

Panel to set rules for hydroelectric project

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CHICOPEE — The Conservation Commission tonight is expected to issue a statement of conditions under which it will endorse a Boston-based company's plan to begin an estimated \$4.5 million hydroelectric project here.

The project, in its final approval stages before construction, calls for construction of a power station downstream of the unused Chicopee Falls dam.

The Swift River Co. earlier signed a 30-

year contract with the city, giving the company access to the property where the station, capable of producing 8.8 million kilowatt hours of electricity per year, is to be constructed.

Conservation Commission members met at the beginning of the month and expressed concerns over possible environmental impact resulting from the project.

The conditions are expected to include prior knowledge of what materials will be excavated from the river bed and where these materials will be deposited, as well

as a request for submission of a state lab report.

The report being compiled is designed to describe what these materials are and to state whether they may pose danger to the environment or public when unearthed.

Commission members are to hold a brief meeting before their regularly scheduled meeting at 7 p.m. to finalize the conditions before presenting them to officials of the Swift company.

Company plans call for selling the electricity produced to the Wareham-based Commonwealth Electric Co.

The city has an option to purchase the power at some point, but this is not required as part of the agreement which, in addition to allowing use of the property, guarantees the city thousands of dollars in periodic payments and an up-front deposit.

The company hopes to begin construction in September.

In other action, the commission will weigh options to stop an alleged illegal dumping of materials in a wetlands area off Sheridan Street, and will review possible uses for 42 acres on Slate Road which it controls.