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TOWN OF GRAFTON
GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER
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PLANNING DEPARTMENT

October 26, 2016

Donna Girouard, Town Clerk
Grafton Memorial Municipal Center
30 Providence Road
Grafton, MA 01519

RE: Scenic Road Permit (SRP 2016-3) – Willard & Wesson Streets (multiple locations) Cutting and Pruning of Trees within the Town's Right of Way
National Grid (Applicant), Town of Grafton (Owner)

Dear Mrs. Girouard:

Pursuant to Article 24 of the General Bylaws of the Town of Grafton, The Scenic Road Regulations, the Planning Board held a public hearing on Monday, October 24, 2016 at the Grafton Municipal Center on a request by National Grid to remove, and/ or trim trees within the right of way of designated Scenic Roads in the Town. The hearing was held in conjunction with the Tree Warden. The Application was received on October 6, 2016. Notice of the public hearing was advertised in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette on October 8 and October 15, 2016. Abutters were notified via First Class Mail. The Planning Board considered the Application at a properly posted meeting of said Board. At the public hearing, all those wishing to speak to the petition were heard. Following public input the hearing was closed on October 24, 2016. Planning Board members present were: Michael Scully, Chairman; Robert Hassinger, Vice Chairman; David Robbins, Clerk; Members Tracy Lovvorn and Linda Hassinger; and Associate Member Sharon Carroll-Tidman (not voting). Present for the hearing were representatives from National Grid – Donald Crocker, Certified Arborist and Patrick Smith, Manager of the Northeast Hazard Tree Mitigation Program. Also present were David Crouse, Town of Grafton Tree Warden; Joseph Laydon, Town Planner and Ann Morgan, Assistant Town Planner.

The Board, the Applicant and the Tree Warden had an extensive conversation about the number of trees to be trimmed (9) or cut (23). It was noted that a notice of the public hearing was posted on each of the trees. Issues discussed included the need to balance public safety, reducing the potential for outages, the process by which each tree was evaluated, the impacts to the abutters of each location and the overall impacts to the Scenic Roads on which these trees are located. It was noted that Mr. Crocker, Mr. Crouse and Mr. Laydon had spent time in the field to confirm the assessment. Mr. Crocker noted that there was one adjustment to the list submitted which originally indicated thirty trees but is in fact thirty two. He further presented additional information to the Board providing more detail about each of the thirty two trees (see attached). Mr. Crouse and Mr. Laydon both noted that he was in agreement with the assessment. Some discussion centered around the fact that the number of trees to be removed along a 1.5 mile stretch of roadway made it difficult for some Board members to conduct their own field work. Mr. Smith noted that the work to remove / trim the trees identified in the application would cost approximately \$35,000 and that crews would be available to complete the work in Grafton starting in mid-November. Mr. Crouse noted that National Grid would be assuming financial responsibility. Delays in processing the Scenic Road Permit

*Notice of Decision – Grafton Town Clerk – October 26, 2016
Decision of the Grafton Planning Board
Scenic Road Permit (SRP 2016-3) – Willard & Wesson Streets
Cutting / Trimming Trees within the Town's Right of Way – Multiple Locations
National Grid (Applicant) / Town of Grafton (Owner)*

would result in the Town having to assume that cost as National Grid would no longer be in the area to complete the work which needs to be done before the winter storm season begins. He further noted that this cost is not built into the Town's budget at this time. And as the assessment is complete and formal notification has been made, the Town would be solely responsible for cutting and trimming as well as any accidents or problems that arose due to damage caused to Town and private property. The Board raised concerns regarding the timing of the application and the lack of definitive information of each tree as presented at the public hearing. It was noted that future applications will require more information and time in order to prevent the current scenario of forcing the Board to make a decision in a rushed manner. Several Board members noted that the assessment conducted by the Town's staff and the Tree Warden would be sufficient to move forward.

Taking all factors into consideration the Board voted 4-1 (Lovvorn – AYE; R. Hassinger – NAY; Scully – AYE; Robbins – AYE; L. Hassinger – AYE) to GRANT the Applicant's request as presented in the Application and annotated at the Public Hearing.

Please note that this letter shall serve as the Board's DECISION on this matter and that a NOTICE of DECISION will be sent to all parties including those identified on the Certified Abutters list submitted with the Application (see attached). Please contact our office if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Joseph Laydon, Town Planner

cc: National Grid – Applicant
Donald Crocker, National Grid Certified Arborist
David Crouse, Town of Grafton Tree Warden
Timothy McInerney, Town Administrator

Enclosed:

- Certified Abutters List, dated October 14, 2016; 2 pages.
- Spreadsheet, Town of Grafton (Town-owned Trees on Scenic Roads), prepared by National Grid; dated October 13, 2016; submitted at the Grafton Planning Board Public Hearing on October 24, 2016; 2 pages.
- Presentation; Town of Grafton NE Hazard Tree Mitigation Program, Scenic Road Hazard Tree Removal List, Circuit #304W1; submitted at the Grafton Planning Board Public Hearing on October 24, 2016; 33 pages.