



# TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH PLANNING BOARD

Town Hall Offices • 63 Main Street • Northborough, MA 01532 • 508-393-5019 • 508-393-6996 Fax

---

Approved 10-6-2015

## Planning Board Meeting Minutes August 4, 2015

**Members in attendance:** Theresa Capobianco, Chair; Michelle Gillespie; Amy Poretzky; George Pember

**Members excused:** Leslie Harrison

**Others in attendance:** Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Attorney Chris Swiniarski; Dave Tivnan, Verizon Wireless; Keith Vellante, Verizon Wireless; Ziad Ramadan

**Chair Theresa Capobianco called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.**

**Public Hearing – Proposed Wireless Communications Facility at 386 West Main St.**

<b>Applicant:</b>	<b>Verizon Wireless</b>
<b>Engineer:</b>	<b>Chappell Engineering Associates, LLC</b>
<b>Date Filed:</b>	<b>June 30, 2015</b>
<b>Decision Due:</b>	<b>Within 90 days of close of hearing</b>

Ms. Capobianco noted that the applicant seeks to erect a 100-foot monopole, designed to resemble a pine tree, in a 12' x 26' equipment shelter on the property.

Attorney Chris Swiniarski appeared on behalf of Verizon Wireless, who is seeking a special permit and site plan approval for a proposed wireless communications facility. He noted that the proposal is for a basic installation and is typical of facilities they install all over the country.

Mr. Swiniarski explained that the installation includes a 12' x 26' shelter to house all of the necessary communications equipment, and is designed to provide space for equipment for other carriers who may opt to co-locate on the pole.

Mr. Swiniarski stated that federal law stipulates that certain provisions of the local bylaw can be overridden when an applicant can establish that they have a gap in coverage and that the proposed location is the most viable option to address that gap.

Mr. Swiniarski stated that demand for cell coverage is increasing substantially, primarily due to an increase in the use of data services. He noted that it is not possible to service all of the demand in the area on the existing networks, so carriers are designing installations to enable them to provide better coverage.

Mr. Swiniarski indicated that he has provided the board with copies of the radio frequency reports, which illustrate where the demand is and where Verizon deems the coverage to be insufficient to meet the demand. He stated that this proposal is the best option to achieve the coverage goals.

Mr. Swiniarski explained that there is an existing 100-foot monopole in proximity to the proposed location that is already completely full. He indicated that the applicant has evaluated the possibility of expanding on the existing pole and has determined that it is not possible to do so. He reiterated that the proposed location is the most viable option available, and noted that they will be able to place the tower at the back of the property where it will be surrounded by state and town owned conservation land.

Ms. Joubert noted that she had provided the board and the applicant with a snapshot from the town's GIS system showing the proposed location and surrounding area. She explained that the access will be off of West Main Street to the west of the property line using the existing roadway for Carney Park. She stated that the proposed location for the cell tower is just off of the northwest side of the parking lot where the trailhead is located.

Ms. Joubert noted that the Acting Fire Chief, Jay Houston, provided a review letter in which he states that he is not aware of any need at this time for public safety departments to co-locate on the pole. She explained that, in the past, the town has always required applicants to provide space for town safety. She commented that she has not received any comments from the Police Department, and is not expecting any.

Mr. Pember asked the applicant to respond to the issues raised in the Fire Department's comment letter. Mr. Swiniarski stated that he had spoken to Captain Houston and has agreed to provide co-location space as needed. He stated that Captain Houston had also asked for space inside the shelter, which is problematic due to the need to have controlled access. He noted that, given the Fire Department's requirements, the applicant would be agreeable to providing a dedicated weather-proof cabin to meet the town's needs. Mr. Pember suggested that this be included as a condition in the decision.

Mr. Pember asked about the width of the proposed roadway. Mr. Swiniarski agreed to make the road as wide as is necessary. He noted that, since the roadway will not be paved, it will not be a significant expense to do so. Mr. Swiniarski discussed an easement granted by Mr. Gallagher to allow the applicant access from the existing parking lot. He also noted that the access road is only needed for the installation and monthly inspections so is not expected to be heavily travelled.

