

Minutes of the Utility Line Undergrounding Study Committee
Of the City of Cherry Hills Village, Colorado
Held on Thursday, September 4, 2014 at 9:00 a.m.
At the Village Center

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present at the meeting were the following Utility Line Undergrounding Study Committee Members: Earl Hoellen, Andy Love, John Love and Paul Stewart.

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; and Emily Kropf, Special Projects Coordinator.

Absent were Committee Members Dan Lynch, Susan Maguire, Jim Tarpey and David Wyman.

AGENDA ITEMS

Undergrounding Draft Ordinance

Councilor Brown stated that staff had prepared two draft ordinances that require the burial of utilities for subdivisions, new homes and additions to institutional structures of 50% or more of existing square footage. He asked if the Committee had any suggested revisions.

Committee Member Andy Love stated that the location of the lines should be clarified. He said that lines located in private easements should be addressed.

Councilor Stewart stated that the exemption in the subdivision ordinance is a balance test, which can be difficult to determine.

Committee Member Hoellen suggested adding “in the City’s sole judgment”.

Committee Member John Love asked if the exemption should go before the Board of Adjustment and Appeals as a variance.

Councilor Brown stated that an approved variance would not set a precedent. He added that separate review criteria might be required.

Public Works Director Goldie and Councilor Stewart agreed.

Councilor Brown asked staff to revise the ordinances based on the Committee's feedback and present the updated versions at the next meeting.

Policy Outline and Discussion

Councilor Brown stated that the Committee may want to submit an interim report to City Council regarding the status of the undergrounding issue. He added that the Public Works Department is planning to add a traffic study to next year's budget. Streetscaping or fiber optics could be used in conjunction with undergrounding. He asked if the Committee had any specific suggestions for the scope of the study. Councilor Brown also asked if the fiber optic ballot issue should be addressed in the interim report.

Councilor Stewart asked if the interim report should be published before the election.

Public Works Director Goldie replied that the interim report would be informational while the final report would include recommendations.

Committee Member Stewart asked if the City should hire a consulting engineer to review CenturyLink and Xcel's cost estimates.

Councilor Brown responded that the City Engineer can review the cost estimates.

Committee Member Andy Love suggested having the traffic analysis include other municipal experiences after improvements have been constructed. He added that projects that require utilities to pay for undergrounding could significantly reduce costs. He asked if a roundabout at Quincy and Colorado would be beneficial.

Councilor Brown replied that a roundabout could cause problems for equestrian users and pedestrians.

Committee Member Hoellen said that presenting an interim report to City Council would provide feedback. The City Council should weigh in about future street projects, as well.

Councilor Stewart responded that the City Council should also discuss fiber optics. He added that he spoke with a contact with experience in private/public partnerships who might attend the next meeting. Councilor Stewart asked if the traffic plan will include community surveys. He added that the community's need for fiber optics should be explored.

Public Works Director Goldie said that the traffic study is more of an update to the existing report. He suggested adding it to the Master Plan review, which might include surveys.

Committee Member Andy Love asked if the issue of using outside contractors for construction had been resolved.

Councilor Stewart replied that the only way might be to renegotiate the franchise agreement.

Committee Member Andy Love asked if that would be included in the interim report.

Councilor Stewart said yes.

Committee Member John Love asked when the South Suburban bond expires.

Councilor Stewart responded that the last payment is in 2018.

Councilor Brown stated that a 2-mill increase for undergrounding could be added for three years and then the money currently directed towards South Suburban could be used for undergrounding. He added that there might be an issue with open space though.

Committee Member John Love stated that the City could issue a bond for the first three years to avoid a tax increase.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.