


STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Inter-Department Communication

DATE: December 23, 2019

AT (OFFICE): NHPUC

FROM: Stephen R. Eckberg, 
Utility Analyst, Electric Division

SUBJECT: Docket No. DE 19-184
Joint Petition of New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, Inc. and Public Service of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy to Alter Their Franchise Areas in Barnstead, New Hampshire.

TO: Commissioners
Debra A. Howland, Executive Director

CC: Tom Frantz, Director, Electric Division
Amanda Noonan, Director, Consumer Services & External Affairs
Rich Chagnon, Assistant Director, Electric Division
Mary Schwarzer, Staff Attorney
Randall Knepper, Director, Safety Division
Jason List, GIS/Utility Analyst, Safety Division

Summary

On November 12, 2019, the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, Inc. (NHEC) and Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy (Eversource) filed a joint petition with the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (Commission) in which they requested the Commission issue an order approving a change in the franchise areas served by the two utilities in the town of Barnstead, New Hampshire so as to accommodate the request of NHEC to have Eversource provide electric service to the Cookingham residence at Lot 0080-38-009 (Site).

Staff has reviewed the petition and recommends that the Commission grant the request of the joint petitioners to adjust their respective franchise areas in Barnstead in order to accommodate NHEC's request, place the Site within Eversource's franchise area, and to redraw the franchise line nearby to reflect the current state, and the future state, of electric service to customers.

Staff also recommends that the Commission grant such approval without hearing as all parties are in agreement. As authorized in RSA 374:26, when all parties agree, the Commission may grant the request without a hearing. Furthermore, Staff recommends that the Commission approved the joint petition on a *nisi* basis to ensure that all interested parties receive notice and have the opportunity to comment or request a hearing before the order becomes effective.

Background

On November 12, 2019, NHEC and Eversource filed a joint petition with the Commission in which they requested the Commission issue an order approving a change in the franchise areas served by the two utilities in the town of Barnstead, New Hampshire so as to accommodate the request of NHEC to have Eversource provide electric service to the Cookingham residence at Lot 0080-38-009.

The petition states that the public interest would be served by the amendment of their respective franchise areas in Barnstead, so as to permit Eversource to provide service to Tax Lot 0080-38-009 off New Road in Barnstead, owned by Mr. Cookingham, and to otherwise align their service territories with the facilities in the field. The requested relief is authorized under RSA 374:22 and RSA 374:26 (Joint Petitioners note that RSA 374:22 does not apply to NHEC, pursuant to RSA 362:2).

The Site is located in what is currently NHEC's service franchise area. However, NHEC is unable to obtain an easement for a new right-of-way necessary to bring its existing electrical service lines from another existing right-of-way back to New Road for service to the Site. The alternative of having NHEC construct a new line from its existing facilities along New Road from a different point would be substantially more expensive than having Eversource construct a service line from an abutting property already served by Eversource.

NHEC and Eversource also intend to use this opportunity to redraw the franchise line in the same geographical area to reflect the actual current state of service within each franchise area, as well as considering expected future development in the area. In the area near the Site, each utility has served building lots within the service territory of the other utility for years, for various reasons. Additionally, in this area, the existing franchise line bisects existing building lot lines for undeveloped parcels in numerous places. This means that if franchise lines are not reconfigured now, future adjustments would be required when or if development occurs on those lots. To address these concerns, the joint petitioners have mutually agreed to various adjustments to the existing franchise lines.¹ Updating the franchise lines in this manner will not affect any existing customers of each utility.

NHEC and Eversource understand that Mr. Cookingham agrees with these arrangements.

Recommendation

Staff has reviewed the Petition and concludes that amending the franchise line to allow Eversource to provide service to the Site which would be less costly than requiring

¹ Eversource and NHEC provided Staff with an updated Attachment C to the petition which is a detailed map showing the lot numbers of all lots impacted by the boundary adjustment. See attached.

NHEC to provide service is reasonable and appropriate, and allowing the joint petitioners to adjust the franchise line in the immediate area of the Site with their respective facilities in the field is also reasonable and appropriate, and therefore would be in the public good.

