

Natural Resources Committee

DRAFT Minutes

May 7, 2013

Committee Members: Peter Grant, David Hamilton, Andrea Ochs (Chair), Ed Payne, Mark Pumiglia, Paul Wagner, Kent Wright

Present: Peter Grant, David Hamilton, Ed Payne, Mark Pumiglia, Kent Wright

Staff: Kevin Behm

Guest:

Kevin called the committee to order at 7:10.

The Committee first reviewed the status of the Phase II pipeline route. The March 22 route planning document was provided and Kevin gave a brief overview of the meeting. He noted that Salisbury and Leicester expressed that they felt like they were ‘playing catch-up’ in the process because Cornwall had rejected the planned route and forced a more southern route to be investigated. There was also discussion at the route meeting of the possibility of pipeline entrenchment voiding a farm’s organic certification. This matter was not settled and VT Gas promised to determine a definitive answer. An additional route planning meeting is scheduled for April. Mark asked about proposed locations of proposed gate stations and it was pointed-out that the route will need to be finalized first.

The committee began reviewing several natural resource related documents that had been sent out as a result of the last meeting. They concerned the width of the cleared pipeline route and the techniques used to cross large bodies of water.

An article from Pipeline & Gas Journal (April, 2013. Vol 240 #4) was provided that detailed major water crossing procedures used in northern California. Essentially Horizontal Directional Drilling was viewed as the least impact procedure, but it had a higher cost than trenching. According to the article, this technique met the required environmental permits. Ed was concerned about crossing the Winooski and Otter Creek as well as Lake Champlain to reach the Ticonderoga Paper Mill. David noted that a ‘pull-back’ area was needed that was equal to the water body crossed. The longest ‘pull-back’ length mentioned in the article was 6,500 feet. The Lake Champlain crossing would be approx 2,500 feet from a rough look at a map.

The NRC felt that horizontal boring should be implemented at all river crossings as well as Lake Champlain. They again requested detailed information on techniques and potential impacts of pipeline river crossings. This is the 2nd request for this information from VT Gas.

Ed asked why wasn’t the Ticonderoga Mill being served gas from NY gas suppliers. Kevin responded that this question was also asked during the route planning meeting noted above. The response from VT Gas was that they can’t provide a definitive answer,

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but that they were approached by the Ticonderoga Mill to provide a competitive cost estimate, which the Mill accepted.

Concerning the cleared corridor width, Kevin understood the width to be 50 foot permanently cleared. A web image from Pennsylvania was provided showing such a cleared with alongside a highway. This issue was a concern at the recent route planning meeting also since it affects historic street tree plantings along some of the possible routes. David asked about the management of invasive plants along the corridor. Kevin noted that the NRC had requested an Invasive Plant Management Plan in its recommended guidelines for VT Gas.

The Committee adjourned at 8:30.