

July 14, 2010

Special Meeting

Present: Mark Lyon, Nicholas Solley, Susan Payne, Diane Dupuis, Philip Markert

Guests: Robert Tomlinson, Emergency Mgmt Coordinator, Kenneth Baldwin, Verizon.

Call to Order:

First Selectman Mark Lyon called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

The meeting was held to continue discussion on the possible location of a cell tower at the town garage site on Blackville Road.

Mark reported he had received a preliminary report from Walter Cooper with propagation estimates for radio frequency emissions and coverage, which will be reviewed. Information will be sought on the proposed 110' height of the tower to determine if this would be adequate to accommodate additional carriers. It was suggested the Siting Council might recommend additional height to accommodate additional companies during the application process rather than create the need for an additional tower.

Question was raised as to whose responsibility it would be to solicit co-locators - Verizon or the Town. It was felt it would be best to obtain the Siting Council's direction if other carriers are interested.

Emergency Mgr. Robert Tomlinson noted text message pager broadcast antennas, which are the best alternative to cell phones at the moment, have recently been decommissioned at some sites in this area, as the need for their services is no longer there. He felt the co-location of the Litchfield County Dispatch service would eventually be a certainty, and the Town should have the right to require a space on the tower. This would benefit Washington and other towns in the area as LCD serves them all. Phil Market reported he had spoken with LCD and there is no commitment but they are very interested and provided information on frequencies they use for Walter Cooper's report. He has requested an update on their response to frequency and co-locations of towers.

Mark reported Walter Cooper had provided a radio frequency emissions evaluation report, which included LCD, from the information that was available using the 110' height and various latitude and longitudes for several locations to determine distances. There are two categories of exposure: voluntary occupational exposure, which is people who work on or near the facility are aware of the exposure and can control the exposure if needed. Involuntary exposure, which applies to the general population, which will be exposed just by being in the area of the tower. Mr. Cooper calculated RF exposure based on the information in Verizon's preliminary proposal and rated it against FCC regulated Maximum Permitted Exposure. The highest occurred at the base of the towers at 57% of the permitted limit. With a 750' setback, this exposure would decrease to .8% of MPE.

Mr. Cooper raised the issue of the metal-sided buildings in the Town Highway complex. He was not concerned about the inside of the buildings, but felt there would be exposure outside and above the buildings. He suggested the siding and roof of the town garages would be reflective. The storage barn approx. 200 feet from the tower would have periodic occupancy and was not calculated. It was noted Blake Leavitt felt to the contrary on some of Mr. Cooper's assumptions. It was agreed it would make sense to be more accurate on what the exposures would be.

The general position is that FCC regulated limits are all predicated on thermal issues, while Blake is concerned about the health hazards at the existing level and the long-term effects. Currently, the issue of

long-term, low level exposure and its health effects are being debated but are not a consideration with the Ct. Siting Council.

It was understood by some committee members that the companies must return to the Town when they plan to increase frequencies used but the process is unclear. It was felt this should be investigated further. Currently Verizon does not use 700 MHz but is licensed to do so. It was felt 700 MHz would eventually be used in Washington because of the terrain and the services to be provided in the 700 MHz bandwidth. The equipment most likely will be installed on the tower now and activated when needed. If several companies had different expectations as to what would be required, it was felt each company would have to provide information to the Siting Council, who would determine if additional height might be required. Whoever the initial company is, they may be asked to build a strong enough tower to accommodate additional companies in the future. It was suggested the Ct. Siting Council would determine this. Mark asked Mr. Baldwin if Verizon could provide more details on their plans for the site at a future meeting.

Mark reported concerns raised in Atty. David Miles' review of the lease have been sent to Verizon Atty. Wendell Davis and would like more details on issues involving access, easements, etc. He would like the details discussed with the Bd. of Selectmen and have an actual site visit with Verizon site development personnel. However, he noted while Verizon is very interested in working with the Town, there is still no lease. Mr. Baldwin noted Verizon would like to return and discuss all issues and questions the Town may have, which would help in making a decision on the leasing of the property, as well as the real estate and engineering concerns.

Susan Payne suggested an overall picture of Verizon's future plans would be useful to address concerns and requested Verizon provide this plan, as well as the reasons for building in this area. Mr. Baldwin reported Verizon does not have a future coverage plan for the State and their building plans are very fluid. They do not come into a town to take property, but rather rely on property owners. The best site may not be available to them. They can show a town map and their predictions and it would simply show areas of town that are not covered. There are so few sites that you can get an idea of future sites. The problem is there will not be seamless coverage. Mr. Baldwin noted transmission is not always from a tower, but antennas may be installed in a structure of some sort. They are mostly on main roads and often become an issue of aesthetics. Their site selections are based on population density, roadway activity and consumer demands. Verizon feels the site in Washington Depot is a priority because of the activity in the Depot, it is a major thoroughfare, and there is not a transmission facility currently serving the area.

With a monopole (flagpole), there is sometimes the issue as to the width required to accommodate equipment, as well as the location. Also, the initial company may require two or three of the highest vertical spots on a flagpole. This creates a lack of physical space for co locators, which could require a wider, higher pole. Therefore a platform type of antenna array is preferred for this location and different shielding options were discussed. He noted various locations of towers or poles in the northwest corner of the State.

Diane Dupuis questioned if Verizon could provide a list of properties they have lease options on in Washington. Mr. Baldwin was unsure and Ms. Dupuis stated this would be important information for the Town to have.

It was noted that the CSC (Ct. Siting Council) is exempt from Land Use regulations. Concern was noted that residents have implemented Town regulations and this may be against the current setback regulations. It was felt while time is of the essence, the public should be made aware of this report and they should reach out to address the residents' concerns. Phil Markert suggested Mark Lyon contact the residents located in the area of the proposed location to offer them opportunities to educate themselves on this proposal.

Diane requested a full report be provided before she would commit to this proposal as she felt the current discussion was very preliminary.

Mark felt Verizon should provide more detail to the Town to see how it corresponds with Mr. Cooper's findings. It was agreed that consideration should be given to Verizon's numbers as they compare to both Blake Leavitt's and Walter Cooper's. It was felt the increase in wireless communications usage would be mind-boggling.

The Board agreed it is their responsibility to monitor this proposal in the interest of public safety. They must remain unbiased and provide due diligence in providing as much information as possible to the neighboring property owners and the Town in general.

Susan Payne suggested an attempt be made to get the neighbors to come together in order to provide them with as much information as possible. This will be scheduled for the last week in July or first week in August or sooner.

Lease negotiations also remain to be addressed. It was suggested if a tower is in Washington's future, any proposed changes in the proposal or use should be reported to the Town in advance. The Town's insurance carrier is reviewing the draft lease proposal as well.

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, 7/22/10, at 2 p.m.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Gollow
Selectman's Assistant