

TOWN OF CHARLEMONT
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC MEETING
3/19/2009

Members Present: Bill Stephens; Gisela Walker; Dan Miller; Trevor Mackie; Kathy Eichholz.

Members Absent: Jerry Pratt

Meeting called to Order at 6:45 PM

Read Mail

Read SP Hearing notices from other Towns.

SBA Communications Tower – Public Hearing opened at 7 PM.

Hearing is being recorded so Jerry can listen to tape and thus participate in future Hearings.

Representing the applicant: Dan Finnegan, attorney for SBA

Tony Wells, C2 systems, radio frequency specialist, Manchester NH

Chuck Regulbuto, SBA Project Director

Abutters signed in on sign in sheet

Trevor Mackie disclosed that the company he works for National Grid, may be doing business with SBA but that he has no say in those matters.

Dan Finnegan: Generic introduction to cell towers

Tony Wells: Long presentation on radio frequency issues:

Coverage both for Mr. Bowen's tower and the proposed one and how they complement each other, tough terrain to provide coverage; other areas: Fair Grounds Site would be good for downtown. Questions from audience re Berkshire East tower: SBA does not have that coverage; it is a lot higher but elevation is not all of it: terrain and type of land use, trees are tough, hills stop it short, signal does not bend down the hills, limiting frequency; Cell phone frequency bands are 800 – 900 MHz and 1900 MHz; Downlink and uplink scenarios both covered

Location of proposed tower: see map

Access road:

1200 feet existing logging trail will be graveled;

Underground utilities to the compound, which will be 70 x 70 feet

Assume to drive up once a month

Elevation:

from 590 feet (Burrington Road) to 766 feet (compound level) = 176 feet rise

Compound:

Fully enclosed chain link fence, tower in the north corner, room for meters and telephone pads for individual carriers and individual comm. shacks.

Tower:

Propose 150 feet monopole, all cables on the inside and not showing; only see antennas, at 10 foot intervals

Top position offered to town in the form of a whip antenna, not top array

Tower not on top of hill to minimize impact, hills goes up to 900 feet

SBA owns 7800 towers all the way down to Puerto Rico

The plan to design the tower to our specifications after we permitted

Some discussions about what comes first.

Bill raises question about antenna design, how about tightly packed ones?

Answer: Flush mount antennas not popular by carriers because it limits their use
Prefer now low profile arrays; coverage different between the two; tight packed not as good.

Tower type can be Korten steel, rusty brown

Stealth tower done in the past, would be okay

Bill: vertical separation: they want ten feet, how about 6 feet?

10 feet industry standard to protect against interference of antennae w/ each other

Setbacks: see circles on the map; 300 feet twice tower height, 800 feet to nearest on-site residence and other neighbors are farther away

Environmental impacts:

Trees to be cut down: 39 for the whole project, listed by diameter groups

Siltation fencing will be installed during construction of the access road

Noise from air conditioning units, 3 ton for the shelters, back up power plants could be installed at the carrier's shelters

Lighting above doors only?

Camille: concerned about emissions and disappointed about coverage

Answer: FCC guidelines regulate radio frequency emissions, weaker than microwave ovens, (?)

Trevor has a lot of questions re technical RF issues

Jennifer: visual impact:

Balloon tests: Saturday April 4th from 8 am to noon, April 5th as back up date with same time

Two balloons, one at 130' and the other at 150'.

At 8.50 pm a

Motion made and seconded to continue this Hearing until 4/2/2009 at 7.15 pm

Passed

Back to regular PB meeting:

Went over time line for future meeting and PB members availability

Motion made and seconded "To accept the Draft Zoning revision of section 23 dated 2-11-2009 and to submit this draft to the ATM for Approval" Motion Passed

Motion made and seconded "To encourage the BOS to reinstate the ALL Boards meeting at least 2 times per year" Motion Passed

Adjourned at 9:30PM

Respectfully submitted,

Trevor Mackie, Clerk