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May 17, 2011

SUBMITTED TO: Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee

DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL: Ken Reashor, Director, Transportation and Public Works

DATE OF MEETING: June 2, 2011

SUBJECT: East Dartmouth Transmission Line Review Update

BRIEFING NOTE

ORIGIN

June 8, 2010 meeting of the Halifax Regional Council, Item 13.5.

“ **MOVED by** Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Barkhouse that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report on the Cole Harbour – Eastern Passage Transmission Project to include:

1. Details on the options Nova Scotia Power Inc. is proposing, the implications of those options and how Nova Scotia Power Inc. is mitigating the impacts on the community and residents.
2. Explore other alternatives, such as undergrounding or any alternative routes, with Nova Scotia Power Inc.
3. Request that the Energy and Underground Services Advisory Committee make a recommendation at a future meeting on the preferred option (which might or might not be a Nova Scotia Power Inc. option).

MOTION PUT AND PASSED”

BACKGROUND

A September 14, 2010 Information Report to the Halifax Regional Council provided an update on the process review for a transmission line and substation to maintain an acceptable level of electricity reliability to the East Dartmouth/Eastern Passage area. It indicated that Nova Scotia Power had shifted its approach to the problem by engaging community stakeholders more formally. This resulted in the establishing of the Harbour East Transmission Project – Public Advisory Committee. It consists of 15 members who represent a cross section of the areas which could potentially be impacted by a transmission line in the area, Cole Harbour, East Dartmouth and Eastern Passage. HRM agreed to participate as a resource to the committee as well as a municipal observer of the process. An HRM staff committee, consisting of representatives from TPW (Utility Coordination), Community Development (planning), Community Relations and Cultural Affairs, and IAM (Real Property Planning) liaise with NSPI and provide municipal planning context to the discussion as it progresses. On March 6th, 2011 HRM presented to the committee, focusing on land use planning and municipal development planning issues.

Over the last 6 months, the Advisory committee has examined a number of possible routes for a new 138 kV transmission line to strengthen the East Dartmouth power grid and to provide for potential future development. It is now at a point where there is interest in sharing process and the results of the option review.

DISCUSSION

The Harbour East Transmission Project – Public Advisory Committee is planning to invite the general public to an open house, and is targeting the end of June. They wish to identify where they are with respect to utility need and timing, options and routes that have been considered, the criteria used to evaluate the various options, the process of elimination and the routes which still remain and could possibly represent a recommendation of the committee. Because this is a public meeting, there will be opportunity for anyone to attend and get an appreciation of how comprehensive and objective this process has been. It will provide an understanding of what areas will be impacted by this transmission system expansion, should the recommendation be put to the NSUARB and accepted as a reasonable utility expenditure.

Because the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee has inherited the Regional Council motion of providing to Council a recommendation on a preferred option, there may be interest in requesting the Public Advisory Committee to provide the Standing Committee with a presentation and an opportunity to ask questions relating to need, process, and recommendations. Because the advisory committee's deliberations have not been open to the general public, such a presentation would need to be scheduled after the public hearing, i.e. the July E&S meeting or later. In accordance with the Regional Council motion, HRM staff will prepare a Recommendation Report to the Standing Committee on a recommended transmission system expansion option, once the advisory committee has completed its review.

COMMUNICATION ISSUES/OPPORTUNITIES:

The general public will be provided an opportunity to better understand why there is a need to expand the transmission infrastructure in the East Dartmouth, Cole Harbour, Eastern Passage area, what the plans are for adding transmission infrastructure to the area, options which the committee considers most acceptable and why other potential options were eliminated.

ATTACHMENTS:

No Attachments

KEY STAFF CONTACT:

Angus Doyle
Manager Utilities Coordination
Transportation and Public Works