

DRAFT

**Dublin City Council Work Session
Monday, November 18, 2019
Council Chambers**

Minutes of Meeting

Mayor Peterson called the Monday, November 18, 2019, Work Session of Dublin City Council to order at 5:34 p.m. at Dublin City Hall.

Members present were: Mayor Peterson, Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes, Ms. Alutto, Ms. De Rosa, Ms. Fox, Mr. Keenan and Mr. Reiner.

Staff members present: Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Crandall, Ms. O'Callaghan, Ms. Goss

Also present was Joe Demaree, AEP Project Outreach Specialist.

AEP Dublin West Innovation District Project Update & Summary of Public Input

Ms. O'Callaghan stated that AEP is preparing to submit their application to the Ohio Power Siting Board in January 2020 and they were present to provide an update on the project. She stated staff has been working with AEP to determine the route of their new transmission line between the Dublin station and the existing station just north of Darree Fields. AEP and Dublin staff will provide the update together and provide the opportunity for Council to ask questions.

In early 2017, AEP reached out to Dublin staff regarding the need to reinforce the electric system in Dublin. Dublin staff had several meetings with AEP to understand the need and options. AEP explored many options, including overhead circuitry, underground circuits and a combination thereof. Originally, in 2017, a double circuit was proposed. In December 2018, AEP reached out again to Dublin staff and had reconsidered the double circuit; now only a single circuit is proposed. Since that time, plans are being developed. A public input meeting was held on September 23, 2019, and AEP has now had an opportunity to review the feedback that was provided.

Mr. Demaree stated that the scope of the project is to build approximately three miles of new power line and upgrade the two existing substations. He reviewed the reasons for the project, which included providing an additional power source, supporting economic development and increasing electric reliability. He noted that this project was a mandated project from PJM under the FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission).

In response to Mr. Reiner's question seeking clarification of a mandated project, Mr. Demaree stated that regional transmission organizations oversee a wider footprint, including other utilities, to ensure that everyone has the power that they need and to keep costs in check.

Mr. Reiner asked if this organization is made up of a board or consortium? Mr. Demaree stated that it is a board but it is rolled up under the FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission).

Mr. Demaree stated that an open house was held to which more than 500 landowners were invited. Forty-six landowners attended the open house. Public comments received were:

- Suggestions to keep the line as far north as possible;
- Visual impact concerns;
- Questions regarding plans for existing distribution lines; and
- Consideration for underground routing options.

Mr. Demaree provided an illustration of the routes that were shown during the public open house in September as well as what the typical structure looks like. Mr. Demaree provided a project schedule showing that construction could be completed as soon as Summer 2021.

Mr. Reiner asked if any power outages were to be anticipated. Mr. Demaree stated that he does not anticipate any outages.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes clarified that the top three lines are transmission and the bottom two lines are distribution lines. She asked about the existing poles on Shier-Rings. Mr. Demaree stated that the plan is to move the distribution lines from the south side to the north side.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes asked if there would be anything remaining on the south side of the street. Mr. Demaree stated that the majority of the poles would be taken out, but there would be a few left to service businesses on the south side of the street.

Ms. De Rosa asked Mr. Demaree to provide more information on why this needs to be done now and how it was mandated to be done. Mr. Demaree stated that PJM is looking at the overall flow of the electricity. They have informed AEP that there is not enough electricity to meet future needs.

Ms. De Rosa asked if that information was available for the public to see as far as the need and when it can be expected. Mr. Demaree stated that it is online, but that he would provide it as well.

In response to Mr. Reiner's question regarding whether or not AEP was solely in the distribution of power, Mr. Demaree stated that AEP is still in the generation of power as well.

Ms. Fox asked for clarification of the number of arms at the top of the pole and what that represented in terms of distribution lines. Mr. Demaree stated that the three arms make up one circuit.

Ms. Fox asked about options for the type of structure, materials used, etc. Mr. Demaree stated that there are some options to consider, such as a finish to the pole, or reducing the height of the pole. Dublin staff has asked AEP to look at the potential for reduction in height.

Mr. Demaree shared four different underground options. He clarified that AEP would be covering the cost of what a pole would cost, but because they are not recommending underground in this location, the City would be responsible for the additional cost.

In response to Mayor Peterson's question regarding whether or not AEP ever buries lines, Mr. Demaree stated that they do when there is no other option for overhead.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes asked for an example of when there would be no other option for overhead. Mr. Demaree stated that they would have to justify the cost of underground to PJM.

In this example, overhead is much cheaper so it would not be prudent to place it underground.

Mr. Demaree stated that there is room for an overhead power line here versus in a downtown Columbus location with no room for overhead, so other options would have to be explored.

He provided cost estimates that the City could expect to pay if they desire to put the line underground.

Ms. Fox clarified that the amounts shown are above and beyond the cost of construction of above ground lines. Mr. Demaree stated that was correct.

Ms. De Rosa asked what determines the cost difference. Is it related to terrain? Mr. Demaree stated that there are so many variables of what could be encountered with burial under the roads.

Ms. De Rosa asked what the construction cost is for all above ground. Mr. Demaree responded he would get back to Council with a number.

