

UDPC Abandoned Lines Subcommittee Meeting

07/14/2026

1:00PM

Attendees: Kevin Campbell, Jason Broyles, John Kelly, Seamus Mulligan, Scott Mergler, Lori Wade, Jimmy Stewart, Justin Freudeman, Brian Hickman, Deron Large, Dave Coniglio, Gregory Vergamini, Elliot Baum, Don Huck, Deborah Harris, Greg First, Melvin Henson, Marc Armstrong, Precious Lewis Tullis, Christopher Domonkos, Mitch Croy, Garry Lee, Jim Collins, Russell Johnson, Wendi Snyder, Blake Ross, Deron Large, Collins Cranmer, Rob Brundrett,

Seamus Mulligan opened the meeting at 1:02pm.

Seamus Mulligan- Definitions are in here just to give us an idea but will be pulled out before we proceed with this. Seamus reviewed proposed language from last meeting. The group consensus was we were ok with A, any additional comments. None. Group was also ok with B, any additional discussion for B? None. Moving onto C, that information will vary based on the type of facility, may need to tweak it depending on what other utilities can provide. Any other discussion.

Don Huck- Any of the stuff in C, under color and material if known, are there other things that should say if known?

Seamus Mulligan- yes, I agree, and I had a note on that as well.

Don Huck- Yes, don't always know all that information.

Seamus Mulligan- Have lines in the field from the early 1920's, don't have measurements from back of curb or centerline. Think we need to put in to the extent that this information is available.

Don Huck- Then it should apply to everything under it as well if it is in the preamble.

Jason Broyles- Will wordsmith this and get it sent out to everyone.

Scott Mergler- I hesitate calling something an abandoned line, from the AT&T perspective, if it is called abandoned, and I am doing a project, what stops them if it's a 900 pair copper, and they cut it out and turn it in for scrap because it is an abandoned line. That is a problem

that I am looking at from our end. If we call it abandoned, I don't have a leg to stand on. Not trying to cause a headache but just want to have a conversation. Copper theft is up right now.

Seamus Mulligan- Concerned about the line being taken out and now a contractor would look for a line that isn't there anymore?

Scott Mergler- If I run a new fiber, and an old 900 pair copper line, it gets cut off, so there is no way to locate it, but also, if it is labeled as abandoned, someone could dig it up and take it for scrap.

Seamus Mulligan- Inactive, unneeded. Just don't like the term abandoned? Does AT&T plan to do anything with that line.

Scott Mergler- I don't know, but if it is labeled abandoned, I am worried about theft. If they go to cut the copper, they also tend to cut the fiber as well.

Seamus Mulligan- Do have a definition for an idle facility. Idle facilities should still be located by the facility owner.

Scott Mergler- It's a catch 22, these are the conversations I'd rather have now than go through the coalition and get shot down later.

Jason Broyles- So what is the underlying concern? Is it the risk of damaging existing facilities or removing that section to take it to scrap.

Scott Mergler- Yes taking it to scrap, and it is on the rise. 6,000 ft project should be called into AT&T for them to come get it.

Seamus Mulligan- Once it is abandoned, it is abandoned in the ground.

Dave Coniglio- Piggyback on what Scott was saying, that section of the abandoned line, as a contractor, I won't know if it is abandoned, would it make sense that reference back to the definitions, report to 811 on the abandoned line per the above reference definition, and this is the information that needs collected. As a contractor, I don't know if it is abandoned or not.

Seamus Mulligan- We have lines that are idle, we cap them and put them under air pressure, so they know if it gets hit. Still mark those but call it an idle facility.

Dave Coniglio- Just referring back to if you find a facility, you are reporting that information per the definitions of active, pending, idle, abandoned. As a contractor I would assume it is a live line in the instance of a pipe with air pressure.

Seamus Mulligan- Not sure if they need marked as idle, but if so that line would still have to be marked. Don't have a solution to that yet will have to ponder.

Lori Wade- Idle facility that is not abandoned is still going to be located correct?

Seamus Mulligan- anything but an abandoned line will still be marked.

Lori Wade- Could a facility owner not report a line as abandoned if there is concern about theft or it could cause harm to someone or the community?

Scott Mergler- I am supportive of this initiative, I put one mark down for my fiber, then they come across a line and don't know who it belongs to, and what type of line, then the next scoop the active line gets taken out. My scare just goes down to copper theft. People opening manholes and cutting out large batches of copper. Someone may call in tickets and then start trying to take out abandoned copper lines in the area of their request. AT&T may not want to label their stuff as abandoned, so that way people don't just start mining their copper facilities.

