

U46, area towns and homeowners among 18 petition filers on high voltage power line project

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A total of 18 petitions to intervene on the proposed Commonwealth Edison high-voltage power line project have been filed by attorneys for local homeowners and groups as varied as Elgin School District U46 and wind energy advocates.

The petitions have been filed with Illinois Commerce Commission regarding the proposed Grand Prairie Parkway project that would carry a 345,000-volt power line on a 57-mile course through Ogle, DeKalb, Kane and DuPage counties. It would be on steel towers 165 feet tall and have four steel cross arms each with a maximum width of 52 feet.

According to the ICC website, petitions as of Friday have been filed on behalf of the following: Mark Secco of Genoa; Ronald and Carol Nightingale of Elgin; Lynn and Betty Landmeier of unincorporated Kane County; John Cash and Mary Lewis of unincorporated Kane County; Wayne, Dean, and Dennis Muirhead of unincorporated Kane County; Invenergy Wind Development; the Board of Education of School District U46; the Forest Preserve District of Kane County; the village of South Elgin; the city of Elgin; Kane County; Rob Mason of Elgin; Wind on the Wires, a group advocating for the development of wind energy; John Tomasiewicz of Elgin; Michael and Jennifer Thompson of unincorporated Kane County; Jerry and Kristin Drexler of Hampshire; Thomas Pienkowski and Kristine Pienkowski of Hampshire; and William Lenschow of Sycamore.

Some property owners — as the petitions filed for the Muirheads and Cash and Lewis note — are concerned because the route “will bisect the owners’ property and will otherwise interfere with and impair the development of the land.”

Invenergy wants its voice heard at the hearing as the intention of the project, according to ComEd, is alleviate congestion in bringing power along the nationwide grid — a matter which Invenergy says impacts its operation and profitability.

“The Commission’s decisions regarding the Grand Prairie Gateway project will affect the business interests of Wind on the Wires and its members who operate in Illinois (and) the states in which the transmission line interconnects with the existing electric transmission line facilities,” the petition for Wind on the Wires states.

U46 is concerned because the lines will come close to Otter Creek Elementary School on Hopps Road, which “will negatively impact School District U-46’s use and enjoyment of its property,” according to the court document.

The filing for South Elgin notes the village “is seeking to have ComEd move the route slightly in order to use property owned by the Kane County Forest Preserve rather than property that is immediately adjacent to residential properties in the village.”

“Accordingly, the District is interested in the subject matter of this proceeding and may be affected by any order entered or other relief granted by the Commission,” the petition for the Forest Preserve District states.

Tomasiewicz and his wife, Pamela, live in one of the three subdivisions near Bowes Creek Country Club and not far from where the lines might be.

In a letter to the ICC, Tomasiewicz wrote, “I survived prostate cancer, my wife is on medication for a thyroid condition, my neighbors have pacemakers, breast-cancer, prostate cancer, thyroid cancer, and a host of other ailments. We represent a typical senior community.

A major concern for all residents of the Bowes Creek Community is the possible future health effects the high-powered lines will have on our health. No one can ‘guarantee’ these power lines above ground are safe.”

People may comment on the proposed project at www.icc.illinois.gov. The case number is 13-0657. ComEd hopes to have a ruling by the Illinois Commerce Commission on the matter by sometime this summer.