SCOPING AND INFORMATIONAL MEETING - 21-140 & 21-141 HERMANTOWN, MINNESOTA - JANUARY 26, 2022 BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION AND DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE In the Matter of the Application of Minnesota Power for a Certificate of Need and a Route Permit for the Duluth Loop Reliability Project MPUC DOCKET NO. 21-140 & 21-141 AAD Shrine Meeting & Event Center 5152 Miller Trunk Highway Hermantown, Minnesota January 26, 2022 - 6:00 p.m. COURT REPORTER: Janet Shaddix Elling, RPR

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1 MR. CEZAR PANAIT: Good evening. My name 2 is Cezar Panait. I am an engineer with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission based in 3 St. Paul, Minnesota. 4 And we are here -- we want to welcome you 5 to the Public Information and Environmental Review 6 Scoping Meeting organized by the Public Utilities 7 Commission and the Minnesota Department of Commerce, 8 and also on behalf -- this is the application on 9 behalf of Minnesota Power, the local utility company 10 here in northeast Minnesota. 11 12 So a couple of logistical items. The restrooms are in the hallway to the left. 13 There's a coatroom in the back, otherwise you can use the back 14 15 of your chair. And, also, it is the policy of the venue to encourage people to use masks in light of 16 17 the recent resurgence of the virus, especially for people not vaccinated, that's the venue's policies. 18 And Minnesota Power provided plenty of masks on the 19 20 table, please feel free to take one or take a There is ice water and coffee refreshments 21 couple. 22 on the other sidewall. 23 With that being said, we are going to go 24

through a presentation of a half an hour or so, I believe, and after that the main purpose of

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1 tonight's meeting is to gather comments and 2 questions from the public regarding Minnesota Power's Duluth Loop Reliability Project, which is a 3 transmission line, a new proposed transmission line. 4 So you see the agenda for tonight. 5 Item one, that's me, I'll go over what the Public 6 Utilities Commission does. The process, the review 7 process for a permit application such as this permit 8 And then we'll pass it over to Mr. Jim 9 at hand. Atkinson from Minnesota Power to talk about the 10 project, characteristics of the project, 11 construction timeline, and any other questions that 12 you might have. And, also, not the least, but 13 Mr. Bill Storm, who is standing at the back of the 14 room, and he works for the Minnesota Department of 15 Commerce, and he'll talk about his role on this 16 17 project. And then, lastly, but not the least, we want to open up the floor for the public to make 18 comments or ask questions about the project. 19 And before I go on to the presentations, 20 21 I want to just remind people that with the Notice of 22 the Public Meeting that was mailed out to everybody

reviewed that notice, so I want to point out your attention that there are a couple of items that

on the project route, I'm pretty sure you've

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1 might be helpful.

2 So on page 4 of the meeting notice where it says additional information, and we'll talk about 3 this in the presentation, also, but there is 4 information on how to get more information about all 5 the applications, all the documents that have been 6 submitted to the Public Utilities Commission, and 7 8 also there is information for the people on how to If you want to be notified when new 9 sign up. documents get filed in the case, how to receive an 10 electronic notification, or the way to provide your 11 12 mailing address and you'll get printed notices in the future. We have your names and addresses 13 already and we'll use the same project contact list 14 for the second time we hold one of these public 15 meetings in the project area, and that will be in 16 17 July and we'll cover that. And then how to provide comments. Mr. Storm will give you all the details 18 and what are the various means of providing 19 So, with that, I guess we're going to go 20 comments. forward, and so these are the slides here. 21 So who is the Public Utilities 22 23 Commission. The Minnesota Public Utilities 24 Commission is a quasi judicial state agency led by five appointed commissioners, and the main role --25

and around 50 staffers. I'm an engineer working in the Energy Facilities Permitting unit of the Commission.

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And the role of the Commission, the main 4 role is to regulate investor-owned utility 5 companies, electric and gas, to make sure that they 6 provide reasonable rates for the services that they 7 provide. The Commission also regulates the 8 telecommunication companies in the state, 9 CenturyLink and Frontier and similar companies. 10 Only the landline telecom companies, not the cell 11 12 phone companies. That's one -- regulating the rates, make sure they're fair and reasonable is one 13 side of the Commission's activities. The second 14 15 main part is permitting large energy facilities such as power plants, transmission lines, natural gas or 16 17 petroleum pipelines. So every time a developer or a public utility, a public utility needs to build a 18 new power plant or transmission line, they have to 19 go through a process and obtain one or more permits 20 from the Public Utilities Commission. 21

22 So in this project here, Minnesota Power 23 will need two approvals. One is for the certificate 24 of need, which is, in other words, justification for 25 why Minnesota Power thinks that the project is

needed and useful for its customers. And then after 1 2 the CN decision is made, but in this process, we are going concurrently to save time, but that's the 3 proper order. So the Commission considers the need 4 first and then if the need is granted, then it will 5 go to the consideration of the route permit, where 6 the project should be built, under what conditions, 7 and all those conditions. We have a generic list of 8 permit conditions that are carried over from project 9 to project, and also each project gets individual 10 items that are captured in the section called 11 special conditions for a project based on 12 particulars of a location and mitigation items, and 13 Mr. Storm will talk about those also. 14

15 So the record developing during a permit application review process involves a year-long 16 17 process in this case. And so the Commission builds a record of evidence beginning with the 18 applications, public comments, agency comments, and 19 then later on will have a public hearing led by an 20 administrative law judge. So all this process 21 22 culminates with the public hearing, and the public 23 hearing will be held in the project area in July, in the summer. And then the judge, we refer to the 24 25 judge as the ALJ, an administrative law judge, he or

she will compile or write a report outlining the findings of the case, recommendations to the Commission. And then the Commission takes that report, takes the entire record of the case, and then makes a meeting, a public meeting again towards the later part of the year, and then they decide on the two applications at hand. So that's the role of the Commission.

