

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Town Council Chambers
October 25, 2016

RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES

The Meeting of the Wallingford Town Council on Tuesday, October 25, 2016 was called to order at 6:34P.M. The opening Prayer was given by– Reverend Will Marotti, New Life Church and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were: Chairman Vincent Cervoni, Craig Fishbein, John LeTourneau, Joseph A. Marrone, III, John J. Sullivan, Thomas Laffin, Christopher K. Shortell, Vincent F. Testa, Jr. and Jason Zandri. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. and Town Attorney, Gerald E. Farrell, Sr. were also present at the meeting.

- 1. Pledge of Allegiance
- 2. Roll Call
- 3. Consent Agenda
 - 3a. Consider and Approve Tax Refunds totaling \$5,266.55 (#382-429)
Acct. #1001001-41020 – Tax Collector
 - 3b. Acceptance of funds from Workforce Alliance, Inc. and Consider and Approve Appropriation of funds in the in the amount of \$854 to Donations, Acct.#2274002-47010 and to Expenditures, Acct. #22702017-51000 – Y&SS
 - 3c. Acceptance of Donation from in town business owners for a canine program and Consider and Approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$718 to Revenue Donations – Police, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations – Police, Acct. #25020050-58830-10127 – Police Dept.
 - 3d. Acceptance of Donation from an in town business owner for a canine program and Consider and Approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$50 to Revenue Donations – Police, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations – Police, Acct. #25020050-58830-10127 – Police Dept.
 - 3e. Acceptance of Donation from Nucor Steel Connecticut and Consider and Approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$14,000 to Revenue Donations – Police, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations – Police, Acct. #25020050-58830-TBD – Police Dept.
 - 3f. Acceptance of funds from HQ Dumpsters and M&M Redemption Can and Bottle Drive and Consider and Approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$87 to Misc. Revenue, Acct. #1009052-47040 and to Veterinary, Acct. #10020100-56742 – Animal Control Officer

- 3g. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$14,600 from Distribution Plant- Street Light and Signal Systems, Acct. #373 to Distribution Operations-Street Light and Signal Systems, Acct. #585 – Electric Division

- 3h. Consider and Approve an Agreement between the Town of Wallingford and Comunidad Hispana de Wallingford, Inc. "SCOW", as our subcontractor, to fulfill all terms and conditions of the CT Dept. of Social Services Human Resource Development (HRD) Grant – Program Planning

Acceptance of Grant and Consider and Approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$31,845 to SCOW Grant HRD Fund, Fund #231 and to SCOW Grant HRD Fund, Fund #231 – Program Planning

- 3i. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$750 from Contingency, Acct. #10019000-58820 to Building Department – Office Expense, Acct. #10010550-56100 – Building Dept.

- 3j. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$4,458 from Cook Hill Renovations, Acct. #22520150 57000 10110 to TBD (EMD Building), Acct.# TBD – Fire Dept.

- 3k. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$13,736 from Contingency, Acct. #10019000-58820 to Fire Training Tower, Acct. #100-20150-TBD – Fire Dept.

- 3l. Acceptance of State Grant and Consider and Approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$15,738 to State Grant, Fund #225 and to Expenditure TBD, Fund #225 – Fire Dept.

- 3m. Approve Town Council Minutes of October 13, 2016.

MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 3a.-3m.

MADE BY: LAFFIN
SECONDED BY: FISHBEIN
VOTE: 9-AYE
MOTION: PASSED

- 4. **Items Removed from the Consent Agenda - None**

- 5. **PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD**

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, inquired about the pension fund and asked if the Council follows it at all.

Chairman Cervoni responded that it is not a Regular Agenda item.

Closed Public Question and Answer Period at 6:41 P.M.

6. Presentation from Eversource regarding Transmission Structure Maintenance Work in Wallingford – Mayor (Attached)

In attendance: *Anthony Johnson, Manager, Vegetation Transportation, Eversource*
John Troiano, Project Outreach Manager, Burns & McDonnell

Mr. Johnson gave a presentation regarding Eversource Energy. He discussed how we are impacted by trees along the power lines and noted that during storms we are severely impacted by trees into distribution centers.

Mr. Johnson then went on to explain that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) found that Eversource was compliant but that they need to maintain the trees which are infected. FERC is recommending clearing all the way to the power lines. He stated that six projects are scheduled in Connecticut and Wallingford is one of them. He explained that the goal is to remove the trees that are going to impact the transmission area.

Mr. Johnson indicated that letters have been sent to all affected property owners and that Eversource is looking to work with property owners. He stated that they are contracting out the work after Thanksgiving.

Councilor LeTourneau asked when they will meet with property owners and Mr. Johnson replied that they have already started.

Councilor LeTourneau asked where exactly they are. Mr. Johnson stated that they are on the Northern Edge, East of 91, across 150– (Traditions) then west (not affected) Wildlife Drive and then North Haven.

Councilor Testa spoke about right of way and asked how much they are cutting into.

Mr. Johnson explained that they are trying to get a distance away from the conducto and that they might clear the whole piece to the edge of the easement.

Councilor Testa asked for an explanation of the legality of the right of way.

Mr. Johnson explained the easement and noted that the property owner granted them the right to own that portion of property. He then went on to state that it is our easement and we purchased it, so we have the right to maintain it.

Councilor Sullivan asked why Fairfield county hasn't been touched and Mr. Johnson replied that the past storms were more in the valley. Councilor Sullivan then asked what type of replanting there will be and Mr. Johnson stated that he is not sure and that it depends on the property. He then stated that they would like to be 100 feet from the conductor.

Councilor Fishbein commented that he shared Councilor Sullivan's thoughts and then inquired about the language in the right of way.

Mr. Johnson explained the right to trim/cut or remove.

Councilor Fishbein asked if there was a map and Mr. Johnson replied they have the map which shows easement lines.

Councilor Fishbein stated that residents don't know where you are going to be cutting and asked if maps are sent to property owners. Mr. Johnson responded no and explained that if they call, they will tell them.

Councilor Fishbein asked if they intend to leave cut wood on properties. Mr. Johnson responded yes we do.

