

Westmoreland Planning Board
Minutes
October 21, 2019

Attending: Alison Fissette, Bruce Smith, Tim Thompson , Lauren Bressett, Jim Starkey, Clayton Stalker as Selectboard Representative.

Excused: Larry Siegel, Frank Reader, Elaine Moore.

Lauren Bressett called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. In the absence of the Secretary, she agreed to serve as recorder and Bruce Smith served as Chair.

Review of minutes: 09/16/2019

Tim Thompson noted that page 2, under Subdivision Review the 2nd line should read “with the four **issues**.....”

Alison Fissette moved to accept the minutes as corrected, Tim seconded, all approved.

Eversource information session

Attending from Eversource were: Connor Jennings. Charlotte Ancel and Steve Casey. Chris Coates, County Administration also attended. They have developed some additional materials as a result of the June public event held at Westmoreland School and provided Jo Ann with these materials to post on the web. They have met with the County Commissioners and have their support. They have informed the Delegation and will keep them apprised of the progress they are making.

The displayed map shows that the circuitry that will be covered is center and southern portion of Westmoreland. Basically all those served by the Chesterfield Rt 63 - Spofford Rd feed from the Hinsdale substation. Some of Chesterfield around the perimeters of the circuit will also benefit such as Johnnycake Rd-Coyote Canyon-River Rd. The northern Westmoreland circuit feeds out of the Keene north substation and would not be served by this project. However all customers would ultimately benefit from the reduction of peak usage charges by utilizing stored energy in batteries as needed which reduces rates for everyone. The company has a focus on two approaches to reduce the outages on this circuit. Besides the battery storage, they are working to harden the circuit to be less susceptible to branch outage but full trees falling on the wires will still impact outages. There is a table showing all outages and the length of time of the outages which may be of interest.

The process is to first gain Public Utilities Commission approval. They then will start the approval process with Westmoreland while doing a lease negotiation with the county after the PUC process concludes hopefully in May. The parcel location is the lot currently used for construction parking. The layout would be a landscaped grassy area leading to a security fence. Inside the fence there would likely be what would look like 2 shipping containers on pylons, transformers and electrical connections. The closest similar installation would be in Stirling, Massachusetts. It was built by NEC Energy solutions. The storage is based on lithium ion batteries. There will be a bid process for contractors once all permits and approvals are obtained.

Full drawings and additional details would be provided when they are ready for site plan review however they encourage feedback at every step of the process to ensure the installation is as suitable as possible for the community. Chris Coates noted that the county wants to clean up the farm property and expect this installation to be as attractive as possible, using landscaping etc. The majority of noise is generated from the HVAC system but through experience from other sites they have been able to almost completely eliminate this impact. The objective is to not be audible outside of the project fence. Lights would be motion sensor with onsite and remote control via phone ability but would only be on when necessary for checking and service purposes. While emergency response and fire safety are a major concern the company has done a ton of work around safety with over 200 similar installations now, and another 200 coming in the next few years. There has been only one major incident with all those installations. Chief Nelson, the county Facilities Director and Chris have had some conversations and will have more as the project progresses. Eversource will not sign off if there are any safety concerns. Eversource will also provide training for local safety personnel.

An additional benefit of the project is that Eversource is adding in targeted energy efficiency options for the town and homeowners on a purely voluntary basis. This could be an energy audit or discounts on items such as Nest thermostats, insulation, lighting, etc. through NH SAVES. They will also offer to purchase energy back from batteries installed by homeowners and would only draw down a portion, never drain it so the homeowner is also protected. These storage batteries are usually installed in garages or basements as high moisture or dust environments aren't optimal and they are susceptible to extreme cold. There are 2,800 homeowner installed batteries in VT that currently have been in use for 2 yrs.

Eversource will come back to town to get the formal land use process started after PUC approval is obtained, which they anticipate will happen by May 2020.

Proposed Budget

The board reviewed this year's budget and expenditures and discussed potential upcoming events. Jim Starkey moved to level fund the budget for 2020. Tim Thompson seconded, all approved.

Clayton Stalker gave a Selectboard update and answered questions about the Broadband committee's progress. Also, upon the committee and Planning Board request, the Selectboard disbanded the Alternative Energy Committee.

Ordinance Review

The board will review all the proposed amendments made to date at the next meeting. Lauren and Elaine will put together a summary for this purpose. The first hearing on the proposed changes would then take place in December.

Alison Fissette moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jim Starkey, passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Lauren Bressett, Recorder