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9 So a project-specific flow chart. Those blocks show the various milestones that this project 10 will go through. And beginning from the upper left. 11 So the application, because we are talking about two 12 applications in this case, where they are identical, 13 Minnesota Power chose a route to provide a combined 14 route/CN permit application, and then they just 15 eFiled the combined application, including route 16 17 maps, and all the supporting information that they are required to provide as part of the statutory and 18 rule requirements. All the record is found in the 19 electronic filing system, the eDockets. 20

21 So the applications were filed -- and I 22 don't think I have a clicker, do I? Yeah, I do. So 23 back in October, and then the green blocks, this is 24 the current phase. And the significance of the 25 green outline means that these are the opportunities

1 for the public to provide comments and ask 2 questions. So we are here, this is the phase, right, the public information and scoping meeting. 3 And then I won't steal Mr. Storm's 4 thunder, he'll talk about the environmental review 5 required for a large project like this, and then he 6 will go to issuing the environmental document. 7 And then following that, we'll be back here in the 8 project area in July. And there is -- one of the 9 next slides offers like a table with dates attached 10 so it is easier for people to kind of see what the 11 next opportunity for learning or providing input to 12 the project. And then this is the milestone where 13 the judge will complete his or her report and 14 15 present it to the Commission. And, finally, towards the end of the 16 17 year, October, November, that's when the Commission 18 will meet in a open meeting in St. Paul at the Commission headquarters, and that meeting is open 19 for the public to attend. And nowadays we have all 20 the meetings are virtual, and I should have 21 22 mentioned that this meeting here tonight in person 23 will be followed tomorrow by a similar meeting using the Internet, the WebEx platform, with a dial-in as 24 25 an option for those people that don't want to use a

computer or are on the road, you can attend tomorrow's meeting and virtually hear the same presentation again and another opportunity to ask questions or provide comments. So we are doing this because of the pandemic.

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I have to be mindful of my time here to keep the pace up.

8 So slide six. So this is a -- I won't read all of this verbatim, but I was talking about 9 the two approvals. The certificate of need, and so 10 these are the statutory and the administrative rule 11 12 requirements. These are to capture the factors the Commission is looking for in making a determination 13 whether a certificate of need application should be 14 granted, and these are some of the factors that the 15 Commission specifically is looking for. 16 This is 17 some of the factors, but there are more factors, but 18 these are just the main ones.

19 So basically the Commission by law is 20 required to look at the benefits of the facility, 21 including any enhancements, benefits, for the 22 natural environment. And, also, let's not forget 23 that this is a power company that needs to build a 24 transmission line, so the ultimate goal is to 25 enhance the quality of service and reliability that

Minnesota Power provides as part of their business providing power to the residential and commercial and industrial customers up here in northeast Minnesota.

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Another aspect that the Commission is 5 required by law to consider is what are some of the 6 alternatives to the project. And when they talk 7 8 about alternatives, it could be a different type of project that kind of provides the same benefits. 9 And I'm sure Minnesota Power will talk about what 10 the benefits are, what the role of the project is in 11 12 enhancing reliability and so forth. And the 13 Commission is required to analyze, are there any other project that could be built instead of this 14 transmission line that obtain the same objectives. 15 And, also, if there are any impacts to the 16 17 environment, how can those impacts be mitigated or avoided all together in the best case scenario. 18 And another alternative, it would be -- and Mr. Storm 19 will talk about that, are there any better, less 20 21 impactful route segments or complete routes that 22 Minnesota Power could build instead of this, this is 23 called a proposed route. And then part of the process will be to look at alternative routes or 24 25 alternative route segments. And you'll hear about

that next.

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2	So the second approval to the route
3	permit that I was talking, similarly, the Commission
4	is required by law, and there are citations for the
5	applicable, I think it's Minnesota 216E, sorry.
6	This is the governing statute and these are the
7	Commission and administrative rules governing 7850
8	guiding the route and site permits. So pretty much
9	the same factors that the Commission is looking for
10	when deciding whether a route permit should be
11	issued or not.
12	Moving on. This is the table that talks
13	about timelines I was mentioning earlier. So these
14	are the various milestones. And I won't read them
15	again, but you can see these are the main milestones
16	of the permit application review process, the
17	year-long process, beginning from when first the
18	application was filed and then the Commission
19	determined back in December that the applications
20	have met the requirements in terms of content, and
21	then they accepted the applications as complete,
22	that's the review process, the public review
23	process, which we are here tonight as that continued
24	review process. And then this meeting, there is
25	another meeting, virtual, and then the milestones

1 for the environmental report, and I'm pretty sure 2 Mr. Storm will talk about those. And then also the public hearing, and 3 that will -- the public hearing has to be held after 4 the environmental report is completed for people to 5 be able to review and comment on it and provide 6 feedback on that report. 7 This is the ALJ's report. I want just to 8 9 say that we don't -- we don't have a date, certain 10 date, these are just tentative dates, but pretty close to what we are trying to work towards. 11 Because we are required by statute to be able to --12 the Commission is required to, not personally, but 13 the Commission is required to make a determination 14 15 whether the permits should be granted or not within a year, a calendar year from when the applications 16 17 were accepted, so by that date the Commission will have to issue a decision. 18 And one other thing that is talked about 19 20 in the notice of the meeting. If you want to find 21 out more information about the project, either the 22 CN application, or -- because they run concurrently 23 but slightly different requirements. For example, I'll give you an example of where they diverge. 24 On 25 the CN application, the rules require the Commission

to make a determination on the merits of the 1 2 project. I was talking about that justification part. So we put out a notice for public comment and 3 a notice mainly to state agencies, but public is 4 welcome to comment on that notice, asking for the 5 merits of the project. Do you think that the 6 project is useful, should it be approved or not, so 7 that's the merit that pertains only to the CN 8 application versus the route. 9 So other than that, the two processes kind of merge, kind run in 10 parallel, but the same steps. 11 12 So in the notice there is a hyperlink, a web link. This is the Minnesota Department of 13 They have the project website 14 Commerce. 15 specifically for each project, each application, and if you go to that link that is talked about in the 16 17 notice, and I can give you a reference where that is 18 talked about, on page 5, the second paragraph, so if you go to that link this is what you will see. 19 This is the page of the project as hosted by the 20 21 Minnesota Department of Commerce. And then they

link various main important documents and you can open those up and read.