Councilor Zandri asked if the intent is to clear cut right to the edges and Mr. Johnson responded that it depends on the property.

Councilor Zandri asked about replanting turnaround time and Mr. Johnson responded April or May.

Councilor Zandri questioned if the utility is prepared to do something if noise really becomes an issue and Mr. Johnson indicated that they will take a look at that.

Councilor Laffin stated that the railroad really burnt us, but this is affecting people's homes. He then asked if they walk the clearing and if they tag. Mr. Johnson replied yes they walk the clearing and they tag after meeting with the resident.

Councilor Shortell indicated that he is fixated on how many people Eversource has met with and how it is going. He then asks how they clear trees in the winter time and if November is a hard date. Mr. Johnson responded that they expect delays but winter is an ideal time to do the work.

Mayor Dickinson stated that there is still an effort to contact people and they are now going door to door.

Councilor Sullivan indicated that he would like a commitment from Eversource that they will be committed to do the right thing by these folks.

Councilor Fishbein questioned if there is a ratio of trees to land. Mr. Johnson stated that he can't say that there is.

Councilor Fishbein asked if there is a legal agreement to plant new trees. Mr. Johnson stated there is not, but they plan to do that.

Councilor Fishbein asked if they have to go to the Inland/Wetland Commission. Mr. Johnson replied local inland/wetlands have no authority over Eversource.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gail Barry, 22 Mulligan Drive, indicated that she is representing all the residents of Mulligan Drive – The Fairways at Harbor Ridge. Attached is her statement, correspondence and maps.

Brenda Tyler, 26 Mulligan Drive, dropped off photos and stated that she bought her home two years ago for over a half million dollars and indicated that Eversource has no regard for her property or her way of life.

Mr. Johnson Stated that the trees by 26 Mulligan Drive will not be removed. Ms. Tyler was grateful.

John Asneak, Twin Oak Farm Road, stated that he saw stakes in his yard before anyone spoke to him and that he would like a clarification on the 100 foot line. Mr. Johnson indicated that all trees are being cut.

Mr. Johnson clarified the 100 foot mark to 150 foot mark are indicated and they will only take trees if it's a problem. They are targeting white pine trees.

Mr. Asneak then asked what the plan is to maintain the clear part and the insidious growth.

Anthony Gambredella, 31 Mulligan Drive, expressed that he is glad to hear that the trees along the homes on Mulligan Drive are remaining. He then commented that noise is going to be a real issue from the highway.

Steven Allinson, High Hill Road, spoke about his concern with the presentation and what Eversource is portraying and what actually happens.

Ken DeMatteo, 1280 Durham Road, indicated that he is in the worst case scenario, property is elevated and there are wires below. He hopes that they take out stumps and plant larger than one to two inch trees.

William Scialabba, 8 Fairway Drive, spoke about his concern with no contract. He then asked what promises do we have. Mr. Johnson responded that they are clearly marking trees that need to come down.

Mayor Dickinson asked if all trees will be marked.

Mr. Johnson stated we will be selectively removing, and those trees will be marked, otherwise, they will be clear cut.

Marissa, 88 High Hill Road, asked if they will be clear cutting to the street and Mr. Johnson answered most likely but some of the property is town owned and they would need permission from the town.

Mary, Wildlife Drive, indicated that she hopes for some action today and that nothing will be done until Eversource has heard from everyone. She then stated that utilities are protected by statute and she's asking that property owners have something that protects them.

Ms. Morse, 174 High Hill Road, indicated that she received a notice eight years ago that Eversource was going to plant trees but they never did.

Joan, 1276 Barnes Road, spoke.

Scott Trauner, Twin Oak Farm Road, spoke

Joe Norwood, 24 Mulligan Drive, spoke

Mr. Calvo, 5 Wildlife Drive, spoke

Paul Aiken, 1274 Durham Road, spoke

Karen Driscoll, Country Way, questioned if it's true that Wallingford is one of eight areas. Mr. Johnson replied that they are not picking on Connecticut or Wallingford and that this is the first year of a six to seven year project .

Pat DeRenzo, 30 Overlook Drive, stated that he is concerned about the noise with removal of trees.

Joe Verna, 31 Overlook Drive, spoke

Richard, 32 Fairway Drive, stated that residents of Fairway Drive have not gotten any notices from Eversource.

Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner, stated there are three town properties in the area that will be affected: 491 Williams Road, Pond Hill Road school and 995 Center Street.

Stacey Stokes, Twin Oak Farm, asks if the cutting will affect the EMF Field.

State Representative, Mary Mushinsky, stated that FERC supersedes State law but the citing council can rewrite vegetation rules. She then went on to explain that the State does not have the legal authority to do anything and that they are just trying to get more cooperation.

Councilor Testa asked what we are able to do and if we have any ownership.

Chairman Cervoni asked Attorney Farrell and the Law Department to please look into what we can do. He then asks if we can also send a letter from this legislative body.

Councilor Fishbein asked what oversight does the CT Siting Council have over this. Mr. Johnson responded not much except for vegetation regrowth.

Councilor Fishbein questioned how many properties are affected in Wallingford and Mr. Johnson replied a few hundred properties are in Wallingford's Eversource budget, but the entire budget is over 2 million which includes other parts of the state.

Councilor Marrone confirms that the vegetation standard is a mandate and Mr. Johnson responded yes. He then confirms that if we don't do what FERC recommends, at some point, there will be fines. Mr. Johnson responded yes.