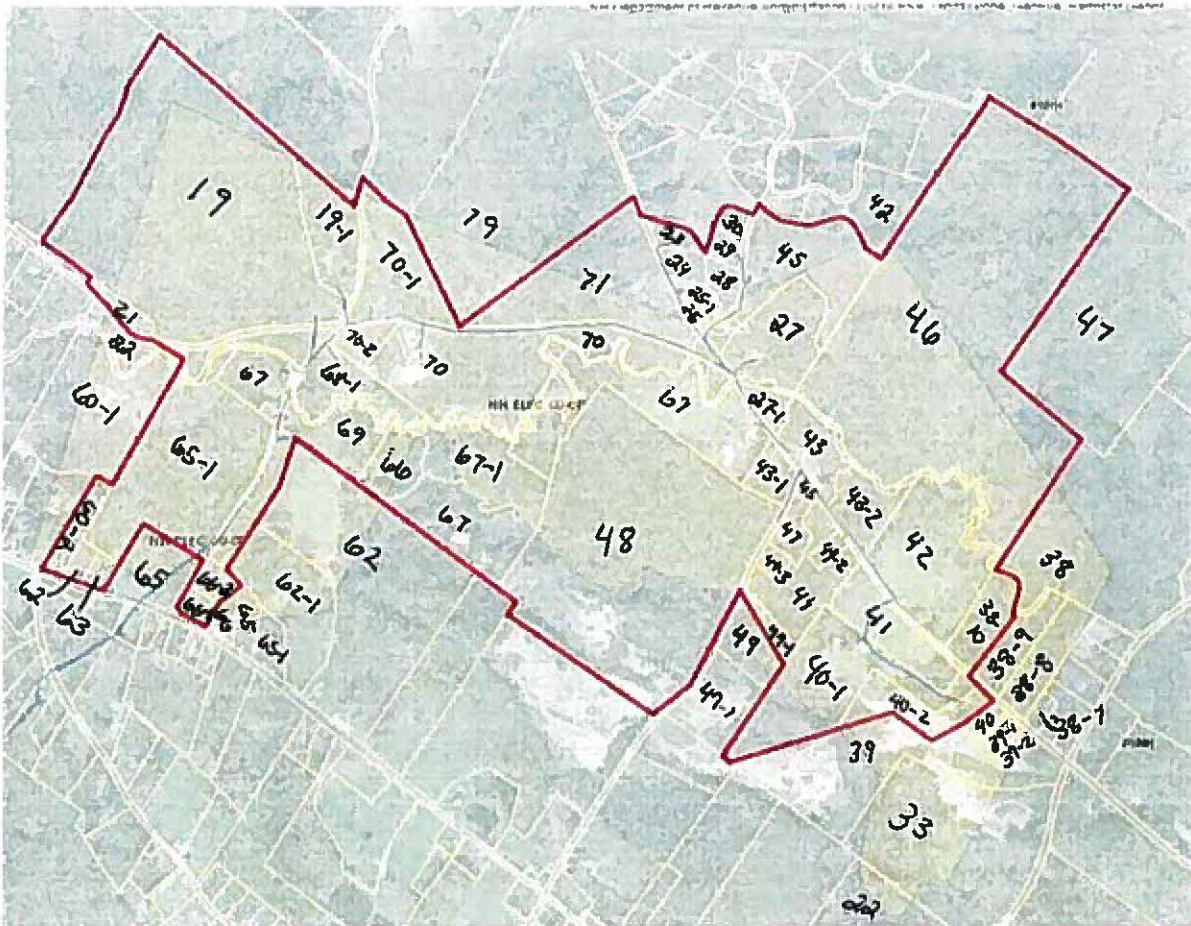
Staff recommends that the Commission grant the request of NHEC and Eversource to adjust their respective franchise areas in Barnstead in order to accommodate NHEC's request, place the Site within Eversource's franchise area, and to redraw the franchise line nearby to reflect the current state, and the future state, of electric service to customers. See RSA 374:26 (the Commission shall grant such permission to alter a franchise territory when it is in the public good to do so).

Staff also recommends that the Commission grant such approval without hearing as all parties are in agreement. As authorized in RSA 374:26 (when all parties agree, the Commission may grant the request without a hearing). Furthermore, Staff recommends that the Commission approved the joint petition on a *nisi* basis to ensure that all interested parties receive notice and have the opportunity to comment or request a hearing before the order becomes effective.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this recommendation.

ATTACHMENT C

The map below shows the proposed franchise re-alignment in red to reflect both the lots presently being served by each company, as well as proposed adjustments intended minimize future adjustments. The area inside the red lines would all be served by NHEC.



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