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24And then on the other side, you can find25out the entire record of the case by going to the

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The eDockets is the electronic filing 1 eDockets. 2 system of the Public Utilities Commission. So if you plug in the numbers, the year 21, and then the 3 case number of 140 for the CN and 141 for the route, 4 this is what you see. So this is just an example. 5 And then just kind of for people to have an idea, am 6 I in the right place? Yes, you are in the right 7 place if you see this page. And, obviously, to see 8 what various documents are and on whose behalf they 9 were filed. And then these are hyperlinks, so once 10 on that website you can click on any of these 11 documents and they open up. So you can read 12 everything that's been filed. 13 Okay. With that, I think, and I hope I'm 14

not forgetting anything. If not, I'll come back up
 here and clarify or supplement.

17 So that's me. I want to thank you for 18 attending tonight's meeting and, again, my contact information, it's up, I'm Cezar, again. And then we 19 have a public advisor. Each case, each docket, each 20 21 project gets a second staffer whose role is -- and 22 he's not here tonight because he had a virtual 23 meeting to run from St. Paul, so if you have questions about process, how do I get involved, how 24 25 can I comment, what is my next opportunity, how do I

1 sign up, Mr. Kaluzniak is the public advisor for 2 this project and he will be designated until the project is permitted later this year. 3 So with that being said, again, thank you 4 for coming out here tonight, because public process 5 is an important aspect of what the Commission does 6 and we value your input, we value your feedback, 7 your comments, because that's what helps each one of 8 these projects get the fair scrutiny that they need 9 in order for the Commission to make an informed 10 based decision. 11 12 And then I'll pass it over to Minnesota Power to talk about the project and hopefully be 13 able to answer questions either during the 14 15 presentation or later on. We'll open it up for public comments, unless you have specific comments, 16 17 questions, during MP's presentation. 18 With that, Jim. You can use the slides if you need to. 19 20 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Got you. 21 Can everyone hear me okay? Okay, good. 22 Because I'm supposed to keep this on. That's the 23 company rules. 24 Thanks for coming tonight. My name is Jim Atkinson and I'm Minnesota Power's Environmental 25

and Real Estate Manager. And a big part of my job is to oversee the permitting and the right-of-way acquisition for infrastructure projects like this.

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So the Duluth Loop Project is all about 4 reliability, as its name would suggest. And what it 5 specifically is about is a transition that Minnesota 6 Power has been making over the last several years 7 away from coal to more renewable energy. 8 There were several baseload coal-fired plants, mostly on the 9 North Shore, that have been permanently closed in 10 recent years. And as a result, we're seeing the 11 12 absence of some of the attributes that they used to provide for the local system here, the transmission 13 system here in terms of voltage, stability and 14 15 having enough power where we need it. So this is really about making up for what they used to provide 16 17 and doing it with a transmission solution instead of 18 another sort of generation.

There's really four main parts to the 19 The first one is about 14 miles of new 20 project. 21 115 kV transmission and that's mostly in Duluth and 22 partly in Hermantown. It starts in Duluth on the 23 north end and it ends in Duluth on the south end, but in between there's quite a bit of the route that 24 25 goes through Hermantown. It's following the

existing transmission route the entire way, and in those cases that existing transmission is also being upgraded or in some cases rebuilt. So at the end of the day we're really talking about 28 miles of new or nearly new transmission line.

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There's also a higher voltage component, 6 too, which is a 230 kV line, which is just under a 7 mile, and it goes straight north from our Arrowhead 8 substation up to an existing 230 kV line and it 9 breaks it into two separate circuits. And that 10 reduces the amount of line miles that are exposed to 11 things that can cause outages, it improves the 12 reliability of bulk transmission into the Duluth 13 So a couple of significant ways that it's 14 area. adding to our overall reliability. 15

There will also be some upgrades to our existing substations, mainly Ridgeview, the Hilltop, and Haines, and a little bit of that at Arrowhead as well. But those are mostly within the fence line, there will be some fence line expansion at our Ridgeview sub, but pretty modest.

And then there will be, as I had mentioned, the rebuilding and upgrading of existing transmission that we're following for virtually all of our route. And associated communications

infrastructure along with that.

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2 It says on here that 88 percent is collocated, but it's actually more than that, if you 3 consider that part of the route right now parallels 4 Midway River, and we wanted to eliminate the section 5 that does that, it's about a mile long, a little 6 And so we propose to reroute the existing 7 less. transmission away from the river and then follow 8 that with our new circuit as well. 9 I'm not sure how that happened. Oops. 10 Ι think this is out of commission. 11 12 So on the screen now you can see both routes actually are shown on this one map, but the 13 115 kV is the long portion. And let's see if the 14 laser -- nope. Where is the laser on here? 15 MR. BILL STORM: The center button, the 16 17 yellow one. All right. 18 MR. JIM ATKINSON: So this, the majority of what you're seeing is the 115 kV 19 And this is Hilltop substation, this is 20 route. 21 Ridgeview up here, there's a couple other 22 intermediate ones. Over here, a short section right 23 here is the 230 kV build and that comes out of our 24 Arrowhead substation. 25 The clicker is not working again. Τ

1 think it's out of the proper mode, which I'm pretty 2 sure I did. I'm looking for the laser. 3 MR. CEZAR PANAIT: Okay. MR. JIM ATKINSON: Put it back on slide 4 5 show. 6 MR. CEZAR PANAIT: Yes. MR. JIM ATKINSON: 7 Thank you. 8 And I kind of described already what the 9 route is, and I'm not going to go through word for word, but it follows existing transmission line the 10 whole way and it connects a series of existing 11 substations. 12 Here's more of a close-up of our 13 Arrowhead substation and that shows how the route 14 15 comes out of there. And that, where it connects up with 98 line, that's where it will break into two 16 17 different circuits. Most of this is Minnesota Power 18 fee-owned land already, just a small portion will be additional right-of-way. 19 The route width is what we permit. 20 21 That's the area in which we would be able to site the transmission line if we get our route permit. 22 23 And that width varies guite a bit on this project, it all depends on the certainty, the level of 24 25 certainty that we have a good buildable centerline

to work with. So in areas where there's more congestion and more reasons why we might have to bob and weave for different factors we'll probably have a wider route.