Ms. Capobianco asked if the proposed access roadway will run along the existing roadway and utilize the impervious surface that already exists up to the point where the roadway curves into the park. Mr. Swiniarski confirmed that it will, but commented that the pavement does not go as far back as it appears to on the GIS map. Ms. Capobianco commented that there seems to be only a small segment of open space to be removed

in order to get access to the current trail head. Mr. Swiniarski confirmed this to be the case, and noted that there should be no need to remove any trees as far as he can tell.

Mr. Pember asked about utility poles or wires serving the site. Mr. Swiniarski indicated that all utility runs are to be underground.

Ms. Joubert asked if the applicant has full-scale plans to show the board. Mr. Swiniarski indicated that he is planning to put up a projection during subsequent meetings but agreed to provide full scale plans as well.

Ms. Capobianco asked if any of the areas to be utilized for housing the equipment, the monopole, or the fenced area will encroach upon the existing parking area. Mr. Swiniarski indicated that it will be close but should not encroach. Ms. Capobianco noted that this is a heavily used trailhead, and expressed a desire not to lose any parking. Mr. Swiniarski indicated that, should there be a need to take any of the parking spaces near the compound, more will be added elsewhere. He also indicated that the applicant has plans for future improvements to the parking.

Ms. Poretsky asked how far the 4G LTE signal travels. Mr. Vellante indicated that the service operates at 750 MHz. He also noted that the distance depends on the location of the pole, but estimated it to be  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile.

Ms. Gillespie asked about rooftop installations. Mr. Swiniarski commented that, while they do have the technology for rooftop installations, there are no tall rooftops in this area. Mr. Vellante reiterated that the proposed location is in the center of an area where coverage is lacking. Ms. Poretsky stated that the coverage gap shown on the map shows a greater gap further East in Shrewsbury, and asked if the applicant had considered locating the cell tower on the public land adjacent to Ward Hill. She commented that the Shrewsbury location looks like it would serve a greater population whereas the proposed location is mostly open space and park land. Mr. Swiniarski reiterated that the concentration of demand on West Main Street is substantial and noted that where people live is not necessarily where the usage is heaviest. Ms. Poretsky stated that, based on her own research, the signal was weakest at the Shrewsbury line and asked if they had approached Shrewsbury as a viable location. She voiced her assumption that the need is greater in that area than in the proposed location. Mr. Swiniarski stated that, though the signal is not that great in that particular area of Shrewsbury, the demand in that area is not as great. He noted, however, that there is an area on the easterly side of Shrewsbury that has been identified as an additional future tower site.

Mr. Swiniarski explained that, since areas with retail businesses are currently a focus because demand from devices is greater, it is a huge factor in determining where coverage is needed. Ms. Poretsky voiced her understanding that if there are too many towers located in close proximity to one another, coverage can be negatively impacted by interference. She stated that there are already 4 Verizon towers in Northborough, which seems excessive for such a small town. Mr. Swiniarski emphasized the need to provide service where there are customers demanding it. He discussed the expense of

building these towers, and suggested that such decisions are based on where it is economically feasible to do so. Ms. Poretsky asked if Verizon and/or the town have received any complaints about coverage in that area. Mr. Swinarski indicated that he was unsure. Ms. Joubert stated that cell coverage is not typically an issue that residents will call the town about.

Ms. Capobianco noted that the applicant is seeking to install a pole to a service-limited section and asked for specifics about the area. Mr. Swinarski explained that the area is shown on the plan, and encompasses the West Main Street area up to the intersection with Route 20 and along the Crawford Street corridor. He noted that there are also plans for future sites in order to improve other coverage areas, and development will be based on priority. In response to a question from Ms. Capobianco, Mr. Swinarski explained that the increase in demand is growing exponentially.

Ms. Gillespie noted that plans submitted include a page illustrating the area where the reception is not ideal along with a page showing the coverage improvement provided by the proposed tower. She stated that, of that area, half or more is forestry. Mr. Swinarski reiterated that demand exists along that area of West Main Street. Ms. Capobianco noted the number of towers in Northborough compared to what she sees in Natick and Framingham, both towns with blocks upon blocks of retail sites and users. She also questioned whether the tower needs to be as tall as proposed, given the limited area that they are trying to cover. Mr. Swinarski confirmed that either a 100-foot tower or several smaller towers are needed, and noted that a single tower is typically preferred.

