

CITY COUNCIL
BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 6, 2014

The City Council Business and Community Affairs Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 5:04 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room located at 201 West Gray on the 6th day of November, 2014, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:	Councilmembers Castleberry, Lang, Quinn, and Chairman Heiple
ABSENT:	None
OTHERS PRESENT:	Mayor Cindy Rosenthal Councilmember Greg Jungman, Ward Four Mr. James W. Chappel, Community Affairs Manager, Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company (OG&E) Mr. Richard Smith, Lead Power Quality Engineer, Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company (OG&E) Ms. Tessa Beder, Norman Chamber of Commerce Mr. Roger Gallagher, 1522 East Boyd
STAFF PRESENT:	Mr. Terry Floyd Development Coordinator Ms. Sara Kaplan, Retail Marketing Coordinator Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager Ms. Leah Messner, Assistant City Attorney Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV

Item 1, being:

CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING ELECTRICAL SERVICE IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA.

Mr. Richard Smith, Lead Power Quality Engineer for Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company (OG&E), said the Business and Community Affairs Committee (BACA) met on October 3, 2014, regarding the electrical service in the downtown area. BACA wanted to discuss what options were available for stopping power surges, outages, equipment loss, birds/squirrel problems, and business frustration downtown. During that meeting, OG&E representatives were asked to submit and discuss an improvement plan with a baseline for monitoring those improvements for the November BACA meeting.

Mr. Smith said downtown Norman is primarily served by a substation located east of Santa Fe and north of Comanche Street, which is fed from the Wilkinson Substation located one-half mile east of 12th Avenue S.E. on the south side of Lindsey Street. He said the downtown substation will be taken out of service in the future because it is small and a new substation would need 3 1/2 to 4 acres of land with a 138,000 volt line attached. OG&E decided many years ago not to try to bring 138,000 volt line downtown because there is not enough room to do that. He said OG&E will build transmission lines around the outside of the downtown area and ultimately feed the downtown area from four surrounding substations. He said there will be plenty of capacity for the long-term.

Mr. Smith said electric power goes through many potential points of failure and OG&E has looked at causes over the years to see if there are repeating causes and locations and if the failures are due to transmission, substations, or distribution. He said most of the problems seem to be distribution from the substation to the customer. He said those power lines have more exposure so there is more likelihood of failures. He said OG&E plans to reduce the "parts" counts because the fewer parts and miles electricity encounters, the less likely there will be a points of failure that causes power blinks, surges, and outages.

Mr. Smith said in January, 2014, OG&E replaced the substation breaker and installed a state-of-the-art Schweitzer relay on the Wilkinson circuit at a cost of \$79,947. Replacement of the substation beaker and installation of the Schweitzer relay provides OG&E with the tools to clear and detect problem areas more quickly. The Schweitzer relay can pinpoint locations of faults on the system within a few hundred feet, which helps OG&E restore power much more quickly and helps to locate “hot spots” that could cause subsequent problems.

Mr. Smith said the downtown area is subject to a majority of 27 plus circuit miles of exposure, much of which goes through residential neighborhoods. Interruptions to service are commonly caused by lightning strikes, trees blown into power lines during high winds, wildlife, and unexpected equipment failure. He said OG&E is working on reliability of service to greatly reduce faults in the downtown area. In January 2014, OG&E installed an IntelliRupter® Automatic Circuit Recloser at the corner of Daws Street and Jones Street at a cost of \$58,514. The IntelliRupter® isolates approximately 1,500 customers’ downtown from possible problems in 16.4 miles of the 27 circuit miles.

Mr. Smith said OG&E will install a TripSaver® Cutout-Mounted Recloser at seven locations that is scheduled for completion before the end of November 2014. He said installation of a TripSaver® will isolate about 2.2 circuit miles and 285 downtown customers from possible problems.