Seamus Mulligan- Could call them out of service lines, but comes back to are they going to be located or not? Will they get information on the abandoned lines layer when they call in a ticket?

Scott Mergler- It gets cut off at the pedestals, so there is no way to locate them. Have an inactive line that can't be located, so put an RIP 1 so you know to look for 2 lines in there.

Seamus Mulligan- Could we address that with an onsite meeting instead of the information just being given in the abandoned facilities database.

Lori Wade- I like Seamus's idea if you don't want to report a line as abandoned.

Seamus Mulligan- AT&T would mark the area in a way that it is known there is something there, and a notification would go to the excavator that an on-site meeting is needed. Excavators want as much information as they can when they dig so they know what to look for. I think that would suffice to trigger an on-site meeting.

Scott Mergler- I agree, and we are an excavator as well.

Lori Wade- When I am on these calls, I am not here to represent OHIO811, just as an industry expert based on years of experience and am just representing myself.

Deron Large- We overbuild so much, and so do others, what if AT&T abandons a line, and you think you cut their line, and it ends up being one of ours. We are concerned about saying it is abandoned as well. We also have lines in duct systems, people want to use those as well when we say we have an abandoned line in there. Other states have more of

an issue with it than there is in Ohio. Is some concern, I do like to RIP marking, but to say it is abandoned is concerning to upper management at Alta Fiber.

Seamus Mulligan- You can keep it idle and mark it.

Scott Mergler- May have 3 conduits in a duct bank leased to someone else. Also with direct bury, people don't know who's lines they are cutting when it comes to communication lines.

Seamus Mulligan- Will need to revisit this and come back to the next meeting with some solutions.

Jason Broyles- Playing devils advocate, full industry impact. Conversations around having a meeting, it has to be a timely meeting. Pushback already from the industry, already some complaints about how long it takes for these meetings to happen. Excavators aren't going to want to wait a long time for the utility to be available, so need to determine how long we have for the meeting to take place.

Seamus Mulligan- Moving back to line-item D, any conversation around this line item? None. Moving to line-item E.

Deron Large- This is one that we will have to work through. Feasible will be different for each utility. Lead lines for example. Think that it is too vague. We would argue that it isn't feasible, so doesn't really have any teeth.

Seamus Mulligan- I agree, and this is a huge cost with little gain. A 1-inch plastic line that could be documented as abandoned, and cut out of the way quickly. I have heartburn with this as well and don't feel the gas industry can move forward with this as written.

Dave Coniglio- To expand on that too, from the construction side, we are already removing those at our cost (lines that are being abandoned) That cost is going to someone other than the utility company. There has to be some kind of middle ground we can come to, it is a big deal from a contractor standpoint, and we end up having to remove those at our expense, and it's an unforeseen expense too since we don't know about it until the job is getting ready to start.

Gregory Vergamini- From ODOT we agree with Dave on that as well.

Seamus Mulligan- If I install a new line on the right side of the road, and the old line is on the left side of the road, the delays, and costs to remove that line are big. It's a big lift for something that may never be in conflict. Inside city limits, that may be something we could talk about. Reviewed alternative language listed in (F). Need help trying to figure out what "appropriate actions" would be.

Dave Coniglio- Going back to what we talked about before moving on to F. to say it doesn't or won't ever pose a risk, ever is a long time. If it is out in the middle of the field, that may be different, but a housing development may get built, and not 20 years later than line is a problem. Now that contractor has to deal with removing that line by the contractor developing that land. It's an unforeseen cost since they wouldn't know it is there before they go to work. F as an alternative, we definitely have to have some conversation around that. Has to be some middle ground on removing lines.

Seamus Mulligan- What other alternatives are out there?

Dave Coniglio- I think what you proposed in F is on the right track, need to digest it some too. Need to come up with what is considered congested, has different meaning to different parts of the industry.

Seamus Mulligan- If I have holes open, I have no problem cutting out what is no longer needed. I also have to have my old lines, and new lines active at the same time. Lines under pavement in downtown Columbus, am I expected to shut the road down, dig up old lines, and remove them from road right of way?

Dave Coniglio- I don't think that is what the intent is, I think you are on the right track though. If a contractor uncovers an abandoned line during a project, and the contractor removes it, who is going to pay that cost to remove them? Is it the city, utility, ODOT? I think F is definitely worth some discussion.

Seamus Mulligan- I agree, we need to find common ground. If someone digs in my area and uncovers a line, we will send someone out to verify if it is ours, and we will cut the line out of the way after verifying that the line is abandoned. I think that counts as appropriate action.

Dave Coniglio- I agree, some don't do that though and it leaves it up to the contractor to verify if the line is abandoned.

