

**Planning Board
Meeting Minutes of June 24, 2014**

Present: Michael Fitzgerald, Chair (MF)
Judy Haupt (JH)
Ken Miller (KM)
Lauren Preston-Wells (LPW)
Alan Rice (AR)

Guest Consultant: Bruce Beliveau, Beliveau Communications & Consulting (BB)

Public Attendance: Jude Elbaum
Christopher Gray
Arnold Jones
Dana Romer
Helene Uprichard

The meeting is called to order at 7:36pm.

1. Board reviews the 6-4-14 meeting minutes. JH moves to accept, as amended. KM seconds. All vote in favor.
2. Board reviews the cell tower special permit application for 1450 Spruce Corner Road with Bruce Beliveau.
 - a. MF iterates the three items desired by the Board from the consultant: 1) to verify the coverage maps submitted by the applicant; 2) to educate the Board on radio frequency/cell coverage, so Board members can vote with confidence; 3) to create sample coverage maps for the Town, to assist with planning.
 - b. Since the hearing on June 12 the applicant has informed the Board that more maps will be provided. MF discusses having the applicant (Industrial Communications) pay for the numerous maps.
 - c. BB looks over the submittals from the applicant, as well as the Town Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP). He recommends that towers should perhaps not be sited in critical areas shown in the Plan. He mentions a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) and Section 106 of the NHPA (National Historic Preservation Act) study being conducted, as required, by EBI Consulting, Inc., for the Robertson property on Conway Road in south Ashfield. This study should be required as well for this cell tower special permit application.
 - d. BB refers to the whip antenna shown in the drawings of the plan submittals (5' height). With this antenna on the top of the tower the FCC would consider the tower height to be 155 feet (as opposed to 150 feet). JH notes that Industrial Tower & Wireless (ITW) said at the public hearing on June 12 that the tower height could be extended in height, if planned ahead. BB notes that carrier antennas are typically ten feet apart – center to center – and that the antennas are typically 5 feet in length.
 - e. LPW asks question about extent of cell coverage. BB: Depends on a number of factors, including how much power, type of antenna, type of array, type of transmission. Some antennas have lots of gain, some less so. A down-tilt of transmission can be created to fill in valleys and to overcome deficiencies of cell phone signal (which is minimal).

- f. JH asks if the emergency services antennas for Ashfield that Plainfield has on its tower be moved to a tower such as this. BB: Emergency radio coverage is difficult for the terrain in Ashfield; also, there is an agreement in place between Plainfield and the state police that is beneficial, cost-wise.
- g. Arnold Jones asks if there is a more favorable location in Town for a tower. MF: the Board is looking at the possibilities. Other locations discussed include the Town barn site, where the elevation is about 1,500 feet.
- h. LPW asks about the parameters of coverage. BB: refers to Section 5, Page 3, of the applicant's submittal. There is different amount of coverage between PCS (personal communications services) and cellular – typically starting about 1,100 megahertz for PCS, about 800-900 megahertz for cellular. It looks like the proposed coverage will cover about a quarter of the Town. The lower frequency travels farther; the higher frequency operates on a line-of-sight effectiveness. LPW asks what the definition is of 'reliable coverage.' BB: One bar.
- i. Helene Uprichard states she lives 1,500 feet away from the proposed tower site and asks if the Board can request the tower be moved further away from adjacent homes in the area. MF: Yes, there is that possibility. Uprichard then asks Bruce if he would live next to a tower. BB: Yes.
- j. AR asks why the coverage maps submitted show coverage for PCS when cellular is the issue. BB: The applicant should provide separate coverage maps for both PCS and cellular. Also, the Board should be able to get coverage maps of existing towers in adjacent towns.
- k. KM asks what the normal procedure is for a consultant such as Bruce in this situation. BB: Normal consulting work for this type of application runs about \$5,000, but it can be more if there are additional requests, clarifications, or alterations in agreement language. BB will need a copy of all materials submitted. He will review and provide a list of questions to the Board that it should be asking the applicant.
- l. Jude Elbaum asks about coverage overlap and if it is needed. She owns an iPhone and gets coverage right now at her home.
- m. Arnold Jones asks if emergency services are different from cell services, and can the Board require emergency services communications be allowed on this tower. BB: The Board should make this a stipulation. MF: Some services are cellular, some are other types (such as microwave). The Board will stipulate that the Town has the right to locate emergency services on this tower. BB: The FCC has forced collocation, to reduce the number of towers.
- n. List of submittal materials for Bruce to receive is discussed: 1) submittal document; 2) full set of plans and maps; 3) all relative OSRP maps. MF: will request the applicant FedEx materials to Bruce ASAP.
- o. Discussion about where to show sample coverage in Town. Chris Gray suggests along the existing transmission lines. It is decided to have Bruce provide coordinates for the DPW site on Rte. 112, the site on Robertson's property in South Ashfield and the south end of Ridge Hill, along the power lines.
- p. BB: Talks about camouflage systems (pole is designed to look like a tree, for example). LPW asks question about enhancer systems (such as on top of existing telephone poles). BB: Has not seen evidence of such a system in widespread use.
- q. JH asks about the NEPA study again. BB: suggests the full NEPA study be requested. This study is standard for a project such as this; in his opinion the applicant can not claim hardship for this requirement.
- r. AR moves to have Bruce be hired as consultant for the Board. JH seconds. All vote in favor.

- s. Jude Elbaum mentions a documentary on cell towers/antennas will be showing at Belding Memorial Library June 25th, 7:00pm.
 - t. Helene Uprichard states that she lives right next to where tower is to be installed. Landowner makes money, developer makes money, and she has no say. MF reminds her of federal law regarding cell towers and that the Board is trying to do what is necessary for the best interest of her and the Town.
 - u. Discussion around when the State timeline for the application began, to have a decision rendered (150 days from submittal). It is clarified that the clock started on June 12 (first public hearing) when the application submittal was complete.
 - v. Next hearing date is discussed: July 16, 7:30pm, at Town Hall. Board to meet that night at 7:00pm (and will meet next on July 2nd).
3. Old business. AR reminds the Board that it is in need of a new scribe and that the Board should discuss rate of pay.
 4. Board reviews meeting minutes of June 4, 2014. KM moves to accept, as amended. AR seconds. All vote in favor.

Meeting adjourns at 10:12pm.
Respectfully submitted,
Alan Rice, Clerk