

Minutes of the Utility Line Undergrounding Study Committee
Of the City of Cherry Hills Village, Colorado
Held on Thursday, April 17, 2014 at 10:00 a.m.
At the Village Center

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present at the meeting were the following Utility Line Undergrounding Study Committee Members: Earl Hoellen, Andy Love, John Love, Dan Lynch, Susan Maguire, Paul Stewart and David Wyman.

Present at the meeting were the following City Council Advisors: Mayor Pro Tem Russell Stewart and Councilor Alex Brown.

Present at the meeting were the following Staff Members: Jay Goldie, Public Works Director; Marcus McAskin, Assistant City Attorney; Troy Carmann, City Engineer; Ralph Mason, Public Works Project and Right-of-Way Manager; and Emily Kropf, Special Projects Coordinator.

Present at the meeting was Jim Tarpey, former Public Utilities Commission Member, and Tom Henley, Area Manager for Xcel Energy.

AGENDA ITEMS

Discussion with Jim Tarpey and Tom Henley

Councilor Brown asked if Mr. Henley could address what the Xcel 1% fund can be used for and what the construction schedule might look like. He also asked Mr. Henley to discuss what he has seen other communities pursue.

Mr. Henley replied that the 1% fund can be used for converting Xcel facilities that are located in the right-of-way. There is typically not a franchise agreement for phone lines, which results in additional costs for the City. There is a state statute for lines located on private property in which the City can form local improvement districts and assist as a bonding agent. The amount of work that can be performed is based on the 1% fund and Xcel's manpower.

Councilor Brown asked how much work can be performed if there was additional revenue.

Mr. Henley responded that it depends on where the project is located and the availability of Xcel's staff.

Mr. Tarpey asked if any other cities have provided funding for undergrounding beyond the 1% fund.

Mr. Henley said no. He continued that other cities have not had the necessary funding to bury other facilities like telephone lines. Poles with joint use generally have ownership transferred to the other utility company if Xcel's lines are buried.

Assistant City Attorney McAskin asked how the process works when other utilities are buried with Xcel's facilities.

Mr. Henley replied that he does not know. Other utilities are not coordinated by Xcel and occur at a different time.

Committee Member Hoellen asked if Centurylink's facilities usually remain on the existing pole when Xcel's facilities are buried and the city does not pay for conversion of the other lines.

Mr. Henley said yes.

Committee Member Love asked how all lines can be converted at the same time.

Public Works Director Goldie responded that when the lines were buried at the Joint Public Safety Facility the City organized a meeting between Xcel, Comcast and Crown Castle. The same boring or trenching company was used for all lines associated with the project.

Committee Member Hoellen asked if Comcast is required to bury lines at its cost.

Assistant City Attorney McAskin replied yes.

Committee Member Andy Love asked if Comcast would be opposed to the installation of fiber optics.

Mr. Henley replied that he believes fiber optics is the current standard.

Committee Member Wyman asked if there would be room in the existing right-of-way for the new facilities.

Mr. Henley said that Xcel has encountered this issue and has found that there can be crowding in the right-of-way. He added that it is more costly to repair facilities that are located underground. It also takes less time to repair facilities that are overhead.

Mr. Tarpey discussed the smart grid system that was installed in Boulder.

Committee Member Andy Love asked if Xcel can provide research in regards to the cost of maintenance and time to repair underground facilities versus overhead lines.

Mr. Henley said yes.

Committee Member Maguire asked what the timeline would be for Xcel to bury 5 to 7 miles of lines.

Mr. Henley said less than five years.

Public Works Director Goldie added that engineering could take 6 to 9 months.

Committee Member John Love asked if the City could hire another contractor if Xcel's specifications were followed.

Mr. Henley said no. Xcel maintains quality control by requiring use of its contractors.

Committee Member Maguire asked if there are any other large projects that Xcel is working on.

Mr. Henley said yes. There are many developments currently taking place.

Committee Member Maguire asked how Xcel prioritizes its projects.

Mr. Henley replied that it is based on the submittal date.

Mr. Tarpey said that the Public Utilities Commission has little involvement in franchise agreements once they have been approved. He suggested checking the public utility tariffs.

Councilor Stewart asked if the Public Utilities Commission is more involved with Centurylink.

Mr. Tarpey responded no.

Committee Member John Love stated that a marketing effort and ad hoc committee may be needed to create a different result than the previous election.

Councilor Brown added that the installation of fiber optics might help.

Assistant City Attorney McAskin asked if the Committee was planning on adding the issue to the 2014 ballot.

Councilor Brown responded that City Council would have to pass a resolution by the end of August to be added to the ballot.

Committee Member Maguire suggested that the Committee schedule a meeting for the following week.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.