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The right-of-way is what we'll actually 5 need to build on once we have a route permit. 6 So we will be acquiring, or in some cases we already have 7 sufficient right-of-way to build on, but in other 8 cases we'll have to acquire new right-of-way. 9 But for a 115 kV line, we typically need a hundred foot 10 right-of-way to build on. If there's two of them 11 side by side we can do it on 160 total. So there's 12 quite a bit of savings by collocating as well as the 13 environmental benefits of doing that. A 230 kV line 14 needs just a little bit more and typically that's 15 130 feet wide. And that would be permitting 16 easement that Minnesota Power would acquire from 17 18 whoever the landowner is.

Here is the two different structure types we anticipate using on this project. And you can see on the left side is our standard wood H-frame structure, and I think the bulk of it is going to be that, but there's also going to be a pretty significant portion where we're going to be using monolithic steel structures that you see on the

right. And there's some difference in how the geometry and how close they can be to each other, and in some cases it affords you an opportunity to get through tight areas that you wouldn't be able to do with a couple sets of the wood H-frames, for example. And they're also far more robust, the steel structures, but they're more expensive and they've got to be closer together.

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9 Once we secure all our land rights and we're ready to go there will be a couple different 10 stages to the construction project. But the first 11 12 one is clearing, so we need to clear all the right-of-way. Additionally, once the line is 13 constructed, some of the lower growing brushy plants 14 15 can be allowed to reestablish, but all of the trees have to go, and initially it's just pretty much just 16 17 cleared to the ground from right-of-way line to 18 right-of-way line.

19Once we have a cleared right-of-way then20there's a lot of surveying that needs to be done,21staking where structures are going to go, and that22involves setting the structures, installing them.23And in the case of the wood H-frame it's really just24drilling the holes, assembling the structures, and25directly embedding them right into the native soil.

1 With the steel monolithic structures, those would be 2 in drilled pier concrete foundations. And then after that it's basically just stringing, stringing 3 the conductor and the communication wire and then 4 5 we're done. 6 And that's all I have. Again, there's my contact information. And you can reach me just 7 about any time. I should have put my cell phone on 8 here, but if you want it, I'll give it to you right 9 It's 218-343-9119. 10 now. And I don't know, Bill, do you want me to 11 take questions now or wait? 12 MR. BILL STORM: Well, let's do it. 13 I'm going to call on a lot of them pretty quick here 14 15 because we've been --MR. JIM ATKINSON: Then I'm going to give 16 17 it to Bill, Bill Storm from the Department of 18 Commerce. MR. BILL STORM: Okay. As Jim said, I'm 19 20 Bill Storm, Department of Commerce. 21 The Department of Commerce, our role in 22 this process is we do the environmental review for 23 the PUC. Environmental review is a part of the record as is the application and all the comments we 24 25 get throughout the process, including the public

hearing.

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2	As Cezar said, there are two approvals
3	needed by the Commission, one for the CN and one for
4	the route. Both of those processes, the CN and the
5	route process, both of them require environmental
6	review. CNs require what's called an environmental
7	report, a route requires an environmental
8	assessment. What we will do is we will produce one
9	document, an environmental assessment, that covers
10	all of the requirements of both those reviews.
11	The goal of environmental review. What
12	is environmental review? Environmental review is to
13	get informed input into the record for the
14	decision-makers. Environmental review has two
15	parts. One is scoping, and that's where I come out
16	like I'm doing now and I talk to the public and I
17	say what concerns do you have about this project and
18	what issues do you want to make sure I study in my
19	environmental review so that the environmental
20	review gets put into the record and it's an
21	objective document. It does not advocate for a
22	side. So that's what scoping does and the
23	environmental review is actually the document.
24	Again, scoping helps focus on the real
25	important issues. To try to reduce the volume of

the document, but also to make sure that issues that the public is concerned about or that downstream permitting agencies are concerned about or that environmentally other groups are concerned about. That's what scoping is. This is your opportunity for you to get that information to me.

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An example, as you saw when you came at 7 the desk a document called the draft scoping 8 I put that out and I look at it as sort 9 document. of like a Christmas tree. If you turn to a few 10 pages in you'll see the table of contents. 11 The way 12 I look at that is that's my Christmas tree. And if the public has concerns and issues, I'm asking you 13 to fill that in, you know, hang them on the 14 The table of contents is the branches. 15 branches. And you can see, this is from a previous docket, one 16 17 person or one group was concerned about an 18 endangered species, Buttercup, and they wanted to make sure, Bill, we know this Buttercup is along the 19 20 route, we want to make sure you account for it and 21 study it. So that's the issue part that comes in. 22 Okav. The rules also say during scoping 23 you're allowed to give us alternatives to the You might have an issue or a concern that 24 routes. 25 you want -- that you think the only way to avoid

that and to mitigate that is to avoid it and you want to provide an alternative route to be studied in the document or an alternative route segment.

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What your suggestions have to do is they 4 They have to be submitted 5 have to meet a test. during the scoping period, and scoping goes on until 6 February 4th here. They have to be to mitigate a 7 specific issue, they can't just be don't put it in 8 my yard, put it in my neighbor's. So it has to be 9 an issue and you have to be specific and 10 identifiable. So you have to give me a route 11 12 segment or a route that you want me to study as an alternative, but you have to be specific about that. 13 And if you need help with that, many times people 14 will call me and say, Bill, I have this issue and I 15 think the only way is to make a little route around 16 17 it, can you help me draw that out. So I put 18 something on the table that is at least viable, at least worthy of studying. And it also has to meet 19 the need of the applicant. You can't give me an 20 21 alternative that doesn't meet what they're trying to 22 do, it won't make it into scope.

This is an example. Again, go back to the Christmas tree. In the table of contents, one of the sections are alternative routes, and here you

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can see an example of a previous project where the DNR didn't like the proposed alignment, the right-of-way crossing of the Cottonwood River, and they wanted me to study an alternative.

