

Municipal Telecommunications Task Force

May 24th, 2010
7:00 PM

Woodstock Town Hall
Room 1

Attendance: Julie Anderson, Jeffrey Gordon, David Lusignan, and Mary Weaver

Guests: Kenneth Baldwin (from the law firm of Robinson and Cole, LLC representing Verizon Wireless) and Michael Libertine (representing Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc)

- I. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.
Prior meeting minutes were approved unanimously.
- II. Chairman Gordon thanked the members of the Task Force for their continued work on telecommunications issues in Woodstock. He mentioned that the Task Force has already achieved a lot:
 - Proposed updates to the Wireless Telecommunications Facilities article of the Zoning Regulations pertaining to the sections on “Purpose” and “Siting and Technology Preferences”, which have all been accepted by the Planning & Zoning Commission;
 - Engaged in continuous proactive discussion with Verizon Wireless about telecommunications issues in Woodstock;
 - Spoke before and presented information to the CT Siting Council about specific cell tower applications proposed to be built in Woodstock; and
 - Set the foundation for coordination within town government and among the public regarding a comprehensive municipal and community approach to telecommunications issues.

The Task Force’s work has been recognized by the Board of Selectmen such that the Task Force was renewed last November to extend its work through 2011.

Chairman Gordon thanked Verizon Wireless and VHB for taking the time to attend tonight's meeting and prior meetings.

III. Discussion was held with Attorney Baldwin (representing Verizon Wireless) and M. Libertine (representing VHB). The following topics were discussed in detail, with each Task Force member asking pertinent questions and engaging in good discussion:

- The CT Siting Council held a second field review today at the proposed Prospect Street cell tower location. Alternate Site B is being seriously considered as the location of this tower. The land is lower than the original proposed location, so the tower will be ~160 feet tall. This location is farther from the road than the original location site. Verizon Wireless and the CT Siting Council list this Alternate Site B as less visible from the road, from the abutters, and from the distance regarding the immediate and the long distance view shed of the area. It is located at the edge of a working farm field with access to the area already established. It will be near the tree line, so less of the tower will be visible. The ground facility structures will be hidden because of the trees. Because of access to the field, less work will be needed to clear an access road to the site. There was discussion about stealth building structures in which to hide this cell tower. Given the height of the proposed tower, Verizon Wireless mentioned that hiding the tower as a grain silo, farm wind mill or tree structure would create a bulky and very tall structure that would appear out of scale for the surrounding area. This alternate site meets Verizon Wireless' RF coverage goals for North Woodstock. If the CT Siting Council approves this Alternate Site B location, the Verizon Wireless could have the cell tower built and operational by the end of this year (possibly). The CT Siting Council will be meeting in New Britain on May 27th, 2010 to continue the public hearing. The Task Force expressed its disappointment with the CT Siting Council for not holding the continuation of the public hearing in Woodstock so people in town could have easy access to the meeting. It was noted that town government and the public would have 30 days beyond May 27th, 2010 to provide additional information and input to the CT Siting Council on this matter.
- Verizon Wireless will propose (an application has not yet been submitted to the CT Siting Council) building a new tower at 87 West Quasett Road (near Quasett Hill Road) on farm land there to replace

an old tower owned by American Tower Corp. The old tower has a whip antenna and cannot accommodate new technology or capacity. Verizon Wireless showed building plans to the Task Force. The tower will be ~150 tall monopole and may or may not integrate stealth building technology. This new tower proposal is called “Woodstock Relocation”.

- Verizon Wireless is looking at building a cell tower in Pomfret near Route 244 (Brayman Hollow Road, Ragged Hill Road, and Swedentown Road area). This is in the northwest corner of Pomfret and would provide coverage to parts of Woodstock (called “Woodstock South”).
- Verizon Wireless is also looking at sites in Eastford that would provide coverage to west and southwest Woodstock.
- There was discussion held about the three current technologies that cell towers and other telecommunications facilities need: cellular, PCS and LTE. Using all three allows for complementary capacity for more bandwidth.
- There was discussion about incorporating stealth structures or alternative technologies.

IV. It was agreed by the Task Force that it should continue its work reviewing and proposing updates of the Zoning Regulations regarding telecommunication facilities. The Task Force and the Planning & Zoning Commission have already been strongly reminding Verizon Wireless and the CT Siting Council of the town’s current Zoning Regulations and proposed updated Zoning Regulations on this matter. Verizon Wireless and the CT Siting Council have taken these matters under strong consideration, as evidenced by how they have approached telecommunications issues in Woodstock over the past year compared to previously before the Task Force, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the public became engaged in this issue.

V. A town wide comprehensive coordination plan of action is needed. The Task Force agreed to continue its work toward such, with the importance of engaging the public. Chairman Gordon mentioned his attendance at a recent Conservation Commission meeting to discuss this idea. It was well received. First Selectman Walker has been very helpful in this regard as well.

- VI. The Task Force agreed to meet again in June, the date to be scheduled in the near future.
- VII. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.