

Decision No. 88396 JAN 24 1978

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of FRED JOHANNESSEN)
 for a variance to General Order)
 No. 103 with regard to minimum)
 water fire flow for a 4-unit)
 apartment.)

Application No. 57524
 (Filed August 19, 1977)

Fred Johannessen, for himself, applicant.
E. M. Lill, for the Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

In this application Fred Johannessen seeks an order for a variance from General Order No. 103 (G.O. 103) with regard to minimum water fire flow for a four-unit apartment building so that he can obtain water service from Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E).

Applicant seeks a 50-foot main extension to serve his building. PG&E has advised applicant that the existing system in the area specified has a present water delivery capability of approximately 1,000 gallons per minute (gpm), whereas G.O. 103 requires a 2,000 gpm fire flow capability to serve the proposed four-plex. PG&E further advised applicant that in order to provide the 50-foot extension, it would be necessary to install approximately 1,300 feet of 10-inch main to reinforce the existing distribution main at an estimated cost of \$24,000 which is to be borne by the developer to obtain such fire flow. These figures were subsequently changed to 2,080 feet of main at a cost of \$45,000.

Mr. Johannessen testified that such cost would be economically prohibitive for the small building project. He obtained a letter from City Fire Commissioner Frank Bozza stating that the city of Colfax feels that the present water supply is adequate to fight fires in the city.

PG&E advised Mr. Johannessen it would not seek a variance from G.O. 103 since it considered such action not to be in the best interest of its customers. This placed Mr. Johannessen in a position where he had to make the request directly with the Public Commission. The hearing in this matter was held before Administrative Law Judge Tomita on November 22, 1977, in Colfax.

Assistant utilities engineer Richard St. John introduced a report in this proceeding and recommended that a variance from G.O. 103 be granted. He testified that there were only two possible buildable lots on the proposed extension and that the cost of upgrading the distribution system is excessive for the foreseen use.

Findings

1. Fire flow at the proposed building site is approximately 1,000 gpm and does not meet the requirements of Commission G.O. 103 of 2,000 gpm.
2. Possible future construction appears to be limited to the two adjoining lots on the proposed extension.
3. The City Fire Commissioner has approved the available fire flow.
4. Under current regulations, Mr. Johannessen would be required to pay for the cost of upgrading approximately 2,080 feet of large diameter main at an estimated cost of \$45,000 to secure a 50-foot extension for water service.
5. Charging the developer \$45,000 to obtain water service to a four-plex would make such project economically prohibitive.

Conclusion

The Commission concludes that because of the limited development possibilities beyond the main extension requested by Mr. Johannessen and the excessive cost of upgrading the distribution system to meet G.O. 103 fire flow standards, a variance should be granted permitting PG&E to provide service to applicant without upgrading to secure G.O. 103 fire flow requirements.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is granted a variance from the provisions of General Order No. 103 to serve a four-plex to be built by Fred Johannessen on Lot 4, Colfax Street, city of Colfax, such that only the approximate 50 feet of main extension shall be sized to accommodate a 2,000 gpm fire flow. PG&E shall serve the property through its existing distribution system.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 24th day of JANUARY, 1978.

Robert Bateman
President

William J. Moore Jr.

Virginia L. Sturgeon

Clayton D. Howell

Clare T. Smith
Commissioners