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And some quick other examples, I don't 5 want to take too much time, here's a project where 6 the proposed route was coming down, I think this is 7 135 up north, and the citizens didn't want the line 8 going between their house and the road. 9 They said, Bill, there is all of this tax-forfeited land behind 10 us, put it back there. Now to me that actually made 11 12 You want to take it off of private property, sense. put it on public property when public property is 13 available. And somebody put that forth, I thought 14 it made sense and did study it, and when the 15 Commission made the decision that alternative was 16 17 the one they picked, much to the chagrin of some 18 people, I think. It was a real difficult route, it went through some wilderness. 19

This is the Cottonwood one that I mentioned earlier. You can see one of the routes, it was a pooled process, there were two routes, blue and red, and the red route crossed the Cottonwood River in a spot that the DNR did not like because the Cottonwood River weaves a lot and they said,

well, if you do this alternative you'll only cross the river once and that's what we prefer. In the end, it made it to scope and I studied it, but in the end the blue route was the preferred route so that's the one that got permitted.

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6 Here is another example. This was down in Shakopee, I believe. There was a historic 7 property -- oops, this thing is finicky. 8 There was 9 historical property right here, and the proposed route is this sort of purple-mauve one that went 10 right in front of it. And several people said to 11 me, we think that it's going to distract from the 12 historic nature of this site, could you study 13 pushing it across and could you study or move it 14 down the railroad track and come up that way. 15 That made sense to me so I included it in the scope and I 16 17 did study it. In the end, though, the Commission didn't feel it was a big enough impact and they did 18 choose the proposed route, the purple one. 19 But 20 that's just to give you a sense of what I'm looking 21 for.

Issues that you're concerned about, and if you have an issue and you think it's a valid issue and you think the only way to mitigate is to go around it, you can give me an alternative.

Okay. 1 So that's what scoping is about. 2 That's what we're here for, to get your comments, and also to have you ask questions about the 3 project. We have got a court reporter here. 4 The comment period is open until February 4th. 5 These are some ways that you can submit comments. You can 6 mail, fax, email your comments to me, you can go to 7 our website, the gov website there, and there's an 8 electronic way to submit a comment, or you complete 9 a comment sheet that's in the back and fax it to me, 10 mail it to me, or drop it in the drop box. 11

I'm going to, as soon as I'm done in a few seconds here, I'm going to turn it over to the public. And we always have little rules, you know, one speaker at a time, maintain respect for others, things we learned in kindergarten.

17 Once it is your turn to speak, state and 18 spell your name, speak slower than I do so the court reporter has a chance of getting what you're saying. 19 20 Direct your comments and questions on the scope for 21 the EA. You can also ask for my input, but if you 22 have questions for Jim about specifics of the 23 project, they're open, too. That's what we're here for tonight, too. Limit your comments to five 24 25 minutes, there are not a lot of people here tonight.

If you speak for five minutes and if there is time and you have something else we can always come back at the end of it.

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A reminder to focus your comments on the issues, alternatives that you want me to study in the environmental report. And remember February 4th.

One thing I did want to mention, we're 8 9 trying something new out here. You remember Cezar showed you that web page, Commerce's web page, if 10 you go on that one for this docket you'll see that 11 12 we're trying to get -- MnDOT uses it a lot, a sort of survey, where this is another way for you to have 13 input into the project. And we're just starting to 14 15 use it, but that's what it will look like if you hit the scoping survey button. 16

17 Then remember the comments, these are 18 your contacts and, with that, I'm going to turn it 19 over for people's comments.

20 Was that quick enough? 21 MR. JIM ATKINSON: That was pretty good, 22 Bill. 23 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. If you want to 24 speak -- and I did have one person fill out a card, 25 so as promised the card people go first.

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Lisa Neitzel. 1 2 MS. LISA NEITZEL: Neitzel. 3 MR. BILL STORM: I always butcher them. Please state and spell your name. 4 5 MS. LISA NEITZEL: Lisa, L-I-S-A, Neitzel, N-E-I-T-Z-E-L. 6 My husband and I live at the corner of 7 Haines Road and (inaudible) Lake Road and Sheridan. 8 And we built -- or we purchased 38 acres of very 9 natural property back in the mid 2000s about. 10 In 2009 we built our dream home there and it overlooks 11 12 Mogie Lake, which some people consider a big pond, but it's actually a lake. And there is so much 13 wildlife out there that we've been able to enjoy, 14 everything from different kinds of birds, different 15 kinds of, you know, from beavers to deer to bear to 16 17 coyotes, all surrounding in that area. We built the house on the five acres on the other side of Mogie 18 Lake and kept the 33 acres natural. 19 So it's a very prime natural environmental area. And we're 20 21 concerned about that. We want to keep it that way. 22 That's why we chose to buy the property and build 23 our house there. 24 The other thing besides the natural and 25 environmental impacts would be my oldest daughter

has extreme sensitivity to overhead power lines. She gets headaches, she gets migraines, actually, from them. So, you know, we're kind of struggling on where this actual line will go, whether it will be on Sheridan Road, or, you know, how far away is this going to be from Mogie Lake, and how far away is it going to be from my daughter when she's home all the time.

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9 So I think those are our two biggest 10 concerns. And we just want to make sure that the 11 area is kept environmentally natural. And, also, my 12 daughter doesn't have to suffer from migraines.

MR. BILL STORM: Jim, do you know that
property and the proximity of the line to that
property?

I'm not sure that I MR. JIM ATKINSON: 16 17 know that very specific property, but I know where 18 Mogie Lake is, and I can say that there's a pretty good setback from the lake. And what we're 19 20 proposing is to be right adjacent to the existing 21 line, so I think our footprint there is going to be 22 pretty light and it shouldn't have a dramatic change 23 on the overall landscape because, like I said, it's going to be right next to the existing line. 24 25 MR. BILL STORM: And, Lisa, the existing

1 line, are you aware of where that is? 2 MS. LISA NEITZEL: Not really, actually. 3 MR. JIM ATKINSON: I would suggest if you went and talked to Brian Melchert (phonetic) he can 4 5 show you and zoom in on your property and see specifically what we're proposing. Brian in the 6 back. 7 8 MR. BILL STORM: And they have a computer, Lisa. And, please, if you want submit a 9 written comment to me to make sure that I address 10 the concerns that you have in the environmental 11 12 document. Thank you. 13 MR. JIM ATKINSON: I'm pretty sure you have commented on our website, too. 14 15 MS. LISA NEITZEL: Yes, I have. MR. BILL STORM: Okay. That was the only 16 17 card. And so now I'm going to do like you did in school, show of hands. 18 Okay. Sir, would you stand and state and 19 20 spell your name. 21 MR. GRANT FORSYTH: My name is Grant, 22 G-R-A-N-T, Forsyth, F-O-R-S-Y-T-H. I'm the zoning 23 administrator for the Town of Midway. 24 And a couple of concerns that just kind 25 of popped up, is on line 98 where it goes parallel

