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Directory	Public Works	Type	Minutes	Category	Public Works

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE HELD ON MAY 10, 2000

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Allen Wyett called the meeting of the Public Works Committee to order at 2:03 p.m. on Wednesday, May 10, 2000, in the Town Council Chambers.

On roll call, Chairman Wyett and Committee Member Sam McLendon were present. Attending for all or part of the meeting were: Town Manager Robert J. Doney; Public Works Director Albert P. Dusey; Town Engineer James Bowser; Assistant Police Chief Michael Reiter; Assistant Town Manager Tom Bradford; Assistant to the Town Manager David Jakubiak; Fire-Rescue Chief Ken Elmore; and Town Clerk Mary Pollitt.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as written.

III. UNDERGROUND UTILITY LINES (FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT, BELLSOUTH, AND COMCAST) IN SEVERAL LOCATIONS WITHIN THE TOWN OF PALM BEACH PER MEMORANDUM DATED MARCH 23, 2000, FROM COUNCILMAN WYETT

Chairman Wyett announced the Committee was meeting to discuss the practicality and desirability of putting the Town's utility wires, including electric, telephone, cable, underground on a basis of north and south. Mr. Wyett said while he recognized the fact the Town may not be able to have all the wires underground, he would like to see the key wires go underground and look at the east/west wires at some future time. He suggested underground wires may be a better security feature during storms.

Representatives from the utility companies attending the meeting were:

Larry Mayernik - BellSouth
Sid Poe - BellSouth
Leonard Maxwell - Comcast Cable

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Bill Hartigan - Florida Power & Light
Rod Macon - Florida Power & Light

Rod Macon referred to a letter he wrote to Mr. Dusey, dated March 21, 1997, (*copy attached*) which addressed the issues of converting overhead FPL facilities to underground. He said the statements in that letter are true today, and nothing has changed measurably; although overhead wires could be converted to underground, and it is a very expensive proposition.

Mr. Macon said underground facilities do have problems of their own; although a new underground system that would replace an aging overhead system would provide better reliability. An underground system is a mechanical system that will have failures from time to time as it ages. He noted that with underground facilities, duration of interruption is typically longer than with overhead wires. It is harder to find a problem when it cannot be seen, and repairing any problem typically takes longer. Following a hurricane or a wet storm with flooding, the underground areas are the last to be restored. FPL repairmen cannot work when there is standing water.

Mr. Macon said FPL always wants to put underground facilities on private property and not in public rights-of-way, and it is a requirement when converting overhead systems to underground that the Town would be required to provide private property easements. He said while overhead lines are put in public rights-of-way, usually at the very edge, those lines are much easier to move, and an underground facility cannot be moved. Generally, underground facilities that have to be moved are abandoned and rebuilt in total. Responding to a question from Mr. Dusey, Mr. Macon said if the Town signed a statement indicating if relocation within the right-of-way was required the Town would pay for it, rights-of-ways would be considered for underground lines.

Mr. Macon said a reasonable amount of separation would have to be maintained if utility lines were in the same trench as water lines. Mr. Macon mentioned that switching cabinets would have to be installed underground every time another overhead portion was tied into the underground lines. The switching cabinets are 9 ft. x 9 ft. x 5.5 ft. tall and require operating clearances on two sides or 8 ft. to the front and to the rear and 4 ft. to either side.

Mr. Macon, referring to his March 1997 letter, said the ballpark figure for a stretch from El Dorado Lane to North Woods Road on North County Road, north to south, was estimated to

be \$500,000 per 1/3 mile. He said any reasonably similar 1/3 mile section would be estimated at the same \$500,000.

Etonella Christlieb, 200 Everglade Avenue, addressed the Committee. Mrs. Christlieb said the cost of the project was relative to the increasing price of real estate in Palm Beach, and, although the project is expensive, the longer the Town waits to do it, the more expensive the project will be. She suggested a referendum should go to the residents of Palm Beach.

Mr. Dusey established with Mr. Macon that the order of magnitude would be \$1.5 million per mile plus or minus 25% with the Town paying the price of the installation of the conduit.

Sid Poe, BellSouth, referred to correspondence with the Town in August and September, 1999. Mr. Poe said BellSouth's position remains the same under the regulations of the Florida Public Service Commission.

Larry Mayernick, BellSouth, declined to provide an estimate for going underground because of the varied types of services provided to Palm Beach customers, but indicated the range could be \$700,000 to \$1.4 million per mile to go underground. He mentioned that BellSouth and FPL had a joint use agreement similar to a joint ownership, but cable companies rent from the pole owner.

Leonard Maxwell, Comcast, said approximately 60% of Comcast's lines are existing aerial lines with the majority of the lines being underground in the south end. He suggested one contractor should install all three companies' lines underground if that were approved, and Comcast would need access to FPL transformers for power supplies.

Mr. Maxwell said an approximate estimate for Comcast to go underground would cost between \$600,000 and \$700,000 per mile.

Rod Macon, FPL, said engineering and design costs would be approximately 10% of any ball park figures. Mr. Macon said if the Town wants to move forward with this project on a long term basis, the project will have to be tried out somewhere to allow everyone to understand every thing that is involved. He continued that if the Town will define clearly the section that is to be done, FPL can study that area and return to the Town with a fairly good ball park estimate for that pilot section.

The Committee made no recommendations, but after discussion, the Committee and the utilities agreed to look at a ball park figure for a pilot program to include the area as identified in a line sketch from the Town Engineer showing the north/south pole lines from the Palm Beach Country Club south to Temple Emanu-El.

Town Engineer Bowser said his line sketch could be presented with the Committee Report at the June 13th Town Council meeting for the Council's consideration of the

area(s) to be addressed.

IV. ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were none.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Allen Wyett, Chairman

Sam McLendon, Member

Attachment (1)