

Planning Board Meeting
April 21, 2022 via Zoom

Attendees

John Gould, co-chair

Michael Hoberman, co-chair

Andrea Donlon, member

Mr. Fred Goldstein, Consultant, Interisle Consulting Group LLC

Francis Parisi, Esq, applicant representative, Vertex Towers LLC

Kate Davenport/Cass Russillo, public

Rick Leskowitz, public

John Holden, public

Christopher Lenaerts, public

Janice Sorensen, public

Marti & Ho Taft-Ferguson, public

Co-chair John Gould opened meeting at 6:33 pm

Item 1 - Vertex Towers LLC Application for Cell Tower

The purpose of the meeting is for the Planning Board (PB) to proceed with a greater understanding of the Vertex Towers LLC Application for a Cell Tower in consultation with Mr. Fred Goldstein (FG), Consultant, of Interisle Consulting Group LLC. Mr. Goldstein introduced himself as principal of Interisle Consulting Group LLC with over 40 years experience in various roles in the field of telecommunications. He has done a number of reviews of tower proposals in the immediate area recently, including Ashfield and Conway.

The PB reviewed a list of items from the bylaws sent to Mr. Goldstein in regard to the application:

- PB: 10-3 b) - must show the tower is necessary independent of what the applicant maintains - how does one go about that?

FG: This will be in the report provided to the PB - FG will do an independent analysis of the coverage maps to determine if there is a gap in coverage, taking into account towers which exist as well as those that are proposed

- PB: 10-4 - the location is in compliance with FCC and FAA requirements in terms of registration and lighting

FG: As there is no airport in the area, this is essentially a "check off"

- PB: 10-5 a) minimum height - how is that determined?

FG: using proprietary software, different projections can be made for towers with up to 4 carriers supported, the question being is the performance adequate at different heights? It appears the 115' level will be the minimum adequate height given the proposed location's characteristics of a steep hill in order to offer intended coverage and minimize gaps. The tower will exceed the current tree canopy, and need to account for the fact that trees grow.

PB: How many carriers are currently serving the area?

FG: Currently, T-Mobile, ATT, Verizon - possibly Dish will initiate coverage as well. The tower as proposed could accommodate four carriers.

- PB: 10-5 b) 7. re: no existing facilities can provide coverage?

FB: This application didn't contain a list of coordinates of existing towers, though FB has some information from other applications, and has mapped those he is aware of. If the PB knows of additional towers that he has not included, please alert him.

- PB: 10-8 b) re: lighting required:

FG: Under 200', no lighting is required by the FAA

- PB: 10-13 re: Radio Frequency Radiation (RFR) standards?

FG: RFR are a Federal matter, local authorities are not meant to address this, but the application includes studies which show that if all 4 carriers operated at once, RFR would still be within the standard. This is usually more of a concern in urban settings, where the towers are much closer to people. What's being proposed is a macro tower, above the trees and buildings, with an antenna designed to send radiation out, not down. The aim is to get cell phone users into a "four bar zone," in which case the user's cell phone is using less power at the user's ear, reducing the risk of using their phones.

PB Can you say more about 5-G?

FG: represents incremental changes over 4G, using higher frequencies and a shorter range. For urban settings, it will make some difference. Carrier aggregation may allow a phone to indicate it is on a 5-G network, but the actual difference in service might not be discernible.

- PB: 10-15.1 - re: the standing of the application without a carrier as applicant or co-applicant - referred to counsel.
- PB: 10-15.5 re: measurements of existing sound on the site, and proposed sound.

FG: possible there will be the sound of fans running, or generators running during a power outage or a generator test.

- PB: Questions of duplication of coverage? What is the ideal percentage of "overlap?"

FG: It is desirable to have an overlap of service, so that when a cell user is traveling, the call doesn't get dropped between signals.

- PB: Will there be hazardous materials stored on site? Is the application clear and complete in that regard?

FG: likely propane for generators, but the siting of the buildings isn't in the purview of FG's review. Each carrier would have its own building. Noted the bylaw reference to underground vaults was "curious."

- PB: When will FG's evaluation be complete?

FG: Should have a draft for comments by 4/22/2022. If the PB has any information about other tower locations, please share. [Discussion about LaBelle Rd. tower, which is likely the existing tower at Berkshire East.]

The Planning Board moved to address the completeness of the application by reviewing a draft letter reflecting issues raised at previous meetings. [Andrea Donlon made changes to the letter in real time during the meeting] Map-lot-block coordinates were added, and the addressee was amended. The letter identifies 2 categories of incompleteness: information missing, and erroneous information to be corrected.

Motion to accept the letter as amended was made by co-chair Hoberman, seconded by member A. Donlon - motion passed on a roll call vote: Michael Hoberman, yes; Andrea Donlon, yes; John Gould, yes.

The letter will be signed by the co-chairs, and communicated by both email and postal mail

Mr. Francis Parisi asked who to communicate with re: responses to the letter. Questions can be forwarded to the Planning Board, and relevant questions will be forwarded to counsel.

Item 2 - Minutes of the April 14, 2022 meeting. After a correction of the spelling of Whately, co-chair Hoberman moved the minutes be accepted; co-chair Gould seconded; on a roll call vote, all voted yes.

Public Comment

Co-chair Gould has spoken to the Town Administrator Heather Butler re: posting public comment letters re: the cell tower application. Any letter is part of the public record to post as

the PB chooses, and in the future, will be included in the meeting packet with the agenda. The public should be able to weigh in, and should have access to public documents. The PB's concern, however, is to not appear to be hosting a conversation outside the public hearing process, so comment and conversation may be premature. If the letters are posted, a note to that effect will be included as an introduction.

Therefore, the comments allowed at this meeting will be those questions that help the PB in its process, not in debating the merits of this application.

Question re: maintenance road and buildings?

PB: please refer to the PDF of the application available on the Town website, or the paper copy of the application at the Town Library.

Question re: FG's qualifications to comment on health issues related to cell towers.

PB: invitation to submit questions in writing.

Question: will the public hearing be held in person, on Zoom, or as a hybrid meeting?

PB: Good question, will consider alternatives which will allow full participation of the public.

Co-chair Gould moved to adjourn the meeting; Co-chair Hoberman seconded; on a roll call vote, all voted yes. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.