Mr. Smith said in downtown Norman, OG&E has seven alley structures with transformer banks made necessary by vehicular traffic in these alleys. They are not adjacent to trees and have not been reported as a particularly problematic area; however, they do contain much more metal than single pole structures and are a concern for possible points of contact for wildlife. He said OG&E plans to rehabilitate these structures at an estimated cost of \$12,000 and work will need to be scheduled for after hours to avoid business disruption. This rehabilitation project is scheduled to be completed in January 2015. He said visible points of interest are the bare leads from the top conductor down to the transformers, which will be replaced by insulated cable. Porcelain insulators will be upgraded to taller polymer ones increasing the distance of energized line from the structure metal. Wildlife protection has been placed on many transformer bushings and will be on all devices in this area where there are potential places for squirrels and large birds to create short circuits.

Mr. Smith said OG&E has trouble codes attached to calls investigating outages to identify causes and eliminate repeat outages. A small percentage of calls do not have apparent causes and one possibility could be connections at all levels that have loosened over time. OG&E has a team that performs thermal imaging of identified trouble areas. A scan of the downtown circuit has been scheduled for November at a cost of approximately \$17,000 and any issues identified will be addressed.

Mr. Smith highlighted ongoing initiatives that include line inspections, equipment repair/replacement, and systematic cycle tree trimming. Wildlife protection will continue to be applied to transformer stations upon installation or as the need is realized. The downtown circuit will be inspected and corrective actions taken as needed and reliability issues will be reviewed periodically by a District Reliability Team.

Mr. Smith said grounding, wiring, and adequate surge protection are essential elements of insuring power quality for electronic loads and reducing risk of equipment damage and disruption. He said the most common and effective strategy for customers is to use Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS), sometimes known as a battery back-up. The UPS is the only strategy that essentially makes a “blink” a non-factor to computer operations including electronic cash registers, etc. Councilmember Castleberry asked if OG&E has considered purchasing back-up generators for restaurants since they could lose the largest revenues and Mr. Smith said that has been discussed, but if that happened, generators would be sold to the business at market value, not given to them. Ms. Kaplan was not sure generators were the answer to problems as her grocery store previously located in downtown Norman had 13 compressors and they were told it would cost \$40,000 to \$50,000 for a generator that protected all compressors. Mr. Smith said the technology is available to protect restaurants, grocery stores, and manufacturing companies and are cheaper than installing underground electric lines.

Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, asked what metrics OG&E will use for measuring success in the future and Mr. Smith said the number, frequency, and duration of long term outages and short term blinks. Mr. Smith said the IntelliRupter® has a counter and if, in a year's time, that count is ten events then the IntelliRupter® has protected the downtown ten times so that is a measurable improvement.

Ms. Sara Kaplan, Retail Marketing Coordinator, would like to see outage and blink data prior to 2013, to see if blink and outage numbers have gone down because if 2010, 2011, and 2012, numbers are higher it demonstrates OG&E has improved the service. She would also like to see number of blinks and outages versus number of customers affected. She felt this would be a viable metric of measurement and Mr. James Chappel, Community Affairs Manager for OG&E, agreed and said he would get that data to Ms. Kaplan within two weeks.

Chairman Heiple said BACA sees the steps OG&E is taking and the Committee likes those steps, but wants to see proof these steps are making a difference. He said decreasing the problems from a 27 mile area to a two mile area is a measure of success, but that two mile area is still a concern. Councilmember Lang agreed and said businesses in downtown Norman have significantly different needs than residential customers. He could care less if his lights at home blink four times a day because that has no impact on him, but blinks to a business could impact equipment, sales, labor, etc. He agreed with Ms. Kaplan that disruption caused to businesses should be measured. Mr. Smith assured the Committee that costs to businesses from blinks are a big concern to OG&E.

Councilmember Quinn said there are businesses that are not in the downtown area that have been affected by blinks and outages and he did not want OG&E focusing so much on downtown that they forget about those other customers. Mr. Chappel assured him there are currently ongoing projects on the east and west sides of Norman and OG&E is not focusing solely on the downtown area.

Chairman Heiple asked OG&E representatives to come back to the Committee in April or May 2015, with a report showing measures of improvement to the downtown area.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated October 31, 2014, from Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator, through Steve Lewis, City Manager, to Council Business and Community Affairs Committee
2. Downtown Norman Reliability Improvements, November, 2014, prepared by OG&E

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MISCELLANEOUS PUBLIC COMMENTS.

None

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The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor