

City of Newton



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459-1449

Setti D. Warren
Mayor

April 25, 2016

To: Public Facilities Committee

From: James McGonagle, Commissioner of Public Works

Subject: # 12 Old Farm Road, Petition for Grant of Location, National Grid Gas Main

Discussion:

National Grid submitted a petition for installation of a new gas main in Old Farm Road, for gas service to #12 Old Farm Road, in the fall of 2015. Old Farm Road currently has no gas main or gas service. Old Farm Road had undergone major construction in the 2011-2012 construction seasons, with installation of a new water main, major sewer and drain repairs, and full depth reconstruction and paving of the roadway surface.

Public Works had recommended denial of the petition at that time, due to three major issues:

- 1) The 5 year roadway moratorium was still in effect. This proposed gas main installation is not a small trench perpendicular to the roadway, but a 200 linear foot trench within the roadway. Cutting into a roadway paved less than 5 years ago by a contractor hired by National Grid is not permitted on a newly paved roadway.
- 2) The compaction techniques of National Grid and their contractors may or may not meet the construction standards of the city, and Engineering Division had no in-house means to measure compaction density.
- 3) Engineering Division did not have a full time construction inspector assigned to monitor the backfill and compaction efforts of National Grid or the other utility companies or their contractors.

Public Facilities Committee denied the petition.

Since that time, Public Works and Engineering Division have been in discussions with the developer of #12 Old Farm Road, to see if an engineering compromise could be reached. The above concerns are addressed as follows:

- 1) Although the five year moratorium is in effect through the spring of 2017, if the work can be performed soon the developer has agreed to additional conditions. The developer at #12 Old Farm Road has agreed to cold-plane (mill) and overlay (with asphalt) the entire roadway surface for the length of the new gas trench, from the connection in Brookline Street to #12 Old Farm Road, plus 25 feet beyond the trench in Brookline Street and 25 feet beyond the trench in Old Farm Road. See sketch attached. It is in the developer's interest for National Grid to properly

compact the trench. This gives the city essentially a new roadway in this area of work. Should the trench in the new roadway settle (and it should not if properly compacted), the developer would be required to return and repair the roadway within one year of paving.

The advantage of this condition is that the entire roadway surface gets new pavement, where as if the developer returned in 2017, with the moratorium over, only the gas trench area (say 3 feet wide) would be required under our current policy to receive a permanent patch of bituminous concrete.

2) A soil densitometer has been purchased by engineering division, and has been delivered. The soil densitometer allows the city construction inspector to test and verify the soil density of the trench, so there can be no question as to the proper soil compaction of the backfill material. Engineering division is currently using the soil densitometer in the field. It would be used to check the compaction density in Old Farm Rd.

3) A new construction inspector position has been added to the engineering division staff (filling a vacant position in Highway Division). The inspector was hired in February 2016. The inspector's duties, among many, include inspection of National Grid's (and all other utilities) trench backfill operations throughout the city, and ensuring that the trenches are backfilled and compacted to city specifications.

After much discussion, we feel that both the extent of repaving as well as the departments ability to properly inspect the work and ensure quality control provides a reasonable engineering compromise to the petitioner's request.

Alternatively, if the petition is again denied, the 5 year moratorium expires in the spring of 2017. At that time, National Grid may again petition for a grant of location for the new gas main, and we would recommend that the petition be granted, and only the area of the trench would be required to be repaired and paved, not the entire roadway surface.

This is a change to the policy in year 5 of the moratorium, with conditions attached to improve our city streets. We have no intention of revising the policy, and we do adhere to the policy on a regular basis.

Sincerely,

James McGonagle
Commissioner Public Works