

Thirty-four Sugar Hill residents attended the Broadband public hearing on April 25th. Carol Miller, Director of Broadband Initiatives for the National Collaborative for Digital Equity introduced herself and explained that she is hired as a consultant for New Hampshire towns to help prepare for Broadband implementation and expansion. She described Broadband as a designated speed of data delivery set by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Adequate speed is defined as 25 Mbps (Megabits per second) download and 3 Mbps upload. She stated that a family of two usually requires 30 Mbps for a good connection. After collecting data from residents and internet service providers, she has determined that large areas of Sugar Hill are not adequately served. This will help qualify for federal funding to build out Broadband infrastructure with fiber technology.

Slides and maps of her presentation will be posted on the Sugar Hill website.

A lively question and answer period followed Ms. Miller's presentation. Questions included:

- Does Eversource currently run fiber for Broadband? - No.
- What is the Grafton County Broadband Commission doing? - bringing fiber to all the town halls, creating a backbone in the county, assisting with technology and build-out designs.
- Why are some utility wires buried? - usually because the developer chooses this route.
- What would be the cost of installing fiber optic cable in Sugar Hill? - based on our 50 miles of road \$1.5 million or \$30 thousand per mile.
- Are there deadlines to apply for federal funding? - Currently funding distribution is being discussed in the state legislature, but monies will be available in phases over the next couple of years.

Michael and Suzanne Morley, as well as their neighbors on Route 117, voiced concerns about higher utility poles and more wires that will interfere with viewsheds in town. They shared pictures of Hendrix spacer cables on new poles that are up to 70 feet high. Most poles are only 35 to 40 feet high. They asked what would be the impact of additional fiber optic cable and potentially thicker cable on views? Are taller poles going to be running up all of Route 117? Ms. Miller did not think so, but the town should follow up with Eversource.

This was the first of several meetings that the Sugar Hill Broadband Committee (Doug Evelyn, Jordan Applewhite, Margo Connors, Nancy Martland, Steve Naboicheck, Tim Egan and Jason Tors) will host. Follow up meetings will focus on our options and decision making for Broadband including funding strategies, working with vendors, technical planning and more.

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