

MINUTES
Public Hearing
Tuesday, January 7, 2014 – 6:00PM
Norma Drummer Room – Seymour Town Hall

Members present: W. Kurt Miller, Karen Stanek, Annmarie Drugonis, Len Greene, Jr., Al Bruno (6:03pm), Paul Roy and Town Counsel Richard Buturla

Members not present: Nicole Klarides-Ditria

Others present: Tom Eighmie, John & Diane Coleman, Mike Ouellette, Ugo Zullo, Jim Wasilewski, John Cronin Jr., Bill McKierenan, Scott Skellington, John J. Zwolmski, Christopher Edwards, Thomas Bennett, Scott Martin, Jeff Cronin, Stephen Culmo, Kenneth Gabianelli, Gary Parkosewich, Dan Zaniewski, Art Raro, Bruce Raro, Eva Hendrer, Will Hendrer, Gary & Diane Bruce, Rory Burke, Frank Loda, and Lianna Staffieri, recording secretary.

ITEM #1: Call meeting to order.

Meeting was called to order by First Selectman, W. Kurt Miller, at 6:02PM.

ITEM #2: Pledge of Allegiance.

Everyone saluted the flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM #3: Review of proposed AT&T Tower at Great Hill Hose Co.

Daniel Laue, a representative for AT&T with the firm Kudi and Fader, explained that AT&T identified a need for a tower facility on Great Hill Road. He went over the site search process and the proposal to the town. AT&T proposed to replace the existing 160 foot tower with a 165 foot monopole structure that would host the AT&T antennas, both existing and future antennas. The tower will connect underground to a ground base compound that will host equipment for AT&T for the operation of the tower. The tower will be unmanned, with no need for any water connections. A technician would visit once a month.

The board questioned AT&T Representative, Daniel Laue about the tower and discussion followed.

Kurt explains that a resident, Dan Cooper, wasn't able to attend the public hearing but sent a letter to be read. Kurt read the letter as follows:

Dan Cooper, 141 Botsford Road.

My wife and I reside diagonally across from the Great Hill Fire House at 141 Botsford Road. Unfortunately due to work commitments, we cannot attend the town meeting regarding the topic of locating an AT&T cell tower at the fire house in place of the existing tripod antenna tower, so I wanted to present this letter to you and the Board of Selectmen to detail my concerns. I hope that you can consider these concerns and comments as part of the meeting.

ITEM 1

I am very concerned about the negative visual effect that this will have to the neighborhood and our home. The existing tower is a tripod frame tower which allows you to see through the structure, but the proposed cell tower is a large cylindrical structure which will not have the same ability to see through. As such I am very concerned it will pose a severe visual distraction to the existing area. Having traveled down Botsford Road the last couple of days and then walking in my front yard, I feel, that while the see through tripod structure seems to blend in, this new proposed pole tower will not blend in and in fact will stand out and provide quite a negative projection to the scenery in the area.

I heard that there were discussions presented at the last Board of Selectmen's meeting which provided information that the tower may be camouflaged like a tree but 1) I see no assured commitment that this will in fact be done and 2) the material you provided me, upon my earlier email request, indicates that going this route would make the tower stand out even more compared to the rest of the environment which may be even worse for the area.

So I ask that before any commitments are made to contract for this tower that a more detailed graphical projection of the installed tower be presented and evaluated. In the age of digital rendering, I feel that this should be possible.

ITEM 2

It is not clear to me exactly where the equipment building will be located. There appears to be a difference between the discussion I understand was presented at the last Board of Selectmen meeting and the layout drawing material you provided me. The discussion did detail that there was a request to change those original plans and move the building across the parking lot near the fuel tanks. But since that original material you sent me showed the equipment building would be located at the back of the parking lot nearer to the tower it seems it would be less visible. My concern is that decisions may be made without clear and final documentation as to where it will be located. If it is located by the fuel tanks I am concerned about the construction period noise and possible negative visual appearance to my next door neighbor and my house which have direct visibility to this area.

ITEM 3

I am concerned about the negative property value impacts this tower may have. I feel the town should commission an assessment to determine the effect on property values and that information be presented and evaluated prior to commitment to going forward with this project.

Now with those items of concern detailed, I acknowledge that I understand that moving forward with this AT&T Cell Tower project may both create some small level of income for the town and provide offsets to needed maintenance and updates to the existing fire department and public works communication infrastructure.

I would like to say that I certainly want our fire department to have the communication infrastructure that it needs, but I must say that I think that can be also be achieved by funding repairs or upgrades to the existing tower. My concerns about the AT&T Cell Tower do not mean I do not want our town to have the required communication infrastructure. I just want all to realize it can in fact be achieved through other avenues.

