

October 11, 2011

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

Council-Manager Form of Government

Adjourned Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

An adjourned meeting of the Council of the City of Fort Collins was held on Tuesday, October 11, 2011, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the City of Fort Collins City Hall. Roll call was answered by the following Councilmembers: Horak, Kottwitz, Manvel, Ohlson, Poppaw, Troxell and Weikunat.

Staff Members Present: Atteberry, Harris, Daggett.

Mayor Pro Tem Ohlson made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Manvel, to go into Executive Session as permitted under Section 2-31(a)(2) of the City Code for the purpose of meeting with the attorneys for the City and affected members of City staff to discuss possible litigation regarding the Dixon Creek Substation to Horseshoe Substation power line project and related legal issues.

Councilmember Horak stated he would prefer to have a staff presentation prior to the Executive Session.

Mayor Pro Tem Ohlson and Councilmember Manvel withdrew the motion to go into Executive Session.

**Pineridge Natural Area Transmission Line Construction Alternatives Study**

The following is staff's memorandum for this item.

***“EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

*Staff will be presenting a draft study which examines alternative construction methodologies. The study examines the environmental, economic, aesthetic, reliability and schedule impacts of the potential alternatives. Staff is seeking Council direction on what alternative, if any, it wishes to pursue.*

*Key to the discussion of potential alternatives is Western Area Power Administration's (Western) adamant position denying consideration of undergrounding its existing and future transmission facilities. Western has also indicated that, within a decade, it plans to upgrade the overhead transmission line crossing Pineridge Natural Area. This position significantly limits options available to address view shed impacts. An underground option is examined and the probable Western line across Pineridge is illustrated, but ultimately due to Western's position, the majority of options examined are related to alternate overhead construction methods.*

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Options examined include:

- Relocate the proposed line to one of three alternate routes in order to lessen visual impacts.
- Change the appearance of the proposed line through the use of either galvanized (silver) or other color treatment.
- In place of the proposed tall single poles, use shorter double pole construction similar to the existing line.
- Decrease the number of poles in the Pineridge area by extending the distance between poles. This will require taller poles.
- Rather than building a double circuit line, upgrade just the existing. This would require additional substation equipment.
- Underground the new line and leave the existing Western line in place.

*In addition to the transmission line alternatives, staff and SAIC have also prepared a report that examines potentially available Distributed Generation (DG) technologies that might be available. While City staff recognizes an immediate need to provide additional electric requirements to the Loveland and south Fort Collins areas, integration of DG technologies are also being studied to augment our future electrical demand. Fort Collins cannot dictate what the City of Loveland does and does not do on its system; however the hope is that the information will be of value as the City looks at the integration of DG on its systems.*

## **BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION**

*To address reliability issues, Platte River Power Authority (Platte River) is in the final stages of upgrading the area transmission network by adding 230-kV transmission facilities, in particular the Dixon Creek to Horseshoe interconnection project (Project). To date, Platte River has accomplished two phases of the Dixon Creek to Horseshoe transmission line. This report addresses issues that have been raised related to the Phase III of the Platte River Project which extends from Dixon Creek Substation to Horsetooth Tap Switching Station. A point of contention for Phase III has been the section that is planned to be constructed overhead by rebuilding the existing Western Area Power Administration (Western) 115-kV line through the Pineridge Natural Area in Fort Collins as a double-circuit steel pole line. This section was planned to complete the Dixon Creek to Horseshoe 230-kV transmission corridor conversion by a summer 2012 in-service deadline.*

*Construction staging for Phase III began in the spring of 2011. As activity on the project escalated, citizens began to take notice. Although the required public process for notification was followed from 2005 up through today, a significant number of citizens were unaware of the project. As observed at Council meetings, and through other media, there has been concern voiced with the impact the project will have on the Pineridge Natural Area. As noted, the required public engagement process was done as part of the project. However, there was not a strong focused process to build informed consent or at a minimum acceptance of the project. Projects such as the Pineridge transmission project require a heightened level of engagement with the community and more specifically those stakeholders that are directly affected by a project. In this case, as with any large project that has substantial impact, the minimum process does not adequately achieve the required level of engagement. As a result, Platte River and the City have devoted significant*

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*resources exploring opportunities to address citizen concerns, which should have been done throughout the project.*

*On August 16, 2011, City Council, by motion, directed staff (1) to attempt to negotiate with the Platte River Power Authority a written agreement to postpone the commencement of construction of Phase III of the Dixon Creek Substation to Horseshoe Substation Transmission Line project pending the completion of a rigorous, in-depth data-based analysis and review of the project and its related impacts as presently designed, as well as the pros, cons, costs and benefits of the project and further pending the review and consideration of that analysis by the Fort Collins City Council and the other member cities of PRPA; (2) if such an agreement has not been negotiated and signed between PRPA and City on or before August 26, 2011, to work with the Mayor to schedule a special meeting of the City Council to be held no later than August 31, 2011, for the purpose of seeking Council approval of the commencement of such litigation as may be necessary for the City to seek adjunctive relief from a court of competent jurisdiction adjoining the construction of the project; and (3) to prepare such legal documents as may be necessary to file such a court action pending further direction from the Council.*

