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PUCO

DON MILLER

CASE # 07-0171-EL-BTX

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First Energy has made very short notice of its intention to construct a 138 thousand volt transmission line, from the area of Mosely Rd., south along Clay St., or SR-528, to the Mayfield Rd., Sr-322 and Huntsburg areas. This was publicized in the Feb., 22, 2007 edition of The News-Herald. The first required Public Informational Meeting as required by PUCO/Ohio Power Siting Board was held a scant 11 days later on March 5th and March 6th of 2007. Many residents in the effected areas to include myself never received First Energy mailings as FE claimed. Also, some Trustees I contacted in the effected areas were not notified, even though First Energy has a dedicated corporate liaison assigned to provide such information to the local governments.

I attended the March 6th "meeting" at Ledgemont High School, located in Thompson, armed with information and to add my voice, protesting against the proposed power line. I & many others feel greatly mislead by First Energy's news release in the newspaper, a fact sheet and alleged mailings regarding such "meetings".

On arrival, we found a number of tables setup in the school gymnasium, manned by various FE rep's supplying information sheets, topo maps and reinforced by the corporate approved comments, not an expected presentation with the a question/answer period afterward. In addition, we were handed a comment sheet, and instructed to leave our comments with FE or mailed into their office. I chose to send an email protesting the line, for documentation purposes.

During this "meeting", facts gathered show the high voltage transmission line was needed to supply a heavy commercial and industrial demand in the area of southern Geauga and Ashtabula counties, and the line would be of no direct benefit to Thompson and some adjacent communities to the south. According the Planning Commission for Geauga County, projected increase in households from the year 1990-2025, 35 years, are only expected to be 29.42%. New building permits have been "flat".

Should the proposed line be installed on Clay St., according to FE maps, the front porch of my new home, almost completed would be approx. 90 feet away from poles and wires carrying 138 thousand volts. I am not eligible for any token of compensation, as the line and poles would be installed on property across the street, 32 feet from the center of Clay St.


Approximately 10 years ago, there was much debate and fact gathering to address many of these same concerns for FE and the southern Geauga and Ashtabula areas. A 138 KV line known as the "Rachel 138" was proposed to follow a substantial portion of the old B/O railroad right of way.

Source <http://co.geauga.oh.us/departments/planning/farmland/plan/ch2b.htm>

Rachel 138, also known as Ohio Power Siting Board case for Application for Certification #95-600-EL-BTX had an opinion by Chairman Mr. Craig A. Glazer. Mr. Glazer's concurring opinion contained the following text:

"After reviewing all of the evidence and weighting the pros and cons in this very difficult case, I concur with the Board's decision the Rachel Line is the superior alternative given the nature of the particular problems and the time period and logistics needed to correct them."

I queried FE personnel at each table about the Rachel Line. Responses ranged from they were not permitted to speak about that line, censored, and the Amish were citing religious followings regarding electricity on their properties. I found the Amish comment particular amusing as "Yankee" money is greatly accepted and appreciated in

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the Amish community even though "Yankee" earnings are primarily derived from the use of electricity. One response showed that although an abandoned railroad line was available, and approved by the Ohio Power Siting Board, it has now been transformed into a bike path, Metro parks would certainly not allow a power transmission line now. So here we had a seldom used, already established right of way, with the appropriate studies completed, and FE failed to act in a timely manner. I was told by a FE rep at the legal table that directly impacted property owners would be well compensated, knowing this is their only chance to make the most money from a utility, while the dumb ones who fight will lose all, if the matter came to court.

