He asked TMRPA staff to research the documentation that supported the original RUCR. Randy Baxley stated that he would research the minutes and the reasoning that went into creating the document. Chair Herman explained that this request was not based on changing anything, but focused on why the original committee had chosen such large set backs.

Commissioner Mattina stated that when the RUCR was found in conformance, the revised language was not accepted and the original wording was what was found in conformance.

Commissioner Rogers stated that it was his observation that the concern was which lines would be underground.

Commissioner Mattina stated that going to the national standard with formidable documentation was a good idea.

Mr. Baxley stated that the local entities must follow the Federal Telecommunications Act; which does not allow EMF exposure to be considered in a cell tower siting decision.

Commissioner Rogers stated that the same law exists for amateur radio towers.

Commissioner Mattina questioned the language in item number 7, which states "Low EMF design that is economically feasible is based on a determination conducted by a qualified individual." She asked who was a qualified individual. Mr. Bennett stated that SPPCo had a staff of engineers that do studies professionally and interpret the National Electric Code, to locate the line on the poles. Mr. Roullier explained that through the EIS for the Tracy to Silver Lake process, the opponents have suggested that BLM find a third-party, independent consultant to determine if what SPPCo is proposing was accurate. On both occasions, the conclusions were affirmed.

Mr. Bennett continued to item number twenty-two, which included the 20-year resource plan and suggested that it be revised to 10-year master plans, which would include distribution and substations. The resource plan was based on a level infrastructure over the next twenty years.

Chair Herman asked if the 10-year plan was based on transmission lines and generation.

Mr. Bennett explained that within the master plan SPPCO would look at entities that would identify distribution, substations, and anything below the resource plan level. Transmission and generation dealt with northern and southern Nevada as a whole without distribution.

Chair Herman asked if the subcommittee would reference both the resource plan and the 10-year master plans, since one is a subset of the other. Mr. Roullier stated that the resource plan is a document that consists of multiples. Chair Herman questioned the term master plans and suggested that it should read master plan. Mr. Roullier stated that there were many areas to consider and that each area would have its own plan; for example, the Spanish Springs area and the South Meadows area.

Commissioner Mattina commented that the 10-year plan would be based on distribution and identify substations and infrastructure of transmission. However, that transmission and distribution was based on the 20-year plan. Mr. Bennett stated that the 20-year plan identified northern Nevada's load needs. Mr. Roullier explained that the 20-year plan identified needs of electrons to serve the growth in the future.

Chair Herman asked if the RUCR gave SPPCo conformance with the Tracy to Silver Lake project. Mr. Roullier stated that with the Tracy to Silver Lake project, SPPCo assumed that the RUCR, prior to being found in conformance was what factored in the set backs so the set backs were considered.

Commissioner Rogers asked that along with the 10-year plan, if there could be a five-year review of the plan. Mr. Bennett stated that master plans were reviewed every two to three years as the load and circumstances change. Chair Herman suggested that SPPCo come to the RPC every year with an update and felt that this would educate the public on the plans and the benefit land use planning.

Chair Herman requested staff research the background information of the original committee and what was done with set backs and EMF and also asked staff to give an opinion on the suggested changes.

Mr. Baxley stated he would research what other communities had done and what the standards for set backs were. He stated that it might be appropriate to contact some of the original members of the RUCR committee to see if they would like to give some insight to the reasoning that went into the original RUCR report.

Commissioner Mattina questioned the wording from the first page of the RUCR, regarding insuring the area or aspects of community value were avoided. Chair Herman referred to the definition section of the document. Commissioner Mattina questioned whether the committee could add to the document. Mr. Baxley stated that the statement had to do with the Alturas power line and it was originally to go over a portion of Peavine Mountain. Due to public concern about the view of Peavine Mountain being a community asset and the power line would be an adverse impact it was moved.

Commissioner Mattina also questioned the language on page three and asked why if we have the ability to produce or not use extra power and why there cannot be a cost savings and what the benefit would be. Chair Herman stated that it is a benefit power plan and if power was sold then there would be an economic benefit. Commissioner Mattina agreed and stated that

the way the RUCR was written, that it should not be used. Commissioner Herman explained that SPPCo does not generate enough power and that is why the Alturas power line was built so power could be imported.

Commissioner Rogers asked if the table of separation was a national standard. Mr. Baxley stated that the table was formed by the original committee that put the RUCR together and he was unsure where the information came from. Mr. Bennett explained that he included an additional table with different right of ways than what were listed in the RUCR.

Commissioner Mattina questioned what would be a significant change to a utility corridor. Chair Herman referred to the definitions and stated that 60KV or higher would be a significant change. Mr. Roullier stated that if SPPCo were to change a 60 KV line, that would be a significant change due to houses constructed.

Chair Herman requested staff to report to the subcommittee what would trigger a major upgrade that would require the public hearing process.

Mr. Baxley requested the committee to refer back to page 5 and the language. And remove some of the language because it goes beyond the RPC's jurisdiction.

Commissioner Herman concurred that the wording on page 5 be revised.

Mr. Baxley requested the committee set a general period for the next meeting and stated that a report to the RPC be done within the next six months. Chair Herman suggested that the RUCR subcommittee should meet again in September and look at the background information.

Meeting adjourned 4:45P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Paige Menicucci

Truckee Meadows Regional Planning

Chair RUCR Sub Committee of the RPC
Terry K. Herman