1 to the St. Louis River Road to the Ugstad Road, that 2 is a section of that line that Midway issued the permits and the right-of-ways and everything for 3 that line to go in. Since that line going in, we've 4 been advised that Kingsbury Creek, which runs right 5 through that area, is now an impaired trout stream, 6 and it comes out of, I call it Mogie Lake --7 8 MS. LISA NEITZEL: Yeah, either way. MR. GRANT FORSYTH: 9 And because of that 10 we're very concerned about stream crossings there. It's not a big creek, but it's a very soft area on 11 the bottom, it would be wetlands, and we're 12 concerned about herbicides. If you're putting any 13 new poles in that area, we would want them 300 feet 14 15 from the normal high water mark of that stream to span that environmental protection area. 16 17 And I work with the DNR and the EPA and a 18 bunch of people right now in trying to get that stream back up so it's not impaired. Because the 19 PCA has said if we don't get it corrected in a 20 21 reasonable period of time, they're going to put 22 restrictions on everything up and down that stream 23 So we're working hard and we'd need in that area. 24 your help. 25 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you.

1 Jim, is that an area that you're familiar 2 with? Yeah, it is. 3 MR. JIM ATKINSON: And, 4 actually, I was just at the township talking about 5 it, what, a month ago? MR. GRANT FORSYTH: Yeah. 6 It would be a month tomorrow. 7 8 MR. JIM ATKINSON: I'm pretty good. 9 Anyway, there's about one-half a mile of 98 line which is not part of any -- it's not part of the new 10 build, but it's rebuilding a part of 98 line. 11 So 12 it's all staying on the same right-of-way, the same It's just being upgraded, you know, just 13 voltage. another step in enhancing the overall reliability of 14 that 230 kV bulk transmission into the area. 15 MR. GRANT FORSYTH: And that's all on 16 17 steel poles with concrete holding them up, so there 18 shouldn't be a need to replace any poles there. MR. JIM ATKINSON: Yeah. 19 So, anyway, it 20 shows up as part of our thermal upgrade on our 21 project map. But, you know, I haven't specifically 22 looked out there physically to see what kind of 23 structures there are and that sort of thing. But we may have -- we have others that might have more 24 25 detailed information on that that you can talk to as

1 well. 2 MR. GRANT FORSYTH: Fair enough. MR. BILL STORM: And if you look at that 3 draft scoping document you'll see that one of the 4 generic categories is surface water, and as a 5 typical standard discussion in the environmental 6 document we'll talk about the stream crossing, the 7 downstream permitting agencies. So that information 8 will be in there, but I will give a special look at 9 that area, too, as I write that document and 10 describe it. 11 12 MR. GRANT FORSYTH: Thank you. 13 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. Anybody else? There in the back. Please stand 14 Okav. 15 and state and spell your first name and your last name, all your names. 16 17 MR. MICHAEL KOPPY: Michael Koppy, 18 M-I-C-H-A-E-L, K-O-P-P-Y. And so my concern area is west of the 19 I'm a volunteer for the city of 20 Lavaque Road. 21 Hermantown, we've worked on the trails in Hermantown 22 and I coordinate the volunteers. And we have a 23 trail there called Rocky Run, and my understanding is that the line going west of the lake there, which 24 is where Rocky Run is, that that line is going to 25

get moved northward, which would take out all the foliage where the trail is existing right now, which does go across Minnesota Power's property, but Minnesota Power gave the city permission to put that trail in there.

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Right now, you know, the power line runs through there. I don't know why, if you could explain to me why the power line has to get moved more north when there's already that easement there, why could they not continue to run on the same easement that they have right now.

12 I understand that further east there's some problems with homes have moved some of their 13 properties closer to the easement or something, and 14 so that's one reason the line was getting shifted, 15 but that would be east of the lake. So I'm talking 16 about west of the lake, I would like to see us to be 17 able to continue to have that trail that's used by 18 thousands of residents in Hermantown all year-round, 19 and in the winter now you can go to that trail and 20 21 that trail is half down because so many people use 22 it. But I just have concern about us and being able 23 to maintain, you know, an environmental friendly trail that people enjoy using and not just something 24 25 that is out in the open under a power line.

1 MR. BILL STORM: Before you take that, 2 Jim, I just want to understand. They're going to move the line and the poles and you think that's 3 going to hit your use of the trail? 4 5 MR. MICHAEL KOPPY: No, we could still probably use it, but then the trail would go 6 underneath the line. And, you know, walking on a 7 trail, part of, you know, the enjoyment is walking 8 through the woods as you walk around. And so that, 9 as I have had an earlier discussion about that, if 10 they move the line, they also have to then take all 11 the foliage down, which now would take all the 12 foliage down where the existing trail is. 13 Does that make sense? 14 15 MR. BILL STORM: I understand your concern, sir. 16 Thank you. 17 Anything you want to speak to on that, Jim? 18 MR. JIM ATKINSON: 19 I assume you're 20 talking about the area north of the city hall facility? 21 22 MR. MICHAEL KOPPY: Correct. 23 MR. JIM ATKINSON: There is apparently two lines up there, and one of them is going to be 24 25 replaced with the new one, and the other one will be

upgraded to like-new condition at the same time. So we're going to be occupying the same right-of-way, which is actually fee owned by Minnesota Power, but where our footprint is isn't really changing, but it's probably going to be more clear than you've seen it.

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7 MR. MICHAEL KOPPY: According to the map 8 that I see that you're publishing, it moves north, 9 you know, 20 to -- it's hard for me to get a scale 10 of how many feet, but it definitely is moving 11 northward, which is where the trail is, so.