Sadly, pathetically but not unexpected, human nature and money have their influences. There are those property owners who have taken a short, quick sited approach to make a few dollars, not fully realizing that they are in all effect being "pimped" by FE. Over the lifetime of the transmission line, FE will make tens of millions of dollars, while offering paltry compensations. Many, but not all, are owners of large, vacant properties residing elsewhere or farms. They will be awarded their token compensations, but not have to see or live within the shadow and effects of high voltage transmission lines. Other recipients operating under the current economic duress we face need this token gesture by FE, forever changing the real value of their land and future heritage. Everyone can use extra monies, but not all need it. I queried about a small scale new generating plant in the effected area and was told that the residents and businesses in that area would object and effectively kill any efforts of an underground natural gas line on their respective properties for fear of explosion hazards.

And somehow through all the above feeble and shallow reasoning's, pompous and arrogant attitudes that apparently mimic FE corporate lines, I am to agree, and accommodate permanent damage to my property values and endure the possibility of this transmission line forever, located a scant 90 feet away from my home. My blood boils, and I am compelled to do what I can to protest and effectively try to stop this monstrosity.

My property was not designated by FE to have the poles and wires installed upon it, so that removes me from the smart/accept the money and dumb/lose the money groups and places me in the "fight for what is right" group. The fight started with an official protest on record with the Thompson Twp. Trustees, public meeting held on Wed., 3/7/2007, emails, letters sent to FE, Public Utilities Commission, Ohio Power Siting Board, countless telephone conversations and face to face exchanges with concerned like minded people. I am far from done, and anyone who personally knows me can attest to my perseverance, until final disposition, regardless of where that may fall.

There are simply no allowances or acceptance to blatant permanent destruction of property values, and the environment, to support a claim by a private, for profit utility, "pimping" the Ohio Revised Code, allowing larger and commercial business expansions located in south Geauga and Ashtabula counties. As stated above, there is no direct benefit to Thompson and adjacent communities. Businesses usually raise the standard of living for the short term and demand a higher level of services, only to flee at the first sign of tax abatement denials or where "outsourcing" becomes more lucrative. Left behind are communities that are now burdened by vacant buildings, a higher expectation of living standards, missing tax revenues, and displaced workforce, all as a result of short term riches. Ohio Edison, a competitor of FE is on the border of the FE service area to the

"troubled" southern Geauga and Ashtabula counties. This appears to more of a threat of market share than a true public need. As a Clay St. resident, I and Thompson Twp. will receive nothing, and be forced to sacrifice forever in the form of visual assaults of poles and wires, and greatly devalued property values, so the "bottom line" of FE and commercial interests are enhanced.

Don't be fooled by with warm, fuzzy misleading statements responses from FE. Actions speak louder than words. FE has great difficulty maintaining the current electric grid. Go through any FE service area and you will see electric poles leaning precariously, poles held by rope to other poles, broken poles, backlogs and delays of electric hookups and the list goes on. Simple logic shows that you can not push a gallon of water through a straw in the same amount of time as a hose. FE would rather run more poles and wires than use larger diameter wire, better insulators and a host of other technologies on current poles. Stepping back and upgrading the current wire grid, and actively promoting and usage of conservation techniques would effectively reduce the need for higher voltage transmission lines. From the time around Thanksgiving 2006 to just a few weeks ago, 4 electric/utility poles with phone lines lay on the ground, along Clay St., between Valentine and Leroy Thompson roads. The fix was smaller temporary poles for phone lines. FE failed to replace the poles with power lines and/or transformers as there were no houses (customers) in that effected area, but allowed the telephone lines, lifelines in some cases, to be susceptible to damage.

Aside from the above rant, you may ask what have I, the author done. To date, approximately \$20 thousand dollars was spent on a geothermal system for heating and cooling. FE did not offer any financial incentives to say thank you for freeing up voltage from my all electric home to the electric grid. An additional \$3 thousand dollars were spent to utilize a non-electric water softener for well water. I also have an excess of 12 thousand square feet of open roof area available, where somehow I'll find a way to obtain funds to utilize solar cell technology, augmented by wind driven technology for current power needs. Studies show Ohio obtains less than or equal to 1% of electric power from renewable resources.

I'm here, fighting. Where are you? Can you help?



Respectfully Submitted,

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