

**ANTRIM PLANNING BOARD AND ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
MEETING**

August 24, 2000 Informational Meeting on Wireless Communication Facilities

Planning Board Members in attendance

Ed Rowehl
Hugh Giffin
Tom Mangieri
Peter Beblowski

Planning Board Members absent

Spencer Garret
Denise Dargie
Eric Tenney
Bob Bethel
Fred Anderson

Zoning Board of Adjustment members present

Liz Robertson
Ben Pratt
Boyd Quachenbush
Tom Cochran

Zoning Board of Adjustment members absent

Carol Court
Don Winchester

Public attendees: 23

Note: When individual members of the public were not identified their comments are preceded by PC (for public comment)

The meeting was convened at 7:17 by Ed Rowehl at the town gym.

Mr. Rowehl explained the adoption of a Wireless Communication Facility ordinance by the Planning Board and the upcoming vote on the ordinance scheduled for September 12, 2000. He explained that the purpose of this meeting was to advise residents of the proposed ordinance and to solicit comments from the public regarding their opinions on Wireless Communication Facilities, i.e. Towers. He further advised that American Tower Corp. had submitted an application to install a facility in Antrim and that there would be a public hearing on the matter sometime after September 12, 2000.

Mr. Rowehl advised the public that there are two constraints placed by the federal government over which the town has no control. 1. Wireless Communication Facilities cannot be prohibited by the town. 2. Health and safety

matters regarding radiation are controlled by the federal government and cannot be superceded by the town. Mr. Rowehl indicated that the town can control such factors as height, appearance, location and like items. At this time copies of the proposed ordinance were distributed.

Mr. Giffin stated that the ordinance was adopted as a stop gap measure because of the increased activity in the area of companies submitting applications for Wireless Communication Facilities. He indicated that the Board was already working on amendments to the ordinance and was soliciting input from the public.

Ms. Nelkins asked what assurance there were that any suggested amendments would be adopted. Mr. Rowehl replied that the Board was aware that there was a need to make changes to the ordinance. Mr. Rowehl then proceeded to read the ordinance item by item to solicit comments.

Ms. Nelkins asked why the specific districts in the ordinance were selected. She felt that Wireless Communication Facilities should be restricted to the Highway Business and Industrial Districts.

PC: The question was asked as to why we even have to have such an ordinance. Mr. Rowehl advised that without an ordinance there would be no control over the installation of wireless communication facilities

PC: The question was asked if the public would have an opportunity to have a say on the site location. Mr. Rowehl said there would be that opportunity at the public hearing on any application.

Susie Caldwell asked if the American Tower application would be governed by the proposed ordinance or could amendments be applicable to their application. Mr. Rowehl explained that their application would be governed by the ordinance in effect at the time of their application.

Phil Dwight asked if a moratorium on applications could be put in effect if the ordinance was voted down on September 12th. Mr. Pratt indicted that this might be possible but would need to be researched.

Ms. Nelkins stated that we should adopt the Fitzwilliams regulation.

Phil Dwight asked if we have a legal opinion on a moratorium. Mr. Pratt stated that we did not at this time.

Mr. Beblowski felt that the rest of the ordinance should be read so that additional concerns could be heard. Mr. Rowehl proceeded to do so.

Ms. Nelkins felt that the Board was more concerned about the needs of the applicants rather than the residents needs..

PC: It was felt that in general the Town of Antrim was soft on zoning regulations.

Liz Robertson introduced information she had obtained at a forum for Wireless Communication Facilities. She described stealth antennas, other methods of camouflage and how the location of antennas could be on or in town owned facilities. She suggested that the thrust of the amendments to the ordinance be in that direction.

PC: The question was asked as to why can't the facilities be restricted to only Town property. Mr. Rowehl explained that the topography of Antrim may not lend itself to such an approach.

PC: It was suggested that the ordinance restrict the facilities to specific hills or locations. The gentleman also felt that the ordinance should concern itself with environmental factors.

Mr. Rowehl explained the procedure for making amendments. Mr. Pratt summarized the application made by American Tower Corp. and the pending schedule for hearing the application.

Ms. Nelkins asked about balloon visibility tests. Mr. Pratt explained that American Tower would be willing do run such test and the public would be advised as to the date and time.

PC: Concern was express about American Towers strategy. It was felt that American Tower would get approval on one type of tower and then go for a second tower as permitted use. Concern was expressed as to who will monitor construction and safety issues.

PC: A comment was made regarding the ability of the town to control what happens. The case of a proposed prison in the area was mentioned and how the public was able to have it stopped.

PC: The Chairman of the Zoning Board of Ordinance was asked if he was satisfied with the existing ordinance.. Mr. Pratt stated that he would like to see the ordnance amended along the lines of the Hopkington and Amherst ordinances. He further explained that the Zoning Board of Adjustment cannot make zoning law – their function is only to interpret existing ordinances.

Ms. Nelkins asked what controls does the ordinance give the town. Mr. Mangieri explained that the town can hire consultants at the expense of the applicant for further studies. Mr. Pratt advised that the town should not get involved in a technical spitting match.

PC: The Board was asked if they were in favor or against Wireless Communication Facilities. The consensus of the replies was that they have to be allowed but should be controlled.

Dave Essex stated that he was not aware of any specific economic benefit to the town but suspected that a number of people would be in favor of the facilities.

PC: It was felt that the Board should find out the legal ramifications of a moratorium. Also it was felt that the description of the ordinance on the ballot might be confusing as to what was actually being voted on. It was suggested that more information be provided to the public prior to the vote to clarify the ordinance. It was suggested that a press releases be made.

Dave Essex stated that the facilities would provide broadband frequencies to the area which would benefit the town in terms of future economic development.

Mr. Rowehl adjourned the meeting at 9:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Paul L. Vasques", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul L. Vasques, Secretary
Antrim Planning Board
Antrim Zoning Board of Adjustment.