7. **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO** Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-225(f) and Section 1-200(6)(B) regarding strategy and negotiations with respect to the pending foreclosure matter of *Town of Wallingford v. Josephine Ritz, et al.*
8. **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION** to consider and authorize taking action in the pending foreclosure matter of *Town of Wallingford v. Josephine Ritz, et al* as discussed in Executive Session
- 9(b). **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO** Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-225(f) and Section 1-200(6)(B) regarding strategy and negotiations with respect to the following pending litigation:
 - (a) *Vernon II CT LLC v. Town of Wallingford; and (WITHDRAWN)*
 - (b) *Wallingford Four, LLC v. Town of Wallingford*
10. Motion to consider and authorize a settlement in the pending tax appeal matter of *Vernon II CT LLC v. Town of Wallingford* as discussed in Executive Session – Law Dept. **(WITHDRAWN)**
11. **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION** to consider and authorize a settlement in the pending tax appeal matter of *Wallingford Four, LLC v. Town of Wallingford* as discussed in Executive Session.
12. **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO** Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-225(f), Section 1-200(6)(E) and Section 1-210(b)(1), (5)(B) regarding the Waste Management Agreement.
13. **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO** Section 1-200(6)(D) of the Connecticut General Statutes with respect to the purchase, sale and/or leasing of property.
14. **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO** Section 1-225(f) and Section 1-200(6)(B) of the Connecticut General Statutes regarding strategy and negotiations with respect to the pending litigation matter of *Demartino Colony Realty Co. v. Town of Wallingford.*

MADE BY: LAFFIN
SECONDED: FISHBEIN
VOTE: ALL-AYE
MOTION PASSED

Time in Executive Session: 9:55 P.M.

Attendance at the Executive Session: 9 Councilors, Mayor Dickinson and Town Attorney Gerald E. Farrell, Sr.

MOTION TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

MADE BY: LAFFIN
SECONDED: SHORTELL
VOTE: ALL-AYE
MOTION PASSED

Time out of Executive Session: 10:13 P.M.

8. **Motion to authorize the resolution to take action in the pending foreclosure matter of *Town of Wallingford v. Josephine Ritz, et al* as discussed in Executive Session – Law Dept.**

MADE BY: LAFFIN
SECONDED: SHORTELL
VOTE: ALL-AYE
MOTION PASSED

11. **Motion to authorize the settlement in the pending tax appeal matter of *Wallingford Four, LLC v. Town of Wallingford* as discussed in Executive Session – Law Dept.**

MADE BY: LAFFIN
SECONDED: FISHBEIN
VOTE: ALL-AYE
MOTION PASSED

15. **Motion to authorize a settlement of the pending tax appeal matter of *Demartino Colony Realty Co. v. Town of Wallingford* as discussed in Executive Session.**

MADE BY: LAFFIN
SECONDED: SHORTELL
VOTE: ALL-AYE
MOTION PASSED

MOTION TO ADJOURN

MADE BY: LAFFIN
SECONDED BY: SHORTELL
VOTE: ALL-AYE
MOTION PASSED

The Council adjourned the meeting at 10:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Moss
Council Staff
Meeting digitally recorded

Vincent Cervoni, Chairman

Date

Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk

Date

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 10-27-16
AT 4:30 AND RECEIVED BY
Barbara Thompson TOWN CLERK



Improving Electric System Resilience

Vegetation Management on Transmission Rights-of-Way

Wallingford Town Council Meeting
October 25, 2016

Eversource Service Territories

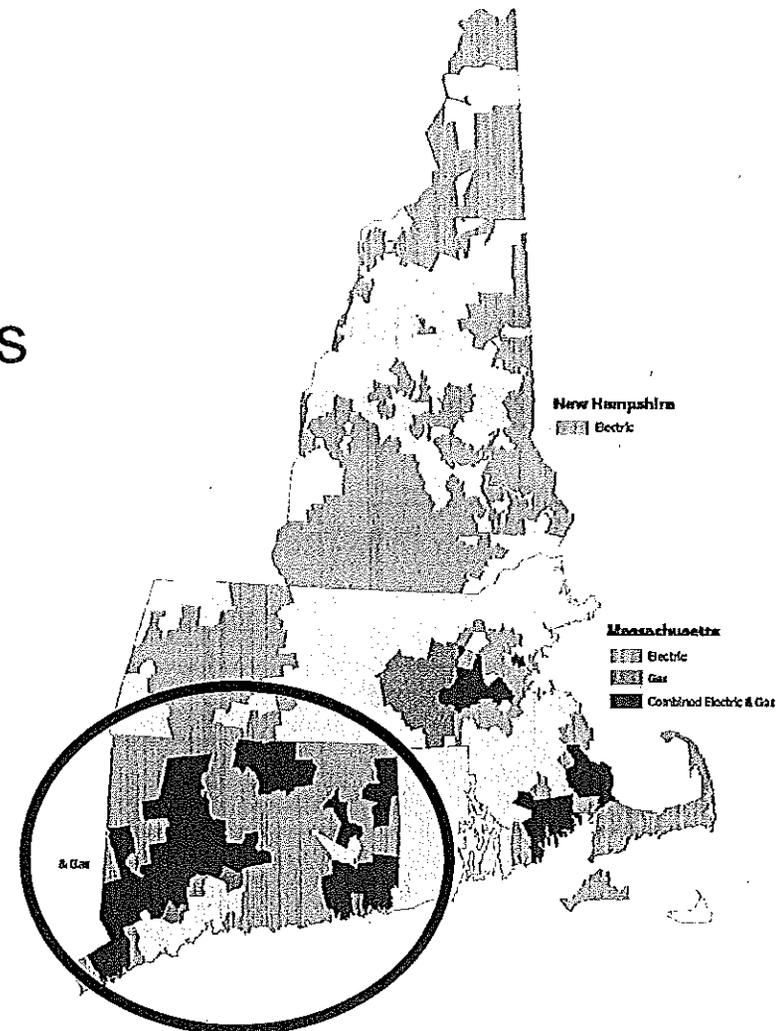


Delivering reliable energy to our customers is the keystone of our company's service commitment