*On August 25, 2011, the Platte River Board of Directors passed a motion directing:*

*“Platte River Power Authority to temporarily delay further construction activities associated with Phase III of the Dixon Creek – Horseshoe transmission upgrade until October 18, 2011, provided an agreement, suitable to the General Manager, can be reached with the City of Fort Collins in order to use this period of delay to study alternative means to complete the 230 kV circuit presently under construction that will provide a redundant transmission circuit to the City of Loveland.*

*During the period between now and October 18, staff is directed to cooperate fully with the City of Fort Collins to retain a mutually agreeable, nationally recognized engineering consultant to complete the referenced study. The results of the study of alternative means to complete the 230 kV transmission circuit will be presented to the City Council of Fort Collins on October 18 for action by the City Council. Due to the critical importance of the new 230 kV circuit to the reliability of service to the City of Loveland and residents of south Fort Collins, any alternatives must complete the connection by June 1, 2012.*

*Fort Collins must pay the incremental costs of any alternative pursued. Platte River is willing to pay a reasonable amount for the retention of the engineering consultant, such amount not to exceed one half of the expenses.”*

*The end result of a multi stepped process has been to develop the Agreement signed on August 31, 2011 (Attachment 1). In that Agreement, the City of Fort Collins and Platte River Power Authority agreed to hire SAIC / R.W. Beck to analyze the Dixon Creek – Horseshoe project and examine alternative ways to accomplish the purposes of the project. Staff, Platte River and SAIC have been diligently working on the Alternatives Study. The initial schedule called for the study to be completed by October 10, 2011 for inclusion in the Council packet for the October 18, 2011 meeting. In order to provide information for the October 11, 2011 adjourned meeting, the study materials that are attached are a 90% draft of the final report (Attachments 2 and 3).”*

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Steve Catanach, Light and Power Director, introduced the draft report, detailing potential alternatives to the proposed power line project.

Joni Baston, SAIC Consultants, presented a summary of the transmission planning process and discussed the need for the project.

Chuck Williams, SAIC Consultants, detailed the Phase III portion of the project, which runs through Pineridge Natural Area and parallels Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) transmission lines. He noted WAPA will not consider undergrounding its transmission lines. Other alternatives that were examined included color-treating the tubular steel poles and using a double-circuit H-frame structure. Mr. Williams detailed various potential routes for the power lines.

Michelle Rossi, SAIC Consultants, discussed the distributed generation portion of the study.

Eric Sutherland, 3520 Golden Currant, discussed the history of Platte River Power Authority.

Councilmember Troxell asked if the goal of the project is to bring reliability and redundancy to the City of Loveland. Mr. Williams replied in the affirmative.

Councilmember Troxell asked for information regarding the peak load of the City of Loveland. Ms. Baston replied the 2011 summer peak load was 155.7 megawatts.

Councilmember Troxell discussed distributed energy generation.

### **Executive Session Authorized**

Mayor Pro Tem Ohlson made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Manvel, to go into Executive Session as permitted under Section 2-31(a)(2) of the City Code for the purpose of meeting with the attorneys for the City and affected members of City staff to discuss possible litigation regarding the Dixon Creek Substation to Horseshoe Substation power line project and related legal issues. Yeas: Kottwitz, Manvel, Ohlson, Poppaw, Troxell, and Weitkunat. Nays: Horak.

THE MOTION CARRIED.

(\*\*Secretary's note: The Council went into Executive Session at 6:45 p.m. and resumed the meeting at 7:35 p.m.)

Councilmember Horak stated the SAIC Study provided information on the issues involved that was useful in deciding whether to pursue any further action concerning this project and none of the alternatives are especially attractive, given the costs. None of the alternatives are feasible. He added the placement of PRPA power lines warrants an improved, more extensive process and public input procedure. PRPA needs to be willing to change procedures as community values change. A resolution directing staff to seek these changes with PRPA should be discussed at the October 18 meeting.

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Mayor Pro Tem Ohlson supported a resolution that would direct staff to work with PRPA to develop policies and procedures that would address the issues raised, including incorporating viewsheds and wildlife habitats into PRPA values and policies. Additionally, he suggested equivalent studies to that of SAIC be completed by PRPA; improvements should be made to the public notification process; and PRPA, along with its member cities, should work together to adopt best practices easement policies. He suggested the City should be involved in PRPA's long range planning process and both on-site and off-site mitigation policies should be examined.

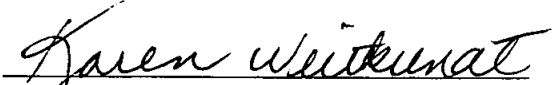
Councilmember Troxell suggested PRPA needs to engage distribution utility engineering and design to understand the requirements of its member communities. He encouraged further discussion on all levels within the member communities.

City Manager Atteberry suggested additional public notification and outreach, including certified mail notification to mayors and city managers of proposed projects.

Mayor Weitkunat stated community values need to be part of the process in the future.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

  
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Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Chief Deputy City Clerk

