

CITY COUNCIL
BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 3, 2015

The City Council Business and Community Affairs Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 4:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room located at 201 West Gray on the 3rd day of September, 2015, 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 Allison, Lang, and Chairman Heiple

ABSENT: Councilmember Castleberry

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Phil Apple, Region Engineering Manager,
Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company (OG&E)
Mr. James W. Chappel, Community Affairs Manager,
Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company (OG&E)
Mr. David Ruyle, Distribution Planning 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

STAFF PRESENT: Mr. Terry Floyd Development Coordinator
Ms. Sara Kaplan, Retail Marketing Coordinator
Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager
Ms. Leah Messner, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Shawn O’Leary, Director of Public Works
Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Harold Heiple, 218 East Eufaula
Ms. Madeline Oujekey, Intern, City Manager’s Office

Item 1, being:

PROGRESS UPDATE FROM OKLAHOMA GAS AND ELECTRIC (OG&E) REGARDING ELECTRICAL SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA.

Mr. Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator, said in October and November 2014, the Business and Community Affairs Committee (BACA) and Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company (OG&E) representatives began discussions regarding a reliability improvement plan and options for downtown Norman. OG&E was asked to submit an electrical service improvement plan with a baseline for monitoring improvements in Downtown Norman to the Committee in its April 2015, meeting; however, Council dedicated the entire month of April and a portion of May to meetings regarding a Norman Forward Initiative.

In April, May, and June 2015, heavy rains as well as a tornado kept OG&E busy repairing lines and restoring power to customer so they were not able to present an improvement plan to the City as scheduled. Tonight, OG&E will present a progress on improvements made since October 2014, and update the Committee on proposed improvements and ongoing initiatives.

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Phil Apple, Region Engineering Manager for OG&E, said the downtown area is primarily served by a substation located east of Santa Fe and north of Comanche Street, which is fed from the Wilkinson Substation. He said the downtown substation will be taken out of service in the future because it is aging out and cannot handle additional capacity.

In the BACA meeting in October, OG&E told the Committee they planned to isolate Downtown Norman from any type of exposure that may be going on and that included the installation of TripSaver® Cutout-Mounted Reclosers (tripsavers) at seven locations. Mr. Apple said a TripSaver® is a three-shot fuse that catches faults quickly so if there is a fault, such as a car hitting a power pole, the TripSaver® fuse will blow then reclose and no one in the downtown area would even be aware of the problem. Chairman Heiple asked the cost of a TripSaver® and Mr. Apple said \$3,000 each.

OG&E also rehabilitated alley electric structures with insulated cable and wildlife protection. He said bare leads from the top conductor down to the transformers were replaced by insulated cable and porcelain insulators were upgraded to taller polymer ones increasing the distance of energized line from the structure metal. Wildlife protection has been placed on many transformer bushings where there are potential places for squirrels and large birds to create short circuits. An OG&E team also performed thermal imaging of identified trouble areas and made needed repairs or replacements.

Mr. Apple said 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. IntelliRupters® can detect a fault, open the circuit to clear the fault then reclose the circuit without interruption to service. The IntelliRupter® isolates approximately 1,500 customers' downtown from possible problems. The IntelliRupter® has a counter and if, in a year's time, that count shows ten events that means the IntelliRupter® has protected the downtown area ten times so that is a measurable improvement. A second IntelliRupter® was recently installed on Lindsey Street near the railroad tracks.

Mr. Apple highlighted an outage history in Downtown Norman and said there were four outages detected in November 2014, three in December 2014, one in April 2015, one in May 2015, and two in August 2015. Mr. James Chappel, Community Affairs Manager for OG&E, asked the duration of the outages and Mr. Apple said the more recent outages were substantial (one hour or more), but affected a limited number of customers. Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, asked if that count included the outage on Sunday, August 30th, and Monday, August 31st, at City Hall and Mr. Apple said yes. Councilmember Allison asked if the outage occurred during business hours and Mr. Lewis said yes, City Hall had not power until 10:30 a.m. Monday. Ms. Sara Kaplan, Retail Marketing Coordinator, said First Baptist Church was affected Sunday, but she did not know if it happened during service.

