

Chino Hills opens purse to fight Edison

By Marianne Napoles

Residents cheered when the Chino Hills City Council voted 3-0 to engage in a potentially costly battle to oppose a power line project that would traverse the city.

The council will spend up to \$600,000 from General Fund reserves on consultants and lawyers to oppose Southern California Edison's plan to install 500 kV transmission lines from the 71 Freeway to the L.A. County line.

Mayor Gwen Norton-Perry and Councilman Peter Rogers left during the discussion on the advice of city attorney Mark Hensley, who informed them of a potential conflict of interest because they live near the power lines.

The Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project will connect wind farms in Kern County to southern California and require the upgrade of transmission lines and substations in 23 cities in Kern, San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties.

In Chino Hills, Edison holds an easement that stretches from the 71 Freeway to the Los Angeles County line. It con-

tains 220kV lines that have not been activated since the 1970s.

The lattice towers would be replaced by 500kV tubular steel poles. Twelve poles and 10 lattice towers are planned for Chino Hills.

Current towers are 98 to 140 feet tall. New towers will be 58 feet to 198 feet tall.

Edison officials said the state has mandated that at least 20 percent of the electricity SCE delivers to customers must be produced by renewable resources by 2010.

Opponents are concerned about health impacts, noise, and aesthetics. The residents have formed a committee called CARE (Citizens for Alternate Routing of Electricity).

At the meeting, Jeanette Short said the city should unite in its opposition of power lines through residential areas. The lines should be re-routed through non-residential neighborhoods, she said.

Scott Guion cited an Edison report that stated additional research is necessary on electric and magnetic fields as a possible human carcinogen. He said a pharmaceutical company would not be allowed to pro-

duce a drug under the same circumstances. "If this project goes through, I'm going to feel like a lab rat," he said. The power pole is less than 60 feet from his home, he said.

Edison spokesman Jerry Silva said an alternative route through existing power lines at the Chino Hills State Park will be submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Right-of-way would have to be secured, he said.

Councilman Bill Kruger suggested the city might have a better chance if it supported the alternative route rather than just opposing the route.

Councilman Ed Graham asked if the alternate route would just move the problem elsewhere. He said he's very interested in finding out more about that route.

The Chino Hills State Park is also interested in finding out more about the alternative route. "We were not aware of this project," said parks super-

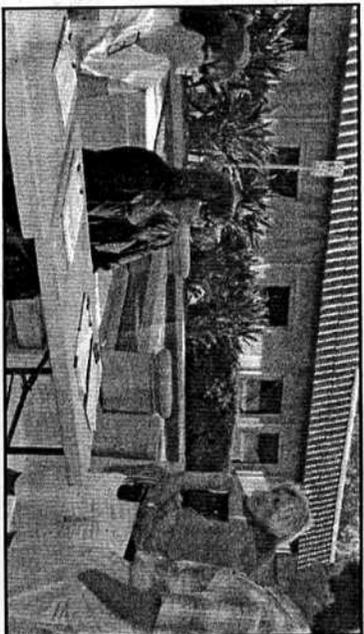
intendent Kathy Weatherman the day after the council meeting. "We're somewhat surprised that we have not been notified."

Ms. Weatherman said the department will need to review the proposal before it can comment.

Chino Hills resident Craig Javid said he is concerned that the city is authorizing a large expenditure on consultants and lawyers when a public process is available through the CPUC. He said the city should work with Edison to spend the least amount of money.

Chino has received no resident complaints and the city has taken no action against Edison's plans, said spokeswoman Michelle Van Der Linden.

"Fortunately for us, it's a different story because their project is not going to run through a residential section in our city, which it sounds like it's going to in Chino Hills," Ms. Van Der



Champion photo by Marianne Napoles
Joanne Genis (left) and Jeanette Short collect signatures for a petition opposing the power lines through Chino Hills. They discuss the proposal with Craig and Tina Javid of Chino Hills before Tuesday's city council meeting.

Linden said.

Nine lattice towers and 16 steel power poles are proposed for installation in the city of Chino. The project will span 4.3 miles from Euclid Avenue to the 71 Freeway. Edison officials said at a recent Diamond Bar informa-

tional meeting that no extra right-of-way would be needed in Chino. A half-mile-long, 150-foot-wide stretch of right-of-way would need to be acquired in Ontario, but that land is vacant, they said.