

Chelan PUD selects M.E.N.D. site for new substation

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By: Ian Dunn, Editor

After more than a year of seeking public input, Chelan County PUD Commissioners have finally settled on the site for a new Leavenworth substation, on property owned by Upper Valley MEND, near Club West off Titus Road.

The PUD calls this site 14. Another site nearby, site 8A, will be kept as a reserve should the MEND site not work out. Site 8A is on Rattlesnake Hill, owned by the city of Leavenworth.

“The public comment that we have received was in favor of moving forward with the MEND site, and keeping 8A as a backup. Comment that came in written form was for either the city property or MEND property,” said Teka Sellers, PUD Customer Outreach specialist. “At the board meeting, we told the commissioners it was supported by the community focus group, MEND, the city and community, for the most part.”

The first focus group meeting was January of 2016, so it has taken over a year to get to this point. Now, the PUD will be working with the city on a conditional use permit. Plus, Sellers said they’ll do some discovery work. A timeline should be available soon.

Sellers said they will be starting discussions with MEND also. For the most part, the public process had concluded.

“I would say that iteration of the public process. We had engaged that focus group we put together to help us find a site. They helped us get to where we wanted to be there. The next iteration will be working with folks in the area of the substation and the area where any lines would need to be built,” Sellers said. “That is our next step, to reach out to those groups of people.”

There has been some engineering done on the sites, but that was mainly just high level so the PUD could demonstrate to the public and commissioners what the sites might look like, Sellers said. This process relied on a lot of assumptions.

“Now, we really dig in, and say, what will it take to put a substation on this particular site? What would the lines look like? Where would we put them? We have an idea, but now we’re going to start digging into the details,” Sellers said.

There are no community meetings planned, she said, because there’s no new information. Once there is new information, Sellers said she could see the PUD coming forward to let the community know what the options might be for fencing, landscaping and those sorts of things.

“We definitely want the community’s input,” Sellers said. “We just don’t have any of that ready yet. We will start outreach with folks in the area. That might be a neighborhood meeting or something like that.”

Some of the benefits of the MEND site include redundancy, so that if the current Leavenworth substation were knocked offline, the new substation could pick up the load. Sellers said they will be building in some transmission redundancy, which is a definite benefit of the site.

There also room at that location for a double bank, similar to the current substation.

“In some of the other areas, that space was confined and we would not be able to double bank the transformers someday,” Sellers said.

You can share public comments on the Leavenworth substation using the public comment form on the PUD webpage or by emailing teka.sellers@chelanpud.org or calling 509-661-4294. Sellers said they will continue to update the website and outreach efforts via email and direct mail as they move into the next phase of this project.

For more information on the Bavarian substation project, visit chelanpud.org/NewLeavenworthSubstation.

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