Mr. Keenan asked how deep underground these are buried. Mr. Demaree responded he is not certain.

Mayor Peterson asked if there were poles like the typical structure shown earlier in other places in Dublin. Mr. Demaree stated there are existing poles like this in Dublin and across the country.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes asked if these were replacing the four armed lattice tower type. Mr. Demaree stated that they are, but that they are still using lattice towers due to terrain in some locations.

Ms. Fox asked if there were other pole options, such as the arch shape as seen in New Albany, for Dublin to consider.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes asked how far from the road the poles would be placed. Mr. Demaree stated that the poles would be about 5 feet outside of the road right-of-way.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes asked how far off the edge of the pavement they would be. Mr. Demaree stated that it depends on the width of the road right-of-way. He was not certain of the width of Shier-Rings Road right-of-way.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes asked about the building clearance. Mr. Demaree stated it was about 40 feet. Mr. McDaniel clarified that this was all north of the road.

In response to Mr. Keenan's question regarding whether or not the City has any infrastructure plans in the future for this roadway, Ms. O'Callaghan stated that staff has shared the Shier-Rings Corridor plan and existing engineering plans with AEP.

Mr. Demaree stated that it would be necessary to have coordination with all the future development that will occur in the area.

Ms. Readler then summarized the process and discussed the City's rights in the process. She stated that the City's rights are limited in this scenario. She had been asked what the City's standing would be if AEP had to take property from the City. Generally in Ohio, if there is an entity with eminent domain power such as AEP, they can take land from a second public entity like the City of Dublin, unless the property is essential to the second entity's business or the appropriation interferes with a public purpose. This is a pretty high standard and would be difficult to meet.

Regarding the application process, she stated that AEP is planning on filing in February.

Notification will have to be given to any affected City as well as to the properties that would be affected. Typically, an accelerated application is deemed automatically approved by the Ohio Power Siting Board no later than 90 days after it is filed. The entity needs only to propose one construction option; however, they do need to discuss other options that were considered and why the preferred option was chosen. In the event that land acquisition is necessary, they would need to disclose the status of negotiations with those property owners.

Ms. De Rosa asked about the difference between accelerated and not accelerated.

Ms. Readler stated that they can take advantage of an accelerated process if they demonstrate a need for the project and if the project is entirely in existing right-of-way.

Regarding participation by interested parties, Ms. Readler stated that the approval process does allow interested parties, including Dublin, to file a motion to intervene and file comments. The Ohio Power Siting Board is the entity with the approval power and any comments filed would be part of the record. The Board would conduct an investigation and produce a report of their findings. The report will contain an automatic approval date. The only limitations on the approval date is that it cannot be sooner than 7 days after the written report is filed and no later than 90 days after the application is filed. The Board can then approve with modifications, disapprove or take no action. If the Board takes no action, then the accelerated application is deemed approved as of the date set forth in the report. Construction can begin after that date.

In response to Mayor Peterson's question regarding whether or not anything has been filed, Ms. Readler stated AEP has not yet filed an application.

Ms. Fox inquired as to whether there was a list of criteria the Ohio Power Siting Board uses to determine whether to approve or disapprove an application. Ms. Readler stated that there is a list of approximately eight criteria. The criteria is the same, whether the application is accelerated or not.

Ms. O'Callaghan reviewed the two route options that were introduced by Mr. Demaree. She explained that the first route option would move the existing distribution lines a little further north, which would be further from the residential areas. The second route option would follow the existing distribution line. She shared some photo-shopped photos to give an idea of what the poles would look like in a few areas.

In response to Mr. Keenan's question regarding existing pole height, Ms. O'Callaghan estimated they were 45-50 feet.

In response to Ms. De Rosa's question regarding what is behind where the new line would go, Ms. O'Callaghan stated that it is undeveloped land.

Ms. Fox inquired as to the number of existing distribution lines and whether or not they would all need to be replaced. Ms. O'Callaghan stated that all lines are accounted for in the picture provided by AEP. Ms. Fox stated that it appeared there were less lines on the picture of the new pole. Mr. Demaree stated that all lines are accounted for in the picture that was provided.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes asked if any of the lines were vacated or if they were all active. Mr. Demaree stated he did not know.

In response to Ms. Alutto's question regarding if there were inactive lines and would AEP take those down when they took the poles out, Mr. Demaree stated that he would assume they would take them out.

Mr. Reiner asked about the number of poles and whether or not there would be less with the increased height. Mr. Demaree stated there would be less poles required.

Ms. Fox inquired as to how far apart the new poles would be versus the old poles. Mr. Demaree stated that the new poles would be about 300 feet apart.

Ms. O'Callaghan stated that a natina finish had been discussed to minimize the visual impact of the poles. She provided an illustration. The cost difference would be about \$300,000 for the entire route and the City would be responsible for that cost. Another option to minimize visual impact would be that the City could provide landscaping as permitted under the poles. The cost would depend on what would be planted, but this cost would also fall entirely on the City of Dublin. She provided a picture of the "BOLD" (Breakthrough Overhead Line Design) pole that Ms. Fox had asked about previously that is used in New Albany. AEP has determined that these poles would not be the best option for the situation in Dublin for a number of reasons -- a wider footprint and one versus two circuits as well as distribution poles required in between them. A shared-use path connection has been in the long-term plans as shown on the bikeway master plan. The path could be combined with this project for a cost savings of about \$90,000. Ms. O'Callaghan provided some photo-shopped images of the discussed options.

