

Regarding the Cell Tower Proposed for 28 Martin Road, Buckland

I'm Christopher Franceschelli, the owner of the property at 28 Martin Rd where Vertex is proposing to build a cell tower. In light of comments which I understand have been made here previously, I hope you will allow me to take a few minutes to share why I ever agreed to lease our land for this project. It's a decision over which I deliberated more than three years.

First, by way of background: In 1948 my father Amos arrived in Shelburne Falls to teach Latin and Math at Arms Academy. Three years later his overly protective Italian parents would buy the camp on Martin Road, hoping to keep a semi-discreet eye on his comings and goings and to make certain he enjoyed a pasta dinner on Sundays. My father's and my grandparents' ashes are buried in a plot behind the camp. I hope that someday mine will join them. My honeymoon was spent here some thirty plus years ago. I hope that one day my daughter Anna's family will be able to experience some of the same joys that I've found in Buckland. I want to do everything possible to make certain that there's nothing which will disturb or interrupt that legacy.

My father's teaching career took him to New York City, so that we would then only spend summers in Buckland. Much has changed in these past 66 years. The village I remember was one when my brother and I could swim almost any summer afternoon in the watering hole in Clesson Brook behind the Purington's stables on Route 112. We knew it was time to go to sleep when at 9pm the glowing sign of the Pegasus of the Mobil station/package store at the bottom of the hill—the house that is now Doc Warner's office—blinked off. The Shelburne Falls of my childhood was a bustling town with two fiercely competing supermarkets (each occupied half of what is now Keystone Market) and a car dealership. The Lamson & Goodnow factory operated two shifts . . .

. . . But over time that dropped to one shift . . . then the plant fell almost completely silent. There were years when many of the storefronts on Bridge Street were shuttered. For a time, you couldn't even buy a loaf of bread in Shelburne Falls until Mike McKusker had the vision and the will to build his store on State Street. And gradually over the past forty years there's been a new vitality and sense of community, which has brought many to the area in search of some balance between a deeper appreciation of tradition and the land together with an embrace of the possibilities of new technologies.

I personally think it's insane that health concerns can't be considered in this decision-making process. It certainly was a significant factor for me. I'd read advisories similar to Professor Chamberlain's white paper (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWK74ie7krc>) recommending that cell tower construction require a minimum 500-meter setback from homes. In fact, ours is the only house in Buckland that would fall within those limits. But I want to be absolutely clear here that I'm not offering myself up as some sort of sacrificial lamb. Because when I entered my Brooklyn address into [antennasearch.com](http://www.antennasearch.com), (www.antennasearch.com) I discovered that there are 7 cell towers within 500 yards from where I sit—and another 251 within 3 miles. That fact provided some necessary perspective and reassurance: My neighbors here in Brooklyn don't glow in the dark and we don't live in some bizarre cancer cluster. (Dr. Chamberlain's analysis is significantly based on a Brazilian study of cell towers with radiation emissions almost twenty times the maximum of the proposed Buckland tower).

What I also learned was that—perhaps counterintuitively—a local cell tower reduces radiation for most nearby cell phone users. Our cell phones emit radiation and—because they’re generally literally in our possession—they actually pose a greater radiation risk than towers. In order to compensate for poor reception, a cell phone operating with only one bar of reception emits 10,000 times the radiation of a cell phone with 4 bars. (This information comes from research compiled by Dr. Joel Moskowitz, (<https://publichealth.berkeley.edu/people/joel-moskowitz/>), a long-time researcher on the dangers presented by cell phone radiation (<https://news.berkeley.edu/2019/07/19/berkeley-talks-joel-moskowitz-cell-phones-electromagnetic-radiation>) at the School of Public Health at UC Berkeley and director of Berkeley’s Center for Family and Community Health).

Again, I need to stress that mine is no wildly altruistic act. I won’t get rich, but I’ll definitely benefit financially from the construction of a cell tower should it happen here. But equally important—and selfishly—it will enable my access to cell and internet service that will allow me to work on publishing of my children’s books from the camp. And I hope it will also allow others here in Buckland to work more productively, to communicate with each other, to learn remotely, or to have access to emergency services when necessary.

I want to end by saying that I don’t believe it possible to freeze any town, any landscape—or any technology—in time. While foliage will hide my view of the tower during the summer, it will surely be visible in winter. I know that for any cell tower to be efficient, it will have to be visible from a considerable number of locations. But I also know that what seems at first to be a harsh visual intrusion inevitably fades and blends into the background. So I hope that you, my neighbors, will consider this a reasonable solution to address an ongoing challenge.

—Christopher Franceschelli
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