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Public hearings set on substation, merger

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The Frederick County Board of Zoning Appeals will continue its hearing on the proposed electric substation near Mount Airy at 7 p.m. Thursday, October 14, at Winchester Hall.

Representatives of Potomac Edison and PATH LLC and opponents of the project met for 11 hours on Sept. 29. Part of the hearing is available online at frederickcountymd.gov/media by clicking on Board of Appeals under Archived Meetings.

That initial meeting on the substation, which would be off Bartholow's Road, drew a crowd that not only filled the room, but overflowed into a second-floor smaller meeting room. Those on the second floor were able to watch the proceedings via a TV link.

The project, known as the Kemptown Substation, would be part of the Potomac Appalachian Transmission Highline, a \$2.1 billion, 275-mile electric line planned to cross three states. Allegheny Energy said the project is needed to avoid possible power outages by 2015. The project is a joint effort of Allegheny Energy and American Electric Power. In Maryland, Potomac Edison, a division of Allegheny Energy, is the recognized legal entity for the project and will hold 5 percent of the project with PATH LLC, a Delaware-based limited liability company, holding the rest of the project.

The proposal has drawn opponents. Two community groups have voiced concerns about the project, as well as individual residents in the immediate area of the substation site.

Citizens Against the Kemptown Electric Substation and Sugarloaf Conservancy have stated opposition to the plan because of the substation's visual, environmental and safety impacts, and loss of property value for many of the 1,300 homes near the site. The groups also question the need for more electric power systems, considering the downturn in the economy and outlook.

Frederick County officials said final authority for the substation's approval lies with them. The utility company said authority should rest with the state's Public Service Commission, which has the final say on the transmission line.

Allegheny, FirstEnergy merger

The Maryland Public Service Commission has scheduled a hearing at 7 p.m. Nov. 30 at Winchester Hall on the merger of Allegheny Energy and FirstEnergy.

The PSC's hearing will focus on the proposed merger of Allegheny Energy and FirstEnergy, a \$8.5 billion deal the companies hope to close by mid-2011. The merged company, to be known as FirstEnergy, would be based in Akron, Ohio. The merger will not affect ongoing discussions about PATH, utility company officials said in May when the plan was filed with the PSC.

Allegheny Energy representatives said in May that one goal of the merger is to establish a headquarters for Potomac Edison in Maryland. Allegheny Energy, the parent company, is based in Pennsylvania. Representatives from both companies said the merger is not based on financial or economic issues, but the geographical coverage of the businesses that will result in 6 million customers in seven states.

Anyone unable to attend the Nov. 30 meeting may submit comments in writing to Terry J. Romine, executive secretary, Maryland Public Service Commission, William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 St. Paul St., 16th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. The case is No. 9230.

Please send comments to [webmaster](#) or contact us at 301-662-1177.

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IF YOU GO

Board of Zoning Appeals hearing on PATH

7 p.m. Thursday, October 14, at Winchester Hall, 12 E. Church St., Frederick

Maryland PSC hearing on Allegheny Energy and FirstEnergy merger

7 p.m. Nov. 30 at Winchester Hall, 12 E. Church St., Frederick