

Planning Board

October 1, 2014

Meeting and Public Hearing, Ashfield Town Hall

Present:

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

John Champ (JC) and Kevin Delaney (KD) from Industrial Tower and Wirelless, LLC

Bruce Beliveau (BB), of Beliveau Communications & Consulting

Meeting Called to order by Chair MF @ 7: 15 P.M.

-AR acknowledges and thanks Lynn Taylor for taking over scribe duties at hearings such as this one, while the Board continues to search for a scribe.

Minutes of 9/17/2014: AR makes a motion to accept the minutes of 9/17/2014 as amended, seconded by KM. VOTE: 5-0-0

Clarification of 9/3/2014 minutes: they were accepted as amended, passing by a unanimous vote.

-AR makes a motion to open the Public Hearing regarding cell Tower at 1450 Spruce Corner Rd. @ 7:31 P.M., second by LPW.

Public Hearing was continued at 7:31 P.M.

-MF Board received from KD a copy of NEPA filing, which is not complete at this time KD advises they are just waiting for the State to sign off on the study. I hope that that will happen in the next week. MF advises the study shows no direct visual effects and no effect on Historical properties. KD starts to read a portion of the study then ends with an overview of the findings of the study including the archaeological findings.

-MF questions KD if the Historical Commission had responded and KD advises they had not responded to the letter sent.

-LPW would request looking into the schoolhouse as it looks like it is right on the line of the 1/2-mile radius required after she reviewed the maps.

-Molly Babize of the Historical Commission advises that no letter has come before the Board. The date of the letter is 9/15/2014.

-MF states that he thinks there is the need to wait until the Historical Commission weighs in with its opinion.

-MF reads letters from residents into the record. 1. Sharon Wells 2. Richard Todd 3. Jack Barry 4. Rochelle Wildfong 5. Sherrill Jourdan 6. Patricia Iizcoff

-MF reads a petition containing 73 registered voter signatures requesting to deny the special permit for 1450 Spruce Corner RD.

- Thor Holback from Environmental Integration a Company that specializes in camouflaging cell towers gives his power point presentation. The presentation consists of different camouflaged towers of various heights, with some of the example towers installed with a material that looks like bark.
- Ken Kipen stands and asks if anyone has ever seen one of these tree camouflaged towers? Many in the room had seen these towers.
- JH explains that all we, the Board, are trying to do is soften the image of the tower.
- JoAnne Ostrowski asks if the sun will get inside the branches and reflect light.
- Thor explains that the tower is painted with no reflective paint.
- Bill Periman questions about signal transfer deflection. Polyester transfers well, according to Thor.
- Martha Lively questioned if the tower would need to be lighted because of its height? KD: No it would not have any lights on it.
- Bill Periman questions how the applicant feels about camouflaging. JC responds by saying they do not like to do it, however they will comply, if necessary. KD adds that they will have a choice of what company to use if camouflaging is needed. KM responded by saying it would have to be of a certain quality. Thor adds that the taper is the key to camouflaging and no other company does the branches long enough. MF: An 'or equal' spec will be included.
- Molly Babize comments that the visual impact depends on the angle in which you are looking.
- BB emails the Board recommending a 120 ft. camouflaged tower he feels that 3 carriers can go on that size tower. KD feels that 120ft tower will only carry 2 carriers.
- MF questions Industrial about providing proof of carriers. KD responds that there are no contracts as of yet most carriers do not go to contract until the tower is built.
- Peter Wildermuth explains that his biggest concern is his property value going down.
- Henry Kaminski of 1779 Spruce Corner Rd. comments that he has a \$359,00 bill for internet. Feels that there is no need for a tower he has plenty of service, he runs a business out of his house.
- Mike Dufresne says the service in that area is spotty at best if you are in a moving car no way you have service.
- Jude Elbaum who lives on John Ford Rd. says she has perfect service.
- Susan Kaminski states she is unclear if the Board is determining what is good for the neighborhood and the Town, or if it is for one person and one business. MF: For the purpose of federal law everyone is entitled to cell coverage. We are to protect the Town and the neighborhood that is why we have these special permit applications. The purpose of the Town Bylaw is to have as few towers as possible. Board is asked if they had already made their decision. MF: No, we are waiting for the NEPA study and to hear from the Town Historical Commission.
- Molly Babize Comments that the fewest number of towers would be best. And asks if there is a master plan? MF: No, there is no master plan been done for the Town. MF states that the applicants have been very helpful to the Board in providing coverage maps.