I also like to ask those who may be influenced by the reported level of income the contracted tower would provide to the town to consider its relatively small value compared to the visual impact to the neighborhood and the potential impact to both my neighbors and our property values.

I hope you can present my concerns at the town meeting. If there are any questions or discussion you would like to have on the items I have presented please feel free to call me.

ITEM #4: Public Comment.

Dan Zaniewski, 10 Lantern Drive, president of Great Hill Hose Co. and past captain of Great Hill Hose Co. went into some background information of the property. He explains that in 1975 the town purchased the property and then the Great Hill Hose Company members cleared the property to build a fire hose there. They feel that the tower and equipment pad will create a negative impact, visually, on the property. Dan asked if AT&T no longer needed to use that tower, what the maintenance cost would be if they abandon the tower or if any upgrades would be needed or if they had to move it. He thinks the town should look at the long term and explained that there is no benefit to the firehouse.

Gary Bruce, 84 Great Hill Road, voices a number of questions and concerns as follows:

Is the footprint on the ground going to be larger? Who will be the owner of the tower after construction is completed? Is the old tower structurally sound and useable? If the town doesn't own the tower, can space on the tower and radio room be guaranteed for the towns use at no cost? Does the new tower have its own generator or grounding equipment and who will maintain the generator and the equipment? Does the town need to have equipment on the new tower to enhance the radio system? What are the town's future plans with the new tower? Is only one vendor allowed on the new tower and will they pay their fair share of taxes? If only one vendor has rights to the tower, can they sublet space or charge for other vendors to access space on the tower, and what, if any, is the town's benefit from this? If the town takes ownership of the tower, what is the liability to the town if the system fails? Will the town need to carry insurance or bonding and what will it cost? Will the town also need to plan for property damage as a result of falling debris and ice, as well as, catastrophic failure? Does the town need to carry an insurance policy to cover life and property? What is the economic life of the tower and who pays for the study and engineering costs? How will the revenue generated from this project be dispersed? Could the town benefit by placing towns radio equipment on the new tower and vacate the other leased tower? As a suggestion, perhaps the town should explore a new ordinance that will guarantee the town space on any new tower being constructed in the town's boundaries. Is this project

for financial gain on our town's part? He stated that if the current tower has outlived its usefulness then perhaps this should be removed.

John Coleman, 139 Botsford Road, agrees with what Dan Cooper had to say. He explains that the new tower will be across from his front door and it is not something he wants to look at.

Bill McKiernan, 2 Country Club Drive, had health concerns for family living so close to the tower. He voiced his concern about where the \$18,000.00 per year will go. He explained that the property value of houses on his street will decrease in a resale situation. He stated that the noise test was taken during the month of December. He suggested testing the noise levels in the summer when the air handlers will be running at full capacity. He also would like to know what the decibel level will be when the tower is running on generator power. He voiced concern of the overall appearance of the cell tower.

Ed Shook, Country Club Drive, states that there are a lot of concerns and questions not answered. He suggests that the board postpone any decisions until everything is clear.

Mike Ouellette, 8 Forest Road, Ext. is most concerned about the town sole sourcing this with AT&T. He questioned why it wasn't put out to bid to other vendors to allow other vendors to bid on design, lease terms, dollars, what the other increase fees might be, rights to the tower, and rights to the property. He expressed his dislike for the new proposed site of the tower. He suggested that the board not vote on the tower tonight and defer a decision and put it out to bid to other vendors/contractors.

Jeff Cronin, 105 Mountain Road, thought that the only benefit to the town with this new tower will be \$18,000.00 a year revenue. He believes that there is no benefit for the town. He suggested allowing more vendors.

Marcia Shook, 7 Country Club Drive, stated that she does not like the design or location of the new tower. She thinks that if the proposed new tower were to be made as a tree tower to blend in, it will look worse. She asked the board if the existing tower will be left there or pulled down and what would happen to it. She invited the board to stand on her front lawn and take a look what she will be seeing.

ITEM #5: Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 6:37PM.

Motion: Al Bruno

Second: Annmarie Drugonis

Vote: 6-Yes

0-No

0-Abstain

Kurt Miller – Yes

Al Bruno – Yes

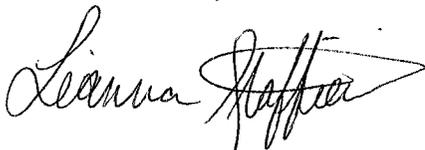
Annmarie Drugonis – Yes

Karen Stanek – Yes

Paul Roy – Yes

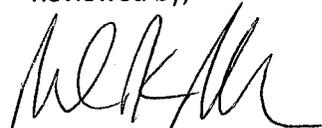
Len Greene Jr. – Yes

Submitted by,



Lianna Staffieri
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by,



W. Kurt Miller
First Selectman