

**SALEM COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS  
AUGUST 13, 2008 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

At 5:05 PM, Director Ware opened the meeting with the prayer offered by Robin Weinstein followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Director Ware stated that adequate notice pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act has been given of this meeting and read the Open Public Meeting Act Statement.

On roll call, the following Freeholders were present: Deputy Director Lindenmuth, Freeholders Timberman, Bobbitt, Acton, Sullivan, Hogan and Director Ware were present.

**COMMENTS BY DIRECTOR WARE**

Mr. Ware stated the purpose of the special meeting outlining the rules that would be followed this evening. Each speaker will be allowed two minutes to make comments or questions. There would be no direct debate, all questions and comments will go through the chair.

Director Ware first recognized Bert Lopez from Atlantic City electric company. He stressed that the company will do everything possible to make the residents satisfied. They want to be good neighbors.

Director Ware then recognized Jennifer Coombs who gave the history of the formation of the Stop the Poles committee, and expressed her concerns with the actions of Atlantic City electric, their failure to notify residents, the way they changed plans without returning to the local Planning Board, and the many discrepancies between what was approved and what was actually constructed. Atlantic Electric responded that all requirements were fulfilled.

Amanda Shrimp- noted the many differences in what was approved and what was actually constructed. Atlantic Electric again noted that all requirements were fulfilled.

Doris Moore-stated that many residents that she has spoken with were never notified. Also that Fire and rescue personnel have not been trained to handle any irregularities at the sub station. Atlantic electric stated that all proper notifications were sent to those impacted (nine residents were noticed).

Bob Dickinson-stated that this is an embarrassment, the company is lying to the people concerning the scale and magnitude of the poles and the lines.  
Director Ware commented that the poles are certainly an eyesore.

Rich Melchert-Commented on the deeds that were issued back in 1932 when steel poles were not a consideration. These poles will prevent aerial spraying of his property.

Nancy Merritt- stated a number of points that Atlantic Electric was prompted to do but has not:

1. Community outreach
2. Summary of dates and events for construction
3. Appointment of a citizens advisory committee
4. Future plans for Salem County including substations and pole placement.
5. Listing the rights that a community has
6. Addressing all environmental issues

Bob Griffith-noted the size and scope of the lines and that they should be buried.  
Atlantic Electric noted that the voltage may be too high to bury.

Tom Gant- He stated that he had received no notification. Also commented on the lines and asked that they be buried.

Michelle Melchert- spoke eloquently about the beauty of the County and how the installation of the lines ruined her vista.

Rene Exadaktilos- wanted to know if the electrical service pattern has changed since the substation has been added. Atlantic Electric responded that all power goes into the general grid.

Sue Smith- noted that the positioning of the poles made her real estate less valuable. Estiaments of 50% less.

Amanda Shrimp- commented on buried lines and questioned if buried lines exist anywhere in the tri state area. Atlantic electric stated they were uncertain where they may exist.

Freeholder David Lindenmuth noted that he needed to attend a Board of Education meeting but wanted to comment that he saw no reason why these lines could not be buried. He also requested that a resolution be drafted to the State requesting additional oversight in the Utility Right of Way along County roads.

Jenifer Coombs- had questions concerning the substation, were are other located, and is the station generating power or transmitting power. Atlantic Electric answered they are transmitting power. She further asked about the landscaping which the company responded concerning the types of trees that would be planted.

Freeholder Acton questioned if there were other poles of this magnitude in the region. The company responded yes but no definitives were given.

Doris Moore- questioned is it true that the power from this substation is being sent to Cumberland and Cape May Counties. Also requested the poles be changed to wood.

Henry Dubois-He requested that the new poles be replaced with wooden ones in a nicer pattern.

Freeholder Bobbitt asked what the big picture is. What are the future plans for the region? The company responded that they would be expanding their grid but as of yet no determinations have been made as to how or where.

Jane Magoffi- noted her support for burying the poles. Where does power originate, what new poles are going to be erected, when the plan will be presented to the Freeholders.

Bill Burke, Deputy Mayor Upper Pittsgrove- noted that property values have dropped substantially on this road due to the unsightly poles.

Nancy Merritt- Questioned if the new lines were installed to handle the proposed expanded Nuclear Plant. The company stated no.

Leon Strang-He will be severely impacted if the same type of poles is extended down route 77. He is also a volunteer fireman for the township and no training has taken place.

Les Rourke- noted that when he looks at the views from his home it is terrible. Also wanted to see more advertisement concerning upcoming meetings.

Linda Dubois- Questioned how the lines are going across her township (Pittsgrove) without the townships approval.

Jennifer Coombs spoke again with additional questions including setting up the next public meeting. Atlantic electric would not commit to another meeting until after they were able to get their plans together and make some determinations. Director Ware asked Jennifer to submit her questions to the Clerk of the Board for dissemination to the company.

Freeholder Bobbitt thanked everyone for coming.

Freeholder Timberman- also thanked everyone for coming and noted that she would like to see more technical support from Atlantic City Electric Company and further noted the dis service to agri-tourism.

Bert Lopez on behalf of the company thanked everyone for coming.

Director Ware advised these points- 1. Mr. Gage will compile all of the questions asked and forward them to the company. 2. He will refer this to the Administration committee to develop a resolution for consideration on Aug. 20<sup>th</sup>. 3. We will meet with the third district legislators to discuss ways to obtain more rights in the utilities right of way.

He further thanked everyone for coming and stated if the company would just bury the poles we would get there.

Freeholder Hogan thanked all those who testified, noted their compassion and sincerity and stated that we cannot allow these poles to stand.

Freeholder timber man moved for adjournment at 7:15 PM, seconded by Freeholder Bobbitt, motion carried.

Respectively submitted,

Earl R. Gage  
Clerk of the Board