Mr. Apple said OG&E constantly monitors outages and tries to analyze ways to reduce the outage time or eliminate the outage altogether and this is something OG&E will continue to monitor. OG&E has an ongoing procedure to review and install squirrel guards, if needed, when an outage occurs. Mr. Chappel said OG&E has also implemented some tree trimming as part of the process to eliminate outages

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Lewis asked how much money OG&E has invested in the downtown area since October 2014, and Mr. Apple said approximately \$120,000 and Chairman Heiple asked if a \$120,000 investment really seemed fair for the third largest community in Oklahoma. Mr. Apple said that figure was spent on the downtown area, not the whole community and OG&E is installing the downtown area with the best technology available. Mr. Apple said OG&E changed some equipment in the downtown substation, which was costly, but it is hard to say what has specifically been spent on the downtown area.

Mr. David Ruhle, Manager of Distribution Planning for OG&E, said the long-term goal is to eliminate the downtown substation and add capacity at the Millennium substation, which will cost \$2.5 million to \$3 million. This will allow OG&E to split downtown Norman into four pieces so if there is an outage it will not affect the entire downtown area. This will happen in two phases with Phase I adding capacity to the Millennium substation beginning in 2016, to be completed in early 2017. He said the current downtown substation will become a back-up substation until Phase II adds more capacity to completely eliminate the downtown substation, which is planned to happen in approximately three years.

Chairman Heiple said the third largest city in Oklahoma deserves a bigger investment from a company like OG&E, but he is not as concerned about the money spent in the downtown area as he is about the lack of speed in which these improvements are being made. He said there are other electric companies out there the City may consider using. He said there does not seem to be intensity or focus from OG&E on getting the downtown area a better power solution and although OG&E is making steps toward that, he is disappointed in their efforts so far. Mr. Apple said speed is related to the availability of new technology and the TripSaver® and IntelliRupter® equipment is first generation technology and hard to obtain quickly because there is such demand for them. Chairman Heiple asked if Oklahoma City (OKC) or Tulsa has these same delays in getting this equipment and Mr. Apple said yes.

Chairman Heiple asked how much money OG&E has invested in downtown Oklahoma City since October 2014, and Mr. Chappel said there is no good comparison on what OG&E has spent on Downtown Norman versus Downtown OKC. He said OG&E is rebuilding the underground network in OKC for the new towers that are being built in Downtown OKC. He was sorry Chairman Heiple is disappointed with OG&E's progress in Downtown Norman.

Mr. Chappel said Downtown Norman will be a priority project for OG&E and Chairman Heiple said it feels like Norman is being slow walked. Mr. Chappel said there is a lot of investment in Norman, but maybe not as much investment in Downtown Norman. He said the Norman downtown area is a special problem. Mr. Apple said OG&E is trying to be as proactive and responsive as they can and that is why OG&E is doing tree trimming, wildlife protection, thermal imaging, upgrading alley equipment, etc.

Councilmember Lang understands there is a lot of development in Norman, but the downtown area cannot be the vibrant mixed use area envisioned by the City if power outages continue to be a consistent problem because businesses will locate elsewhere. He said to keep the downtown area of Norman growing to balance with outside area growth, the infrastructure will have to be there in order to lure businesses downtown.

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Ruyle said OG&E is fighting for money in the budget to get Phase I started as soon as possible and the City will see improvements out of Phase I. Mr. Lewis asked when capital budget decisions are made in the corporation and Mr. Ruyle said mid-October. He said Norman's project is behind Poteau, Oklahoma's substation, which is OG&E's number one priority because it is basically deteriorated to the point of failing. Mr. Lewis asked if the Downtown Norman project is dependent on a rate increase and Mr. Ruyle said no.

Chairman Heiple said if to the City does not see a huge improvement in 12 months then the City will need to have a conversation about starting its own electric utility. He said five years is not good enough for completion of the entire project.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated August 27, 2015, from Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator, through Steve Lewis, City Manager, to Council Business and Community Affairs Committee, with Attachment A, Ongoing and Proposed OG&E Improvements from November 2014 Reality Improvement Plan, and Attachment B, City Council Business and Community Affairs Committee minutes of October 2, 2014, and November 6, 2014
2. Photos of Downtown Norman improvements provided by OG&E

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Item 2 being:

MISCELLANEOUS PUBLIC COMMENTS.

None

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The meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.