

Meeting Summary for PSE Activity Advisory Committee

Jul 01, 2024 05:57 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada) ID: 861 9988 6067

Quick recap

The team discussed a petition to study the feasibility of undergrounding electrical lines on the island to reduce damage to trees and the potential costs associated with moving power poles. They also addressed concerns about the impact of pole moving on residents, other utility services, and the need for a feasibility study to address these issues. Lastly, they planned for the upcoming August board meeting, the creation of a promotional poster, and discussed the lack of public notification about planned blackouts due to dry weather conditions.

Next steps

Jenny to prepare a summary of questions for King County representatives for the August 15th meeting and bring it to the Community Council board meeting on Thursday.

Jenny to organize volunteers to staff the Community Council booth at the Strawberry Festival to discuss the PSE project.

Jenny to create sample poster designs for the Strawberry Festival booth and get feedback from community members.

Jenny to prepare multiple clipboards with the petition for the Strawberry Festival booth.

Diane to send Jenny the schedule for the Strawberry Festival booth staffing.

Jenny to contact the attorney from Bainbridge Island for advice on how they proceeded with PSE discussions.

Jenny to obtain and review details of the franchise agreement between King County and PSE.

Summary

Island Undergrounding Petition and Costs

Vashon-Maury discussed a petition to study the feasibility of undergrounding electrical lines on the island to reduce damage to trees. The petition had already gathered over 400 signatures in 16 days. The high costs associated with moving power poles were discussed in response to the King County Franchise Agreement, with factors such as legal actions, employee time, tree removal, and undergrounding being highlighted. A new technology was introduced that could potentially reduce costs by allowing for shallower digging, but further discussion and image presentation were necessary to elaborate on this solution.

Utility Pole Relocation Necessities Discussed

Discussion of the necessity of moving utility poles. It was clarified that not all poles needed to be moved, with only those within 10 feet of the road edge requiring relocation. The team agreed that some poles, already more than 10 feet away, did not need to be moved, and that the need to move poles also did not eliminate the need for other telecommunications infrastructure to be moved.

Island Poles Shifting and Telecommunications Infrastructure

There was a discussion about the necessity of moving poles across the island, specifically those within 10 feet of the road's edge. Concerns were raised about whether they could operate underground. Vashon-Maury clarified that not all lines would be moved, and addressed the need for further information on this issue. He also mentioned the plan to underground the electrical lines due to wildfire risks and the impact of tree trimming on the telecommunications and electrical lines. Telecommunications lines do not need tree trimming around them.

Addressing PSE's Pole Moving Impact

Vashon-Maury raised concerns about the potential impact of PSE's pole moving activities on residents and other utility services. The discussion highlighted that PSE is required to have a plan to move all poles at least 10 feet from the roadside under their 2019 Franchise Agreement with King County Roads. However, there were uncertainties about how this would affect other utilities ('double poles') and the potential for live wires causing wildfire hazards. The team agreed on the need for a feasibility study to address these issues.

Discussing Utility Pole Replacement and Easements

The team discussed the need for replacing utility poles, specifically those with tree wires, and the associated requirements for pole height and easement acquisitions. Vashon-Maury clarified that poles with tree wires must be replaced with taller ones. There was also a discussion about the issue of easements and tree trimming rights under state law, with an anonymous participant questioning the need for Vashon-Maury's advocacy.

Infrastructure Changes and Community Consultation

There was a discussion about major infrastructure changes happening on an island, with concerns raised about inadequate community consultation. A participant expressed frustration about being excluded from decision-making and suggested that ongrounding utility lines, a potential solution, is not allowed in Washington state. It was confirmed that GLDS has a minimum coverage option if required to meet code. The team agreed that the issue might need to be addressed at the state legislative level, with suggestions to pursue any necessary changes through this avenue. Diane suggested investigating the potential benefits of new grounding technology being tested in California, despite disagreements about the necessity of easements for other utilities and potential restrictions in Washington state.

Strategic Discussion on Franchise Agreement Meeting

Vashon-Maury stressed the importance of King County and Pse's upcoming August 15th meeting, suggesting the involvement of strategic decision-makers to ensure a productive discussion. Additionally, a Freedom of Information Act request was suggested to obtain more information about PSE arborist's list, with Bainbridge's attorney being consulted for furthering discussions with Pse.

Tree Trimming Wording and Community Engagement

The team discussed changes in wording regarding consultation with the owner before tree trimming, emphasizing the importance of careful language due to potential legal ramifications. They noted a shift in

wording from 'seeking agreement' to using PSE's 'sole judgment', but acknowledged uncertainty about the legal process for seeking reasonable agreement. Additionally, Vashon-Maury highlighted the large number of people interested in the project and the need for their attendance at meetings to ensure their voices are heard. Diane proposed the idea of having speakers at the Strawberry Festival to discuss the Pse project, and Vashon-Maury agreed to organize this.

Creating Poster for Cause Promotion

Vashon-Maury and Diane discussed the creation of a poster to promote their cause. Vashon-Maury agreed to create the poster, with the theme being "clear zone", and Diane suggested that Vashon-Maury should make a few small mock-ups to get feedback from their mailing list. They also discussed which images to include, with Vashon-Maury showing several options. Diane advised Vashon-Maury to choose a few images that would attract people's attention and convey their message clearly.

Project Next Steps and Board Meeting Preparation

Vashon-Maury, Diane, and Co discussed the next steps for their project, focusing on the August board meeting and the necessity of involving the right people. Vashon-Maury agreed to bring a summary to the board meeting and planned to highlight the eminent domain aspect. They identified key questions to ask, including the handling of communications and utilities, and the potential need for changes to statutes.

Blackout Notifications and Strawberry Festival

Vashon-Maury raised concerns about the lack of public notification about planned blackouts due to dry weather conditions, which could lead to power lines sparking and causing wildfires. Diane and Co assumed that the decision to cut power would be based on weather forecasts and that residents would be notified in advance. The team also discussed the upcoming strawberry festival, where they planned to have information booths and petitions for signing.