

9.18.14 P&RC Meeting – Commissioner Report – Cathy Poulin

**Notes from the Dominion Power Line Meeting, September 11, 2014
Alexandria Parks and Recreation Commission Representative Caty Poulin**

In our June meeting, I was appointed to be our representative to the Underground Transmission Working Group. Our first meeting was on September 11, and the second meeting is scheduled for September 25th. We will attempt to meet twice monthly until Dominion's proposal is submitted to the State Corporation Commission, which essentially justifies the rate raises to pay for this project. This submission is expected in November 2014. City Staff was present, including subject matter experts, Assistant City Attorney, Dominion representatives, Councilman Smedberg and Councilwoman Pepper. The group includes representatives from affected neighborhoods, Planning, and the Four Mile Run planning group.

Dominion had very little information to offer to this work group regarding their preferred location choice for this underground power line from the Pepco substation at the former Mirant plant site, to an Arlington substation just across from Four Mile Run. Basically it appears that Dominion will tell us where the lines will go within the legal notification guideline: near the time of their submission to the State Corporation Commission, the city and the work group will be given a window of 60-90 days to provide feedback.

In brief, Dominion asserts the need for this line in order to comply with Federal regulations that mandate secondary and tertiary redundancies for regional power delivery if there are substation failures in the network. Dominion's projections predict that our current network could become noncompliant if there continues to be the level of growth in power usage volumes, and there would be a possibility of grid failure if redundancies are not built into the system. Dominion has studied several options throughout the state, and the Alexandria line was chosen as a top option for reasons including cost and impact – but the data underlying the choice was not provided.

Concerns of the work group were voiced, and they were as follows:

Several members of the work group were unhappy that so little information was provided about the methodology and data for choosing the routes through Alexandria, as opposed to other parts of the state. It is not clear that this group will have any say on that matter, however.

Several members voiced irritation that Dominion's plans could have been projected earlier, and infrastructure in Potomac Yard, Route 1, the new linear park, and elsewhere could have been built with conduits for this project instead of potentially ripping up brand new construction.

Councilman Smedberg noted that some routes could have huge impact on undeveloped land in north Potomac Yard.

Potomac Yard representatives noted that some routes may have a huge impact on their developed property.

Several mentions of the infrastructure that may be affected: newly redone Route 1, the train tracks, Mount Jefferson Park, Four Mile Run, etc.

The Dominion representative said there is a possibility that this project would allow them to remove the substation at north Potomac Yard, as previously planned.

Several members asked about the feasibility of an underwater line from the Potomac River up Four Mile Run, as it would have the least impact on the city's infrastructure and could potentially cost less than underground lines. No data was available regarding this option.

I brought up the potential impact to the parks on some of the options, and the potential for new bike/jogging paths on some options.

Concerns were raised about public health and environmental impacts.

The city staff said they have retained outside counsel, and "we will be tapping into all our resources" to advocate on the city's behalf.