Ms. Gillespie asked about mounting equipment on self-storage facilities as she has seen done in other locations. Mr. Vellante noted that there is a flagpole tower nearby (300 West Main Street), but there is no space available on it. Ms. Gillespie asked the applicant to provide a letter confirming this to be the case. Ms. Poretsky asked if it is possible to modify the existing pole to accommodate additional co-locations. Mr. Vellante indicated that there is a footprint issue with trying to do so. In response to a question from Ms. Gillespie, Mr. Swinarski explained that these towers are typically designed to handle three co-locaters, though he is unsure what future technology will bring.

Ms. Gillespie asked if Verizon has a tower at Northborough Crossing. Mr. Swinarski indicated that they have a permit for a proposed canister antenna to handle the stores in the development, but that has not yet been installed.

Ms. Capobianco asked for clarification as to why installing a shorter structure would require multiple towers. Mr. Swinarski explained that this is what would be needed to cover the entire area. He also noted that the radio frequency engineers determine the ideal height needed to reach the coverage goal.

Ms. Capobianco commented that the area to be improved is all at the 300 foot elevation level with the exception of a small area in the forest. Mr. Swinarski noted that the topographical map is based on GIS data and does not take into consideration the

buildings and trees. In response to a question from Ms. Capobianco, Mr. Vellante indicated that the tallest building in the area is Mr. Gallagher's building at 2½ stories. Ms. Capobianco questioned why the tower needs to be 100-feet tall if Mr. Gallagher's building is the tallest nearby structure. Mr. Swiniarski indicated that the signal needs to get over the buildings and the trees. Ms. Capobianco asked how much taller than the tallest tree will the proposed tower be. Mr. Swiniarski suggested that the crane test will demonstrate the height of the tower in relation to the surroundings. Ms. Joubert indicated that she will notify abutters about the crane test and post a notice on the Town's website.

It was agreed that the crane test will be scheduled for August 19, 2015 from 8:00AM to noon, with a rain date of August 20, 2015. Ms. Joubert will notify abutters, place a notice on the Town's website, and publicize a message on the local cable station indicating that the parking lot will be closed until 2:00PM and advising residents to park at the rear of Pendleton Square for access to the trail.

Members of the Planning Board requested the following from the applicant:

- Plan showing the tower in an alternate location, closer to the building and away from the trailhead
- An overlay map showing the compound location in relation to the trail parking area
- Dropped call information – Mr. Swiniarski explained that the industry no longer captures this data, so it will not be possible to provide.
- Letter from SBA tower at 333 SW Cutoff confirming that it is full.
- Consideration of a 75-foot tower, with model to be provided for the next meeting.

Michelle Gillespie made a motion to continue the hearing to September 8, 2015 at 6:00PM. George Pember seconded; motion carries by unanimous vote.

Amy Poretsky left the meeting.

## **Old/New Business**

### **Newton Street**

Ziad Ramadan explained that Verizon has not yet moved the 9 poles as requested. He stated that he had recently sent an application for the relocation of three poles and a public hearing is scheduled for August 10, 2015 with the Board of Selectmen, with an anticipated installation date of September 10, 2015.

Mr. Ramadan indicated that trees for phase 1 and phase 2 have been cut, with two remaining to be removed. In addition, there are 9 stumps along the wall that are to be grinded. Mr. Ramadan also noted that the ledge cannot be ground and the paving scheduled cannot be determined until the poles are removed, which he does not anticipate will occur before winter.

**Board of Health and Planning Board meeting regarding agricultural regulations on lots of less than five acres** – Meeting is scheduled for September 8,2015 at 7:00PM.

**Bonds**

- Members of the board discussed a bond reduction for the New England Baseball project at 333 Southwest Cutoff.

George Pember made a motion to reduce the bond to \$48,000. Michelle Gillespie seconded; motion carries by unanimous vote.

**Next Meeting Date** – September 8, 2015 at 6:00PM.

Adjourned at 8:55PM

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Rowe  
Board Secretary