



six feet (6') of space between individuals.”<sup>1</sup> Phase 1 is to be reevaluated on May 31, 2020, to determine if the State of Missouri is prepared to move on to Phase 2.

3. Due to the current guidance in effect, as well as the continuing uncertainty and fluid nature of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the Parties have agreed that the possibility of holding an in-person local public hearing on or after June 1, 2020, is unclear at this time.

4. Following discussions amongst the Parties, two options have been identified as alternatives to an in-person local public hearing:

- a. An online, virtual, local public hearing, and/or
- b. Continue to encourage the filing of public comments, and Staff will compile those comments into a document to be filed in the case file.

#### **A. VIRTUAL LOCAL PUBLIC HEARING**

5. To best accommodate the maximum number of customers possible, the Commission could order a local public hearing be held in a virtual forum. As the COVID-19 crisis has progressed, many Missourians across the state have become accustomed to participating in doctor’s appointment, work meetings, local government gatherings, and even the teaching of their children in various virtual settings. If a local public hearing by virtual forum is ordered, the Parties recommend that the Commission host the hearing utilizing virtual meeting platform, such as Zoom.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Show Me Strong” Economic Reopening Plan, Phase 1, <https://governor.mo.gov/sites/gov/files/media/pdf/2020/04/Economic-Reopening-Phase-1.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Certain subscriptions for Zoom have the ability to host upwards of 1,000 participants at a time, thus maximizing the number of customers who could participate in the virtual local public hearing. However, increasing the number of participants to 1,000 will require the Commission purchasing an upgraded Zoom package, but it is the recommendation of the Parties that the Commission do so to maximize participation. The cost of such an upgrade, under the Commission’s current Zoom plan, would be \$109.99/month.

6. In order to help customers attend the virtual local public hearing, the notice of local public hearing could include an email address for customers to contact in order to indicate if they would like to provide testimony to the Commission, and receive an invite to the virtual local public hearing. If any of the Parties would like to include a handout describing their role and position in this matter that may be included with the notification as well. The hand-outs may also be electronically attached to the virtual public hearing invites.

7. Further, in lieu of a traditional live Q&A session, customers could submit questions directly to representatives of Elm Hills, Staff, and OPC, prior to the virtual local public hearing. The contact information for these representatives would be included in the notice for local public hearing sent to customers.

8. OPC/Staff propose the following dates and times for the virtual local public hearing: any date after June 10, with the exception of June 25 due to previously scheduled Commission business.

9. The Parties further realize that it would be impossible to potentially accommodate all of Elm Hills' customers in one virtual local public hearing. Holding multiple virtual local public hearings on each of the dates proposed may help to accommodate as many customers as possible.

**B. CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE THE SUBMISSION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS, AND ORDER STAFF TO FILE THE COMMENTS AS A DOCUMENT TO BE FILED IN THE CASE FILE**

10. The Parties have continued to encourage customers to submit public comments in this case. As of the date of this filing, 37 comments have been received by Staff through EFIS.

11. The Commission could order Staff to compile the submitted comments into a single document for filing in the case file by June 30.

**WHEREFORE**, Staff prays, on behalf of itself, Elm Hills, and OPC, that the Commission accept the parties' status report, and grant any such other and further relief as is just under the circumstances.

Respectfully Submitted,

**/s/ Travis J. Pringle**

Travis J. Pringle

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### **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing have been mailed, hand delivered, transmitted by facsimile or electronically mailed to all parties and/or their counsel of record this 15th day of May, 2020.

**/s/ Travis J. Pringle**