12 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Yeah. I think we own a strip of land in there that's a few hundred feet 13 But, yeah, our plan is to basically be in the 14 wide. 15 same location. There may be some shifting of, again, 20 feet, that's very possible, but we're not 16 17 intending to limit public use of that land in any 18 way. There may be fewer trees and fewer brush and all that sort of thing, but it's not going to be 19 taken off limits at all. 20

21 MR. MICHAEL KOPPY: So, I mean, I realize 22 that we could still have a trail there, but there's 23 a big difference when you are walking on a trail and 24 going through the woods as opposed to walking 25 underneath the power line. That's the concern that

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1 I have, it changes the whole effect of the trail. 2 MR. BILL STORM: I understand your 3 concern. MR. MICHAEL KOPPY: And our trail runs 4 parallel to the power line, but in the woods. 5 And if the line is moved northward, the trail now would 6 be out in the open because all of that wood would be 7 8 taken out. That's my understanding. 9 MR. BILL STORM: I understand your 10 concern, sir. 11 Any follow-up, Jim, or that's enough? 12 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Just if the trail does end up being cleared, which I'm not sure is actually 13 happening, but if it did, I don't see any reason why 14 the city couldn't move it further north on our 15 property. 16 17 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. If you wouldn't 18 mind, Jim, maybe after the meeting you could meet and show them some maps so the gentleman could maybe 19 refine his comments and submit additional comments 20 21 in writing before the comment period is over. Would 22 that be okay? 23 MR. MICHAEL KOPPY: Okay. 24 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. Thank you. Thank 25 you, Jim.

1Anyone else? Okay, sir, please stand and2state your name.

MR. KEVIN SLEEN: My name is Kevin, K-E-V-I-N, Sleen, S-L-E-E N.

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I live on Hermantown Road, and right now 5 I have no power lines the way it sits. I kind of 6 enjoy that. And the proposal from our understanding 7 is that they want to move it away from where it's at 8 right now. Which, you know, we bought our property 9 the way we did because it's thick woods and we love 10 that, and now to find out that they want to move it 11 12 from where it sits right now, to me it's already impacting something where it is now. And we really, 13 you know, we talked about splitting off a piece of 14 15 property and selling it as income as we get older and now they want to put a power line right through 16 17 the middle of that. It's going to really impact us Like I said, right now I have no power line, 18 a lot. there was no power line when I moved in, and there 19 was no talk of a possible power line until this line 20 21 came up, and I'm wondering why it can't stay where It's already cleared, 200 feet 22 it is at right now. 23 wide of cleared land.

24 MR. BILL STORM: Jim, do you want to 25 speak to that?

1 MR. JIM ATKINSON: I'll do my best. Ι 2 think we're probably talking about the area where we're paralleling Midway River. 3 MR. KEVIN SLEEN: I think so. 4 MR. JIM ATKINSON: 5 And that is a spot that's probably just a little bit less than a mile 6 of where our existing line essentially breaks with 7 the river, it crosses it probably at six points. 8 And knowing that that would be a challenge to permit 9 another line directly adjacent to that, we looked 10 for alternative ways for when -- I think that's the 11 area we're talking about, would by my guess. 12 And that's the reason for it, is to avoid the Midway 13 River, which is right now pretty significantly 14 impacted by that's a designated trout stream, as you 15 know, and that transmission build that dates back in 16 17 the '50s could be wrecked out, eliminated. It would be rerouted over onto some significant chunks of 18 real estate that we've been acquiring, as I 19 explained to you earlier, Bill, and the new line 20 21 would go right next to it. MR. BILL STORM: 22 Okay. Sir, if I might 23 ask, maybe give me a follow-up before the 4th, a follow-up letter, and show me maybe with a plat map 24 25 or something of where you're talking about. Because

1 what I'd want to do is I want to represent in the 2 environmental report the benefit of moving it away from the river, and also the impact, or the 3 perceived impact you may have on it. And if you 4 give me the distances and so I know exactly where 5 your property is and your concern, that can be laid 6 Like I said, the EA doesn't advocate for a 7 out. side, but I would like to lay out that there is a 8 benefit of moving it because of the trout stream, 9 but there also might be an impact or a perceived 10 impact to people who are on that side of it. 11 So 12 would that be okay? Okay. Anybody else? Any questions? 13 Okay, sir, over here, please stand and state and 14 15 spell your name. MR. JEFF RICHTMAN: My name is Jeff, with 16 17 a J, Richtman, R-I-C-H-T-M-A-N. Kind of two levels of questions, I guess, 18 as far as the environmental impact stuff goes. 19 So Minnesota Power has a line behind my house at this 20 21 point, they don't have a right-of-way or an 22 easement, they came through a couple years ago and 23 did massive spraying, over sprayed on our property, obviously well over the boundaries of where they 24 25 should have been. I'm wondering, is there anything

that's taken into effect on the environmental impact 1 2 as far as their accountability on their actions when they're working on this line that's, you know, going 3 to get upgraded? And what impacts there are because 4 of that? You know, if they come through and they 5 decide they want to kill everything with herbicide 6 instead of mulching it, or they want to drive 7 vehicles through and destroy wetlands, what's to say 8 they can or can't do that, and is that something 9 that you work on making sure that doesn't happen? 10 MR. BILL STORM: One thing, the 11 environmental impact statement will describe the

12 planned or typical way that they clear a 13 right-of-way and maintain that right-of-way. 14 And they sometimes do physical and herbicide, sometimes 15 they do physical. If there is an area where their 16 17 easement is adjacent to, maybe like an SNA or a wildlife area or some other feature that they're 18 next to that some downstream agency or some citizen 19 expresses concern about using herbicide in that 20 21 area, that they prefer just to have a mechanical 22 cutting of it, no herbicide, as I said the EA will 23 explain the typical methods that are used. But when we get to the hearing, and we'll be back up here for 24 a hearing with an ALJ, you as a citizen can say, 25

1 look, I'm adjacent to this right-of-way and for 2 whatever reason I would prefer that they maintain that mechanically, you can make that statement to 3 the ALJ, because the ALJ will make a report and that 4 will go in front of the Commission. And it could, 5 if the Commission thinks it's valid or warranted, 6 they could add into the permit that they issue, if 7 they do issue a permit, for certain sections this is 8 how you have to control the vegetation. 9 I mean, that's happened in the past, but it's very site 10 specific. Like I said, if you're next to an SNA or 11 12 wild rice body or something like that where over spray may be an issue, that can make its way into 13 the permit. Like I said, the EA will discuss the 14 15 typical methods that the right-of-ways are cleared, and if the Applicant has stated in a section here or 16 17 section there, we'll put it into the record that the 18 EA will capture that for the area.