Deron Large- We have to consider public works as opposed to private works. I agree Dave, someone is paying to move this stuff. But that is also public vs private. Phone companies have some challenges from an environmental aspect, and it's too expensive and unsafe. Then we just wouldn't label it as abandoned and that's going against what we are trying to do. We have an outcome we are driving towards and need to figure out how to get there. If we have to go into a major city and tear up a road to pull something out, it doesn't make sense financially and environmentally. We are going to continue to work with this, but I do think we need to figure out what the expectations are and need to talk about it and work through it.

Seamus Mulligan- We are pretty well aligned A-D, E is going to require a lot more discussion for sure. Any input from the governmental's on here? Haven't heard from electric either.

Deborah Harris- No comments at this time, a little out of my wheelhouse. Will bring it up to leadership and discuss. Not sure where they would stand on this, but will discuss and bring it back on the next meeting.

Seamus Mulligan- The Co-ops, they are rural, 75% of their facilities are overhead, so not a huge concern for them. Some of this small rural stuff may never be exposed again, and it is a heavy lift to dig it up and abandon it.

Scott Mergler- I am not a professional locator but have been in this field for 30 plus years, quite often, locating power lines, will bleed off onto cable and telecom lines. If a line gets mismarked and say there is an abandoned power line in the area, someone comes out to cut the lines out of the way and get killed. I'm not against any of this, I just want to make sure it is right.

Seamus Mulligan- Agreed and concerned that the information could be misconstrued. We overlap with Columbia Gas, could say it's not ours or we abandon a 2" line, and Columbia has a live 2" line.

Scott Mergler- Cut an old copper that is dead, no big deal, but I have a fiber line that if it gets hit, it takes out the whole town of Washington Court House. If you cut an electric line thinking it's dead and it's not, that leads to big issues.

Seamus Mulligan- Do we need to all come back to the table with a better definition on E o meet in the middle? Would like to hear what others are thinking.

Jason Broyles- Specific to Greg Vergamini, does any of this line up or touch base with anything ODOT is working on with abandoned line language, and lines not getting moved in a timely manner? Does ODOT have anything that would work with this.

Gregory Vegamini- The relocation of utility lines in ODOT right of way is very important, if it doesn't happen there is cost and delays. Could talk to our team to see if we have any language on abandoned lines as well. We will be in touch as we move forward.

Wedni Snyder- For ODOT with abandoned lines, we have a lot of abandoned lines, and when we encounter them on projects, it is getting harder to get someone out, or the claim the line. If we need a line tapped, it is a full stop for our crews and waiting for verification. Feel some utilities are uncooperative to help us verify whether the line is abandoned or not. Our contractors uncover something that isn't there, and we can't tell who it is. In favor of some of the changes we are making to keep people accountable and shed some light on the abandoned lines. I appreciate the groups that are working to make this better.

Seamus Mulligan- Utilities have heard that, and we think it is the right thing to do in A-D. Utilities need to help assist the excavators when these lines are uncovered. Don't want to see the work in A-D go to the way side because we can't agree on E.

Jason Broyles- Heard from different utility groups, with ODOT having their own fiber and power, what does ODOT do internally with their own facilities in their own right of way, it could be beneficial for this group.

Wendi Snyder- My group deals with active lines and relocations on projects, so I can't speak to that. I can recall sitting in a meeting, we weren't always good about having our stuff in the 811 system. We have worked to improve that and get our facilities mapped. I can ask what our policies and procedures are and get back to you.

Jason Broyles- Just curious with ODOT being their own utility entity. Just looking to see some of your practices and policies to see if any of that would help.

Wendi Snyder- We do own a lot, but we do lease stuff as well. I'm not sure that we have some sophisticated process, I don't know that we own as much utilities as people believe.

Seamus Mulligan- Does anyone have any final thoughts? Would like everyone to think about E, come with some alternatives that everyone can live with. A-D we are good, just need to work through E.

Lori Wade- An excavator finding a facility identified an abandoned and having a similar line close by that is not abandoned. Should they still call the utility owner and have them respond even it is labeled as abandoned? Especially if that line needs to be removed, it needs to be verified.

Seamus Mulligan- I agree and would encourage folks to call and get that information verified. I would think that would fall back to the utility making appropriate actions to help the excavator. Thank you for everyone's time and thoughts today. Think we are getting closer. Jason will be in touch with our next scheduled meeting.

Jason Broyles- October 13th from 1-2 pm is our next meeting.

Seamus Mulligan- Thank you all for your time.

Meeting adjourned at 2:02pm

DRAFT