Ms. O'Callaghan stated that her presentation has focused on overhead options, but next she would discuss the various line burial options.

A full underground burial would be \$3.4 million more per mile for about 3.5-3.75 miles for an approximate cost of \$21 – \$32 million.

A partial underground offers three different options:

- Service Center to just west of Darree Fields;
- Service Center to just east of Darree Fields; and
- Service Center to just east of Cosgray Road.

Staff has been exploring the option that would benefit the aesthetics of the residential areas the most. It has a price tag of approximately \$9-14 million. An important note regarding partial burial is that while the transmission line would be buried, the distribution lines would remain where they are existing above ground. AEP is not in favor of the underground option.

Ms. Fox stated for clarification that distribution lines and transmission lines are not buried together. Mr. Demaree stated that this would be something for AEP Ohio to consider as this project is only for the transmission lines.

Ms. Alutto stated that the partial burial would still have distribution line on the south side.

Mayor Peterson stated that if the City decided to pay the largest amount of money, \$32 million, to bury the lines, there would still be existing distribution poles/lines on the south side of Shier Rings.

Mr. Demaree stated that was correct.

Ms. De Rosa stated that it would be a separate conversation with AEP Ohio to bury distribution lines. She inquired as to whether or not it was technically feasible to bury the lines together.

Jessica Helling, Transmission Line Engineering Manager, stated that when they consider underground there are other factors that need to be considered, including duct sizing and heat factors. She could not think of a scenario where they would bury transmission and distribution lines together due to the concerns it would raise operationally. They have worked with their distribution counterparts to determine what the needs are and where they need to be. She stated that there is no need for distribution to follow the transmission line into the park.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes asked where the route goes from there. Ms. Helling stated that they go underground and serve one of the park buildings in Darree Fields.

Ms. Fox asked about the clearance of the poles on either side of the road. Ms. Helling stated that the 80-foot corridor centered on the poles means that they will acquire easement rights wherever there are private easements.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes asked what happens in the case of an existing structure. Ms. Helling stated that they work to design around anything existing.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes asked if all these issues are contemplated before their filing with the Siting Board. It is important to understand exactly where these poles are going to be.

Ms. Alutto agreed that they need more certainty on the pole placement before decisions can be made.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that it is important to have more certainty in the areas that impact the residential areas. Mr. Demaree stated that he can provide more accurate photos by the December 2 hearing.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that Council needs to have time to be able to communicate to the public what the options are and what we can do to minimize impact.

Ms. Alutto stated that it would also be important to indicate that the poles would remain on the south side. The residents need to see what it looks like today versus what overhead would look like versus partial burial.

Mr. Keenan stated that he doesn't believe burial is a good option.

Ms. De Rosa stated that a discussion hasn't yet occurred about what can be done or what is usually done if the lines cannot be buried together. Ms. Helling stated that they can be in general areas, but it would be a matter of working out that design. She suggested reaching out to AEP Ohio with additional questions due to their expertise being different.

Ms. De Rosa asked if any conversation has occurred with AEP Ohio. Ms. O'Callaghan stated that they have not had such conversation.

Mr. McDaniel stated that the City has some experience about buried distribution as part of road projects, but it would depend on the site and conditions. A cost per mile basis would be in addition to costs already discussed.

Mayor Peterson stated he is concerned about timing because there is only one Council meeting remaining in 2019.

Mr. McDaniel stated that the primary focus of this meeting was to have the discussion with Council. Staff has been working on different options and in discussions with AEP regarding what can be done.

Mayor Peterson stated that this is an open process and there will be an opportunity for public comment. He stated that they need to be sensitive to the residential areas on Shier-Rings. He appreciates AEP working with the City to consider options.

Ms. Fox asked about what route would be presented to the Siting Board. Mr. Demaree stated that they are still seeking input about the two route options.

Ms. Fox stated that as the City looks to develop the West Innovation District, she wants to know which option staff prefers.

Mr. McDaniel stated that either route is impactful. Staff does not have a preferred route at this time.

Ms. De Rosa asked if the Eiterman option allowed anything different to be done with the distribution lines. Mr. Demaree stated that everything west would stay the same. Unless it is moved, what is existing will remain.

Mayor Peterson asked about the timeframe. Mr. Demaree stated that timing is tight. A route needs to be selected in order to begin engineering and be ready for the Siting Board.

Mr. McDaniel stated they are still working together. More information will be coming and it will be well publicized.

Vice Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that the landscaping, multi-use path and natina pole options are important to bring back as well because those are value-added items.

Ms. Fox stated that Council would like to hear what comments residents have. She is in favor of whatever we can do to make it more aesthetically pleasing.

Mayor Peterson stated that he wants to encourage public participation and thanked staff and AEP for all their work on these options.

Hearing no further questions from Council, Mayor Peterson adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Clerk of Council