-MF Comments that a perspective site for a tower is on the Robertson property in South Ashfield that tower would cover Main St. & all of South Ashfield.

-Bill Perlman comments that one tower alone is useless; you need overlapping coverage in order for the system to work.

-AR responds to Peter Wildermuth regarding property values. Two positions can be taken: A reduction in property values because of the presence of a cell tower nearby, or a reduction in property values if there is no cell service at the property.

-MF: The Town Bylaws have no criteria for property values; rather, the Bylaws focus on preserving what creates property values – such as rural character.

-Walter Cudnohuzsky feels that view directly affect property values.

-Tony Jillson comments A bio mass plant, cell tower, when does it end?

-Cindy Kearney comments that working where she does she has contact with a lot of people traveling there are those that really can't believe we don't have cell coverage just as there are some that are so happy to leave the phones turned off.

-Anne Maddocks has comments regarding the NEPA study. The Spruce Corner Bridge, Streeter farm, and the Spruce Corner School House were not in the study why not and how do they get there? KD: It is measured in a 1/2-mile radius from the center of the tower, which is included in the study. All of the properties mentioned are outside of the radius. LPW feels that after looking at photos and maps that the cemetery and the schoolhouse are right on the line. What do we do? KD: The study was conducted by professionals.

-MF: Ashfield Historical Commission is not involved and I feel that they should be. KD: FCC does not require Historical Commission approval.

-Joanne Ostrowski questions any endangered species? KD: Conservation Commission signed off on it and we have a letter from Fish & Wildlife that there are no endangered species.

-Doug Field (Emergency Management Director) questions if emergency services will have a place on the tower if it goes up? KD: Yes, they will a spot free of charge to emergency services. Field goes into the fact that radio communication and cell service is unreachable in the area forming a dangerous situation. LPW: Are we not working on a tower in Plainfield for that reason? Bill Perlman said that the FRCOG is in the process of applying for the license now and as soon as that comes through we can start working on the tower.

-Janet Rogers states that his is an issue of great importance. Having no radio or cell coverage is terrible. We need to step up. People are trying their best to make this look as nice as possible. The Town needs this coverage.

-Mike Dufresne (President of Ashfield Snowmobile Club): There are roughly 60 miles of groomed trails. There are very few areas that have any cell coverage. And these snowmobilers, whether you like them or not, bring in a lot of revenue to this Town.

-MF questions whether the Board is to continue the public hearing until the NEPA study is complete?

-AR makes a motion to continue the hearing to a date that is undetermined at this time, seconded by KM. VOTE 5-0-0

-KD: Feels the study should be complete within a week.

-BB thinks that the Historical Commission should also review, for the record. He suggests the Board should write a letter to the HC. **MF:** Board will forward information to the HC.

Planning Board hearing is continued until October 29, 2014 at 7:30 P.M.

-MF gives a complete packet to Molly Babize to take to her next Historical Commission meeting.

-Helen Hodges is still very concerned about stray radio frequencies and would like her concerns recognized.

-KM questions if other towns have commitments with carriers prior to construction? **BB** It is becoming very normal for commitments with carriers to come after construction.

-Tony Jillson would like to clarify that the company will be paying for the camouflaging not the Town. The Town and Industrial will have to agree with quality of the products used in the camouflaging.

-JH: Board would require the most up to date products.

-JH: This project would not have the bark, as shown by Thor.

-Nicole Romer questions if this issue is too big for 5 members of a Board to make a decision. And if legally the Planning Board can make this decision? **MF:** yes the Planning Board by law can & will make the decision on this project. Any citizen can petition the Select Board at any time. **Romer** states it will never stop. **MF:** The FCC cannot require the Town to put in more cell towers, if coverage is complete.

-Ken Kipen as concerned resident advises that another real reason no one has spoken of is that this tower will provide income for Lenny Roberts (the landowner) in order for him to put in his proposed Bio Mass plant.

-At 9:40 PM it is decided the public hearing is to continue to 10/29/2014 @ 7:30 PM at Ashfield Town Hall

Planning Board request that **BB** attend the next Planning Board meeting 10/15/2014 @ 7:30 PM. **BB** accepts the invitation.

AR makes a motion to adjourn at 9:50 PM, seconded by **JH**.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Lynn Taylor Assistant Municipal Clerk