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Hingham Public Meeting: Planning Board and Zoning Board Will Review HMLP Substation Proposal

HINGHAM, MA – (May 20, 2024) – A joint meeting of the Hingham Planning Board and the Hingham Zoning Board of Appeals will be held via Zoom on June 4, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. to facilitate public review of Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant’s (HMLP) proposal to build a new electric substation. The proposed substation is part of HMLP’s proposal to ensure the reliability of Hingham’s electric supply with a new 3.2-mile underground, 115-kilovolt transmission line.

The proposed new, enclosed substation would be constructed at the northeastern corner of the Hingham Transfer Station off Hobart Street. HMLP selected the transfer station site because of its close proximity to its existing Hobart Street Substation, and because the transfer station site offers HMLP an opportunity to minimize visual and other impacts to the surrounding community. Moreover, construction and operation of the new substation will not interfere with transfer station activities.



Artist rendering shows proposed substation at the Hingham Transfer Station

The new substation is an integral part of a larger transmission project which includes: (1) a new tap station off Broad Street in Weymouth that will be built and operated by Eversource; (2) a 3.2-mile underground 115 kV line that will travel through Weymouth and Hingham; and (3) the new enclosed substation at the transfer station in Hingham. This project will provide Hingham with a critical second source of power and bring HMLP into compliance with regional reliability standards.

Currently, Hingham’s entire electric supply is fed by two overhead transmission lines,

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which occupy the same pole structures in a number of locations. If severe weather or another contingency causes one of these double-circuit poles to fall, Hingham residents and businesses could be without power for an extended period of time.

The new 115 kV underground line would be capable of handling all of Hingham's electric needs if the overhead lines went out of service for any reason. Moreover, as the Town continues to pursue greater electrification consistent with its climate goals, the HEIRP will ensure adequate capacity for all customers and future uses.

The June 4 Hingham Planning and Zoning Board meeting will be held remotely via Zoom, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The dial-in number is 929-205-6099. The Meeting ID is 826 9132 5254 and the Passcode is 424332. Web users may go to <https://zoom.us/join> and use the same Meeting ID and Passcode. A copy of HMLP's applications and associated plans and studies can be found at: <https://www.hingham-ma.gov/767/Applications-Pending>.

The purpose of the joint meeting is to give Hingham officials, residents, and businesses a chance to learn more about HMLP's project and to provide comments on HMLP's substation plans prior to HMLP's filings later this year with the Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board and the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, including a petition to exempt the proposed substation from local zoning review in Hingham.

On April 12, 2024, HMLP provided the Planning Board and Zoning Board with detailed plans for its proposed substation, as well as its proposal for mitigating construction and operation impacts associated with substation. This informal review by the Planning Board and Zoning Board will allow the two Town Boards, as well as members of the public, to examine and offer feedback regarding HMLP's engineering and construction plans.

"Like many utilities in similar situations, HMLP will pursue the zoning exemption path to ensure that the overall project – which has components in Hingham and Weymouth – can proceed through permitting in an integrated and timely manner," said Tom Morahan, General Manager of HMLP. "We are committed to working cooperatively with Hingham as the Zoning Board and Planning Board jointly review the proposed substation and its impacts and offer a meaningful opportunity for members of the public to be heard."

HMLP has been studying options for adding a new transmission line for more than six years. HMLP launched a separate website for the project in October 2021 at <http://heirp.com>. and HMLP has held 7 Open House events (some held jointly with Eversource) in Hingham and Weymouth over the last three years to invite the public to learn about the project and provide feedback.

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