Connecticut

- Electric
- Gas
- Combined Electric & Gas

- 1.2 million electric customers
- 226,000 natural gas customers



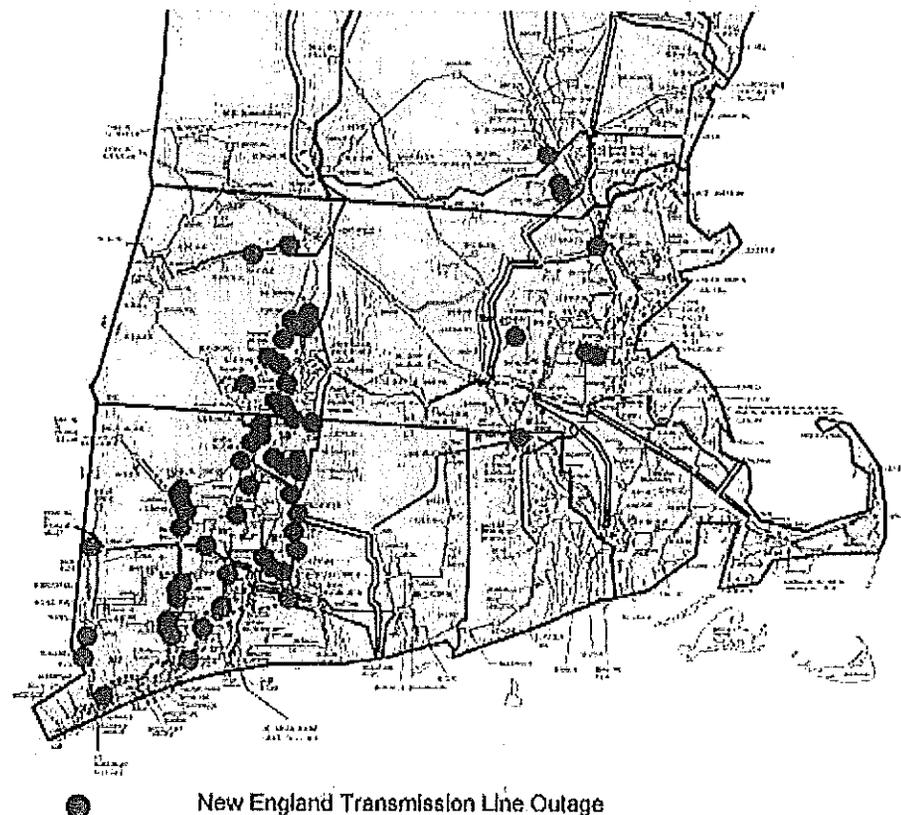
What is the work and why is it needed?

- **To protect the electric system, we will be removing tall-growing tree species in an expanded area of the transmission rights-of-way.**
 - These trees pose a serious safety hazard if they contact energized equipment.
 - Vegetation contact with transmission facilities may lead to power outages that could impact thousands of electric customers.
 - The clearing of trees in the rights-of-way will improve system performance, especially during severe weather.
 - Make the transmission corridor a sustainable, diverse habitat, with grasses, shrubs and low-growing trees that can safely coexist with transmission lines.

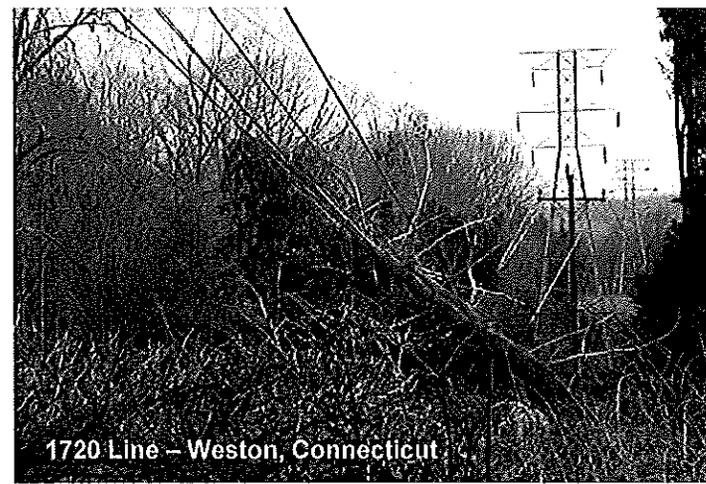
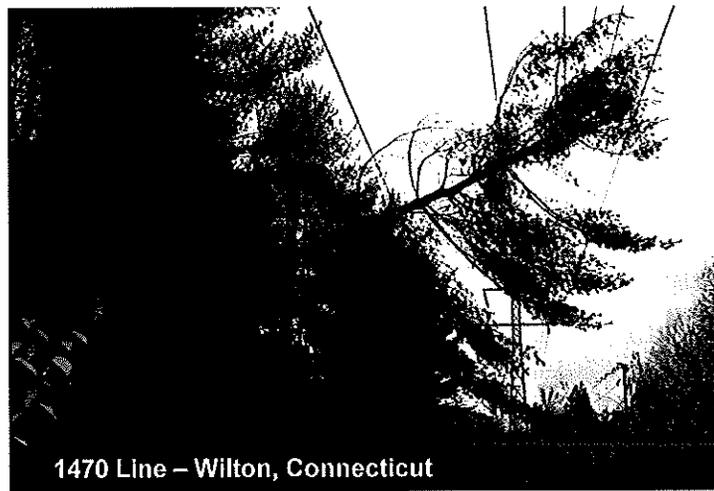
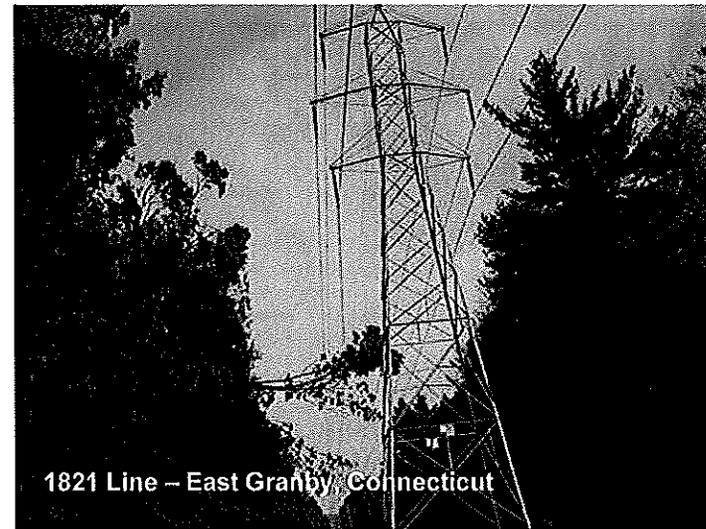