MR. JEFF RICHTMAN: Your presentation 19 20 mentioned essentially this is an upgrade for most of 21 it, you know, wood poles, adding a second line, and 22 then you casually threw in something about 23 essentially doubling the right-of-way when you add a second line. Is the right-of-way likely to increase 24 25 if the line voltage has an increase or are we

1 talking similar? 2 MR. JIM ATKINSON: No, I was saying essentially the length of new build is doubling 3 because the circuits that we're paralleling are 4 being more or less rebuilt at the same time. 5 6 MR. JEFF RICHTMAN: Okay. So those of us that are on existing line and we're getting this 7 notice -- I guess, this map is terrible. 8 So it 9 sounds like you have somebody on the computer, that's great, and I think everyone in this room is 10 in agreement that this map is useless, right? 11 So is the right-of-way growing? Are you gaining more 12 access here because --13 In some places it is, 14 MR. JIM ATKINSON: 15 If it's just currently a single 115 kV line yeah. there, there will be two, and side by side they need 16 17 160 feet. 18 MR. JEFF RICHTMAN: Versus 100. MR. JIM ATKINSON: Versus 100. 19 I don't know how that 20 MR. JEFF RICHTMAN: 21 process plays out. Obviously, you're going to take 22 our land, right? So is that like an offline 23 conversation we can have about that? MR. JIM ATKINSON: Of course. 24 And we 25 have a representative from our right-of-way agent

1 here and you can get into more detail. 2 MR. JEFF RICHTMAN: All right. That's all I've got for environmental stuff. 3 MR. BILL STORM: 4 Thank you. 5 Okay. Anyone else? Yes, ma'am, please stand and state and spell your names. 6 7 MS. SARAH YOKEL: Hi. My name is Sarah, S-A-R-A-H, and my last name is Yokel, Y-0-K-E-L. 8 My husband and I just bought a house in Hermantown last 9 summer, on Wildwoods Trail, and we have line 71 that 10 goes right through our property, through our 11 backyard, and that's one I think you guys want to 12 get rid of, correct? 13 MR. JIM ATKINSON: 14 Correct. 15 MS. SARAH YOKEL: Okay. I'm fine with this because I have a power line in my yard. 16 I have 17 three little boys that want to be outside nonstop. 18 So it sits right there. And we have plans to plant trees, but we can't because of the power line, and 19 we talked to you guys this summer about how far 20 21 away, well, then, it gets pretty close to the house 22 and we don't want a tree like right next to the 23 house. 24 After hearing this presentation and 25 knowing that the new lines will help with access, I

guess, or like outages, my main heat source is heat. I have baseboards all around my house. If the power goes out, my heat force is one fireplace in my dining room. So it's like space heaters. So that's why I'm for all of this, obviously.

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6 You know, other people, it's going on your property, it sucks, and I get it. I have this 7 big power line on my property and we can't do 8 anything with our backyard, but we need power. 9 We need power, we need it to be up to date. Because if 10 we don't have power, are we going to be living back 11 12 in the olden days where we have to do a fire? Ι mean, we have to think of that when we are advancing 13 ourselves. 14

Another question, I don't know if it's for you or you. If this project gets approved and those power lines come down, will I still have that easement with you guys or will that go away?

19MR. KEVIN SLEEN: Well, they're not going20to give you your land back.

21 MS. SARAH YOKEL: And you don't need to 22 be rude, sir. 23 MR. KEVIN SLEEN: They're not going to 24 give you your land back.

MR. BILL STORM: One person at a time.

1 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Yeah, we would release 2 the easement back to the property so you would no longer have the line or the easement. 3 MS. SARAH YOKEL: 4 And then we could go on 5 it? 6 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Correct, we wouldn't 7 have an easement anymore. 8 MS. SARAH YOKEL: Okay. All right. So 9 with that, in Hermantown, it's an expensive swamp, 10 because my backyard is a swamp. So when you guys come to take those poles down, 'cause, again, these 11 people that we bought it from, they have rocks and 12 stuff so it doesn't come up more towards the house, 13 but how -- essentially, you guys would rip up my 14 15 backyard. So would you guys fix it or would we be left with a bill? Because there are plants back 16 17 there that only grow in swamps. So how would that 18 be affected, I guess? I can picture the spot 19 MR. JIM ATKINSON: 20 so I know what you're talking about. Generally, we 21 try to do those things as carefully as possible and 22 we clean up after ourselves. 23 MS. SARAH YOKEL: Okay. Great. 24 It might be one of MR. JIM ATKINSON: 25 those areas that makes more sense to try to do in

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1 the winter. 2 MS. SARAH YOKEL: Yeah. Thank you. 3 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you. 4 Anyone else? Going once -- there we go. 5 Stand, state and spell your name, please. Kevin Sleen, S-L-E-E N. 6 MR. KEVIN SLEEN: I just had a question about what type of 7 power lines are going by my house. Is it the one or 8 the two, or how do I know? 9 It doesn't really tell you anywhere whether it's one line or two lines or 10 how wide it's going to be when it comes through my 11 12 property. MR. JIM ATKINSON: Well, first of all, we 13 could verify that by talking to Brian over here. 14 Ιf it's where I think it is, I think it's both lines, 15 and they would both be brand new in that section, 16 17 and in that case we'd be looking for a 160-foot wide 18 right-of-way. MR. BILL STORM: 19 Okay. Coming back to 20 the pool. Anyone wish to speak, ask questions? 21 Going once, twice? 22 Okay. I want to thank everybody for 23 coming out. Remember, our contact information is on the slide, my business card is on the table, all the 24 information is also in the notice. 25 Remember

February 4th, get your comments to me, you can mail them, fax them, email them, electronically, but the process needs you to participate. You need to tell me what you want me to consider as I'm writing my document, give me input. Thanks for coming out tonight. (Matter concluded at 7:11 p.m.) 

# Hermantown, Minnesota January 26, 2022

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