Transmission Line Outages during the 2011 October Snowstorm

- Fifty-four of the October Snowstorm's seventy-four transmission line outages in New England (approx. 74%) occurred within the Eversource service territories of CT, Western MA and New Hampshire.
- All of the trees that fell into lines from within the utility's full right-of-way were located outside of the area in which the utility typically performs vegetation management

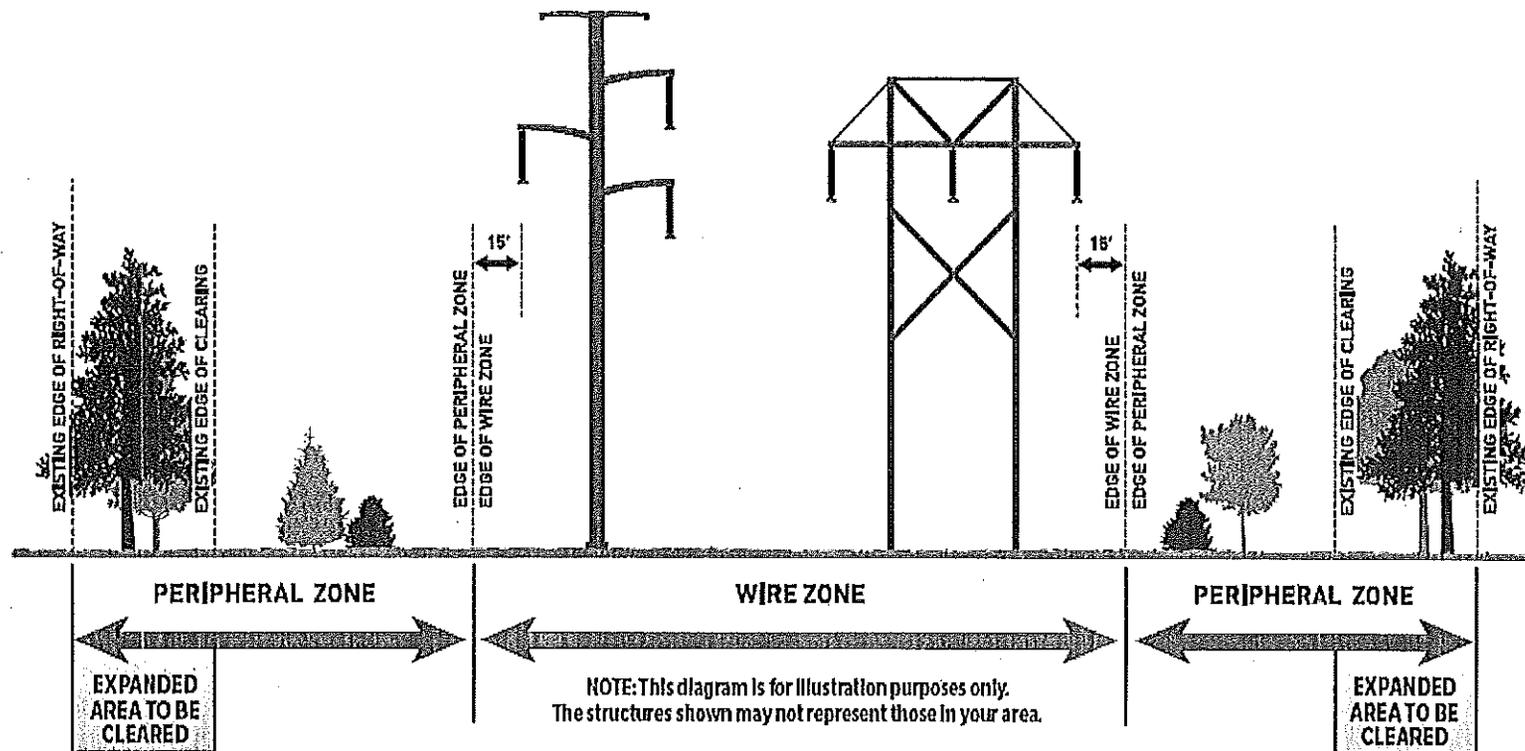


Examples of falling trees



Typical Right-of-Way Condition and expanded area to be cleared

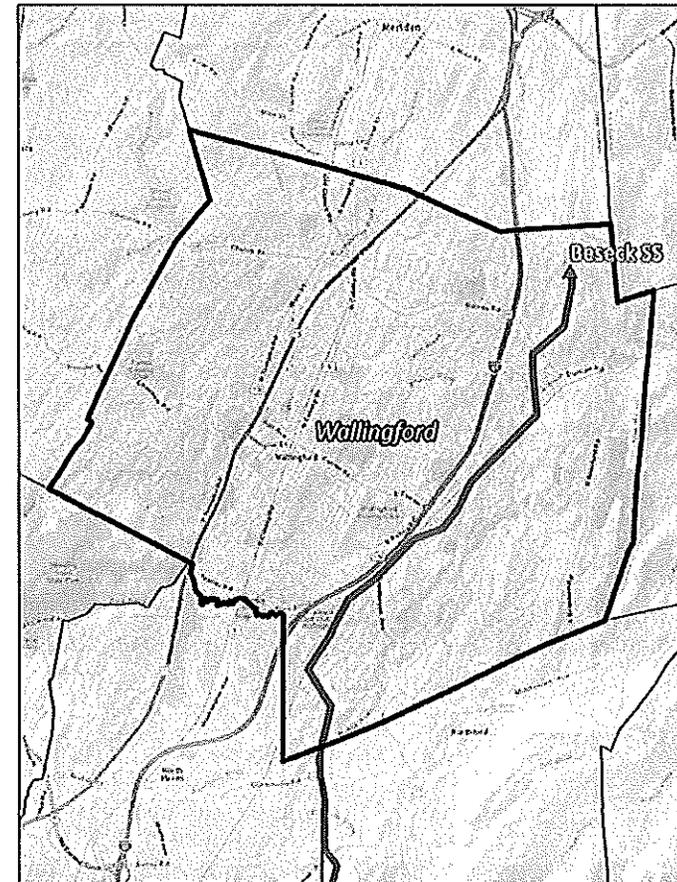
- Average right-of-way width in Wallingford ranges from 275 to 320 feet.
- Average width of currently maintained right-of-way in Wallingford ranges from 215 to 250 feet.



* Depicts averages; individual locations may vary

Where this work will occur in Wallingford

- 8 miles of transmission right-of-way
- Projected timeline: Approx. November 2016 – Early 2017



Tree clearing on private property

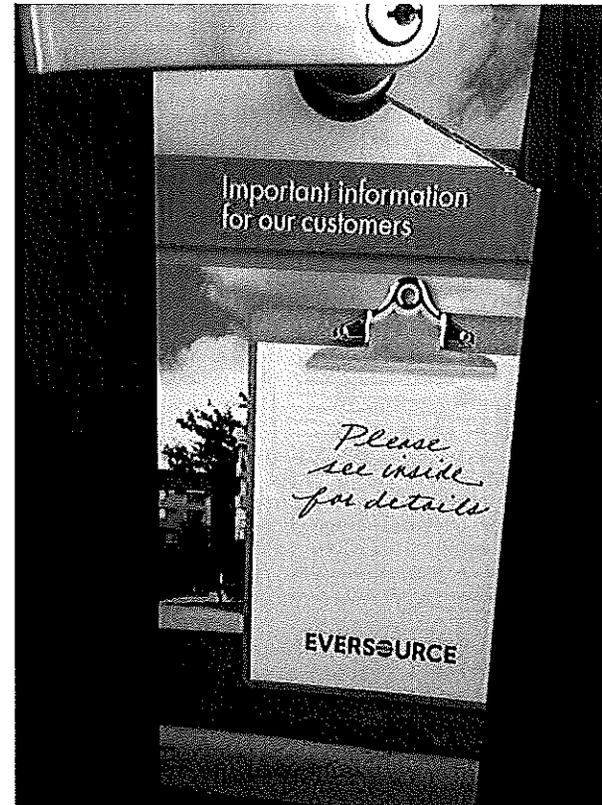
- Eversource will work closely with property owners to explain the limits of clearing and impacts on their property.
- Property owners can retain all or a portion of the wood from the cleared trees on their property.
- Any wood requested by property owners will be left along the edge of right-of-way.



Typical way firewood is left for property owners

- Key stakeholders
 - Property owners/residents
 - Businesses
 - Local officials
 - State officials
 - General public

- How we will communicate with key stakeholders
 - Briefings, presentations
 - Letters
 - Emails
 - Door hangers
 - Field meetings



Project timeline

- **Brief municipal officials:** Completed August 2016
- **Mail start of clearing letter to abutting property owners:** Completed August 2016
- **Outreach to property owners:** Began August 2016 and is on-going
- **Begin clearing:** Approx. November 2016
- **Complete clearing:** Early 2017



Contact Information



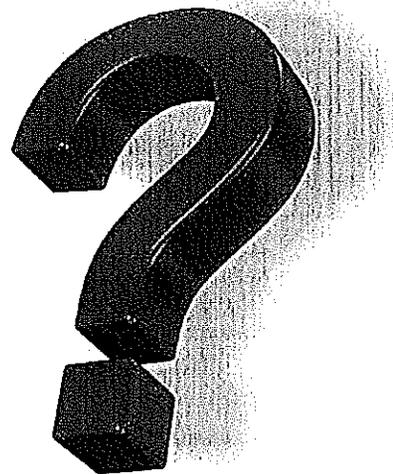
Hotline Number: 888-673-9943

Email:

CTVegMaintenance@eversource.com

Questions & Discussion

EVERSOURCE
ENERGY



8/25/16

Gail B & Richard E Barry Jr
Or Current Resident
22 MULLIGAN DR
WALLINGFORD CT 06492

Dear Neighbor,

As part of its everyday efforts to deliver reliable energy and superior customer service, Eversource is planning vegetation management work on the right-of-way on or adjacent to your property. To keep the power flowing and maintain safe system operation, we regularly remove tall-growing trees along 2,300 miles of power corridors.

This work will help maintain the reliability of the electric system in Connecticut. It is scheduled to start in September 2016 and may continue into the early months of 2017. The schedule is subject to change due to weather and other unexpected circumstances.

What You Can Expect

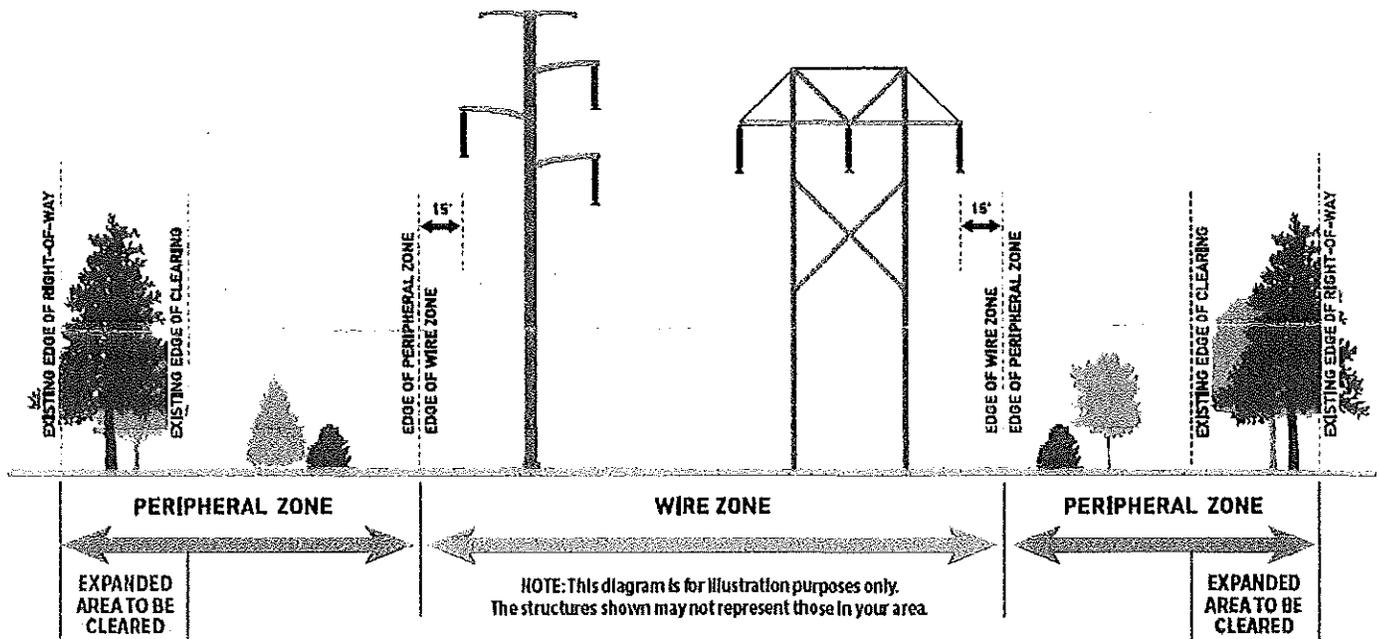
Eversource is scheduled to remove all tall-growing tree species in an expanded area of the transmission right-of-way on or adjacent to your property. These trees pose a serious safety hazard if they were to come in contact with energized equipment, and may lead to power outages that could impact thousands of electric customers. The removal of tall-growing trees in the rights-of-way will improve system performance, especially during severe weather.

Eversource is using a professional line clearance contractor to perform the work. The vegetation management work will be accomplished by using mechanical tree-harvesting equipment, manual climbing crews and tree-chipping equipment. The contractors will have identification with them to show that they are working with Eversource. Prior to work starting in your area, our Field Outreach representatives will be in touch with you to provide additional details and timing.

Understanding Clearance Areas

Eversource's contractors will be working to remove tall-growing trees within the peripheral zone of the right-of-way. The diagram on the next page illustrates a typical right-of-way condition and the expanded area that is to be cleared as part of this project.

(continued)



Keeping the Wood from Cleared Areas

If you would like to keep the wood from trees cut on your property, please call 888-673-9943. If the project does not hear from you within two weeks of this letter's date, that wood will be removed. The wood that is kept for your personal use will be stacked in log lengths (about 18 - 22 feet long) along the edge of the clearing limits. If the clearing edge is in an environmentally sensitive area, we'll discuss an alternate stacking location with you. Wood that is cut on Eversource-owned property will be removed from the site.

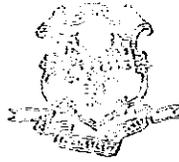
Next Steps

We are committed to keeping the lines of communication open. Please contact us with any questions you might have about the proposed work. We can be reached at 888-673-9943 or CTVegMaintenance@eversource.com. Thank you for your patience and cooperation while Eversource performs this reliability project.

Sincerely,

Anthony Johnson

Anthony Johnson
Manager – Transmission Vegetation Management
Eversource Energy



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

October 14, 2016

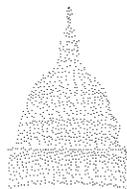
Mr. James J. Judge
President and Chief Executive Officer
Eversource Energy
107 Selden Street
Berlin, CT 06037

Dear Mr. Judge:

*Fairways @ Harbour Ridge
Harrison Greens*

The undersigned are writing this letter to bring attention to the Eversource plan to remove trees along their transmission line deeded right of way as part of the preventative maintenance program. We represent certain residents in a limited area in Wallingford, Connecticut, more specifically at property known as "Pilgrims Harbor." This area is a dense condominium complex which has a number of very unique characteristics. First, it is located on the side of a golf course and, therefore, significant open space spread across the area already exists. Second, it is located near train tracks which abut both the golf course and the condominium development complex. Third, it is very close to I-91 that runs north and south through the state of Connecticut. This area of highway slopes down and, as trucks travel southbound, the incline causes drivers to "down shift" resulting in very loud noises. The combination of these three factors, a golf course, train tracks and a major highway, we would suggest results in very unique problems that, we would argue, are not duplicated anywhere along the transmission lines. As a result of these characteristics, the elimination of trees will exacerbate the problems such as noise and unsightly obstructions. The unique layout of the area will amplify the impact of tree removal resulting in these residents being 'unable to enjoy their residence in a normal manner.' In addition, property values in this location would be significantly negatively impacted, more so than in any other area.

We understand that many people may complain to Eversource about the tree cutting, but we would suggest that a particularly unique situation requires Eversource's attention. The owners understand the obligation Eversource has to deliver electricity at all times including storm events and, therefore, have worked with your representatives to come to an agreement that is beneficial to both parties, which in large part has happened. However, there is a very small defined area near the railroad tracks which, if removed, would have a significant detrimental effect upon the neighborhood. We spoke with Eversource representatives who have indicated that their authority is limited and, that if we wanted to examine other solutions, we would have to contact your office. As a result, on behalf of the constituents we represent, we are sending you this letter.



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
UNITED STATES SENATOR

October 25, 2016

Kathleen Shea, President
Eversource - Transmission
56 Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103-2818

Dear President Shea:

I am writing to express my concern with the tree trimming proposal along transmission lines in the Wallingford area and urge Eversource to remove or trim only trees that pose an absolute danger to the integrity of the power lines.

While tree trimming is often essential to ensure power lines are secure during storms and power outages are reduced, these trees also serve to protect our environment from greenhouse gasses and provide critical natural barriers for residents in the area of these transmission lines. Too often, we have seen overly aggressive tree-trimming that has not appropriately balanced the need for security with residents' concerns.

I appreciate your holding a public hearing tonight in Wallingford to provide residents with a better understanding of the projects impact on the community and an opportunity for residents to express their concerns and perspective. I urge you to take these concerns and perspectives seriously and make every effort to accommodate the residents while advancing the legitimate need to protect the integrity of the power lines.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

October 18, 2016 10:49PM By Matthew Zabierek Record-Journal staff

WALLINGFORD — Eversource Energy will present a plan to remove hundreds of trees near transmission lines at a Town Council meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 25.

The cutting is intended to reduce storm-related power outages by removing tall trees that pose a risk to the transmission lines, Eversource spokesman Frank Poirot said. The removal of trees in Wallingford is part of a larger project in several towns.

At the Town Council meeting, Eversource officials are expected to present details of its tree removal plans. Members of the public will have a chance to comment.

The presentation was requested by Mayor William W. Dickinson Jr. after he was approached by property owners with concerns.

“It threatens our safety and serenity,” said Suzanne Goodison, who lives on Mulligan Drive.

Goodison’s property in the Fairways at Harbour Ridge is adjacent to a transmission right-of-way where the Eversource plans to clear trees. The company notified her and nearby residents in a letter sent Aug. 25.

“Eversource is scheduled to remove all tall growing tree species in an expanded area of the transmission right-of-way on or adjacent to your property,” the letter stated. The letter went on to say that removal would be done with “mechanical tree-harvesting equipment, manual climbing crews and tree-chipping equipment.”

Poirot said he could not provide details about what other areas will be impacted in Wallingford, but noted all affected property owners were sent a letter on Aug. 25.

The decision to remove the trees by Eversource is in part a response to recommendations made by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission following an October 2011 snowstorm that left millions without power in the state and region. According to a report by the commission, over half of the power outages were caused by contact with trees.

On Sept. 16, Goodison sent a letter to Eversource on behalf of the Fairways at Harbour Ridge Condo Association, which outlined concerns about the impact of tree removal in the area.

Among the concerns, is noise and light pollution. Goodison said the trees act as a barrier between the condominiums and Interstate 91, which is located about 800 feet from her property.

The trees “decrease significant highway noise from auto and truck traffic” and “dampen significant headline radiation from traffic,” Goodison wrote in the letter to Eversource. She added in the letter that removal of the trees will devalue the neighborhood’s homes by “at least 30 percent.”

Though Eversource does not own the land, the company has a “right-of-way” that defines its legal right to maintain the land beneath the lines, Poirot said.

Town Council Vice Chairman Tom Laffin said the presentation will be a “good opportunity for members of the public to express their concerns and feelings.”

Laffin added that mass removal of trees “seems drastic but let’s see what they have to say.”

The removal of trees by Eversource has raised similar concerns by property owners in other towns, including in Glastonbury, where the company appeared before the Town Council last month to make a similar presentation, Poirot said.

Goodison said she and neighbors have met with Eversource officials, as well as Dickinson and other local officials like state Rep. Mary Mushinsky and Senate Minority Leader Len Fasano about their concerns.

“It’s really a more collaborative process than people think,” Poirot said about the company’s tree removal plans. He added that the tree clearing will not start until after the company has received public feedback.

Goodison, however, said she remained skeptical of how much of an impact the tree removal will have, adding that she has not received satisfactory answers from Eversource officials.

“No one is willing to come out and say what they’re going to do,” she said. “We don’t get a straight answer.”

Project manager Anthony Johnson was not available to comment.

Mulligan Drive residents, Goodison said, support removing some of the trees in the right-of-way area, but fears that Eversource will take “extreme measures.”

Joe DiNatale, a Mulligan Drive resident and owner of The Tradition Golf Club that runs parallel to the condo community, said while he believes some tall trees in the area must be removed to protect the transmission lines, many do not.

“There are some trees that couldn’t get to the power line if they jumped,” he said.

Poirot said Eversource will select trees to remove on a “property-by-property basis.”

Mushinsky said she recently sent a letter to Eversource asking that the company take a “selective approach” when removing trees.

The issue of tree removal will be discussed at a town council meeting on Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Council chambers of Town Hall.

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Trim

FROM PAGE 1

power line and is willing to send out representatives to meet with homeowners and explain which trees they want to cut down.

Poirot said Eversource is trying to prevent a reoccurrence of what happened in late October 2011, before the merger between Northeast Utilities and Boston-based NSTAR, which created the new company, had been completed.

A snowstorm knocked trees onto transmission wires, knocking out power to "thousands and thousands" of customers in Connecticut and much of New England. Of the 74 calls for trees hitting transmission lines that NU and NSTAR repair crews responded to in this state, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, roughly 40 of them were in

Connecticut.

Poirot said the company faces fines of up to \$1 million a day if it fails to take adequate precautions to clear any trees that could hit the transmission lines.

But Goodison said she feels the company is determined to "clear-cut so much that they won't have to come back for another 50 years."

"There should be some kind of process in place where a compromise could be reached," she said. "Or some independent third party where our concerns could be heard. Now, it just seems like we have no recourse."

If you live along the right-of-way and have concerns about the company's plans, but can not attend tonight's meeting, Eversource's vegetation maintenance hot line is 1-888-673-9943.

Call Luther Turmelle at 203-680-9388.

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WALLINGFORD

Another tree-cutting plan under scrutiny

Residents question extent of work, effects on quality of life

By Luther Turmelle

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WALLINGFORD » Eversource Energy officials will meet with the Town Council tonight to address growing frustration among residents about plans for tree trimming along the route of a transmission line the company has running through the community.

The meeting, scheduled for 6:30 p.m. in Town Hall, is focused on the extent of tree cutting planned along the transmission line right-of-way. The line extends from the northeast corner of town east of Interstate 91 and continues in a southerly direction past homes located along the Traditions golf course.

Residents don't dispute the need for some trimming, just the extent of it.

"It would really reduce our quality of life," said Suzanne Goodison of Mulligan Drive.

Goodison's home is located near the northbound side of Interstate 91 and she said the trees that are scheduled to be removed serve as barrier to traffic noise.

"We wouldn't be able to spend any time outside because of the level of noise," Goodison said. "We have a realtor who estimates this could reduce the value of our property by 30 percent."

Goodison relocated from Old Saybrook to Wallingford in mid August at about the same time that Eversource began sending out notices to residents living the transmission line right-of-way, said Frank Poirot, a spokesman for the utility. The company has made subsequent attempts to contact those who live along the

TRIM » PAGE 4

Google